

# **On the Meaning of Philanthropy**

## **Classical and Modern**

WIMPS Presentation  
April 1, 2008

By: Marty Sulek  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Indiana University Center On Philanthropy

Phone: (765) 468-4909  
Cell: (765) 546-0859  
E-mail: [msulek@iupui.edu](mailto:msulek@iupui.edu)

Box 236  
103B North Main St.  
Farmland, IN 47340

Marty Sulek is currently a Ph.D. candidate in philanthropic studies, with a minor in philosophy. He was born and raised in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and earned his B.A. with an honours certificate in political science and philosophy at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick. Before coming to the Center On Philanthropy for graduate studies, he worked for several years as a non-profit development professional. Marty's primary academic interest is in political philosophy, both ancient and modern, for the light it sheds on contemporary understanding of civil society and philanthropy. The working title of his dissertation is: *Gifts of Fire – Promethean Imagery and Philosophical Philanthropy in Plato, Bacon and Nietzsche*.

# Table of Contents

## On the Meaning of Philanthropy, Classical and Modern

Introduction . . . . .	2
<b>Part I</b>	
Contemporary Academic Definitions . . . . .	4
Modern Definitions . . . . .	8
A Synthesis of Modern Definitions . . . . .	14
<b>Part II</b>	
Archaic Greek Origins . . . . .	17
The Genesis of <i>Philanthrôpía</i> in the 5 <sup>th</sup> Century Greek Enlightenment . . . . .	19
Plato and <i>Philanthrôpía</i> in the Philosophical Mode . . . . .	24
Widening Usage in 4 <sup>th</sup> Century BCE Athens . . . . .	27
Conclusion . . . . .	34
Bibliography . . . . .	37
Endnotes . . . . .	42

# On the Meaning of Philanthropy, Classical and Modern

“This has caused me the greatest trouble and still does always cause me the greatest trouble: to realize that *what things are called* is unspeakably more important than what they are.”<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Proper definitions are critically important to the life of language and ideas; for the meanings assigned to words fundamentally shape and direct the path of discourse. Perhaps nowhere is this more so than in an academic setting. The precise definition of terminology employed by scholars exercises a decisive influence over what is studied, how and why it is studied, and by whom. This is particularly true of philanthropy, as a term that now defines, in part, an emerging field of scholarly discourse.<sup>2</sup> Given this situation, an historical analysis of the various definitions assigned to philanthropy is, perhaps, more significant to its contemporary academic study than might at first appear. This paper, then, is organised around four inter-related hypothesis:

1. Philanthropy has (had) a variety of significantly differing, albeit inter-related, shades of meaning in its academic, common, contemporary and historical usage.
2. The predominant academic definition of philanthropy is more narrowly focused than its meaning in common parlance; however, what academics understand by philanthropy is still largely influenced by contemporary usage, as well as exemplary instances of its historical usage.
3. The meaning of philanthropy has evolved along a discernable historical trajectory, the analysis of which can yield insight into its full nature.

4. There are a number of distinct aspects to the meaning of philanthropy that, while disparate, nevertheless inform one another, such that particular aspects lose significance when considered in the absence of an understanding of the meaning of philanthropy as a whole.

In testing these hypotheses, this paper begins with a survey and analysis of the predominant modern English definitions of philanthropy, both within the academy and in society at large. It then traces the historical evolution in the meaning of philanthropy back to its genesis as a word and concept in classical Athens. This historical examination primarily focuses upon philosophical usage of the term, both to narrow the parameters of the paper somewhat, and because philosophers tend to be more careful than most in the meanings they assign terminology.

## Contemporary Academic Definitions

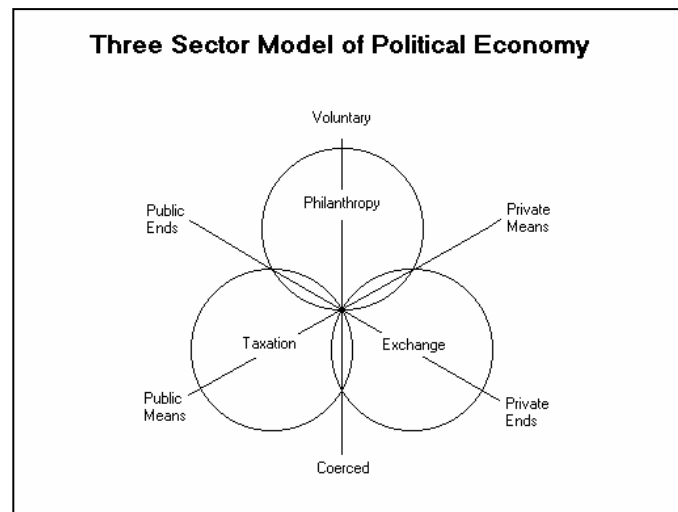
The precise meaning of philanthropy is a matter of some debate within contemporary academic circles, its definition largely dependent upon the interests of the scholar employing the term. Nevertheless, there are some working definitions to which the scholarly community most closely associated with the field of ‘philanthropy studies’ most commonly subscribes. One of the more widely accepted of these is the one employed by Lester Salamon, who defines philanthropy as:

*“the private giving of time or valuables (money, security, property) for public purposes.”*

He then goes on to characterise philanthropy as:

*“one form of income of private non-profit organizations.”*<sup>3</sup>

Given this particular definition, philanthropy might perhaps be best understood, at least as a concept within modern political economy, as the application of private means to public ends. The other conceptual poles in this schema would thus be:



government taxation, defined as the application of public means to public ends; and market exchange, defined as the application of private means to private ends.

This Salamonian definition of philanthropy, as essentially synonymous with charitable donations, is generally taken as a given by most scholars of philanthropy,<sup>4</sup> though with some notable exceptions. Some historians, for example, point to a distinction that arose in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century between ‘Christian charity,’ which primarily

sought to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, and ‘scientific philanthropy,’ which sought, instead, to address root causes in order to bring about permanent solutions to poverty and other social ills.<sup>5</sup> Those drawing this distinction often point to the seminal influence of the Rockefeller philanthropies under the direction of Frederick Gates, with their novel emphasis on applying the findings of scientific research, particularly within the field of medicine, to solving previously intractable social problems.<sup>6</sup> Others point to Andrew Carnegie, who attempted to encourage self-reliance among his beneficiaries in a conscious effort to avoid the ‘pauperism’ that dependence on charity tends to foster.<sup>7</sup> Still others point to the rise of associational life in early 19<sup>th</sup> century America as marking the decisive transition from charity, understood as giving between individuals, to philanthropy, understood as a more institutionally-channeled humanitarian response to conditions of the poor.<sup>8</sup>

Scholars from more varied backgrounds tend to define philanthropy both more broadly and more precisely. Robert Payton’s definition, as “voluntary action for the public good,” offers one of *the* major alternatives to Salamon’s definition within the field of philanthropic studies. A blend of the ‘Paytonian’ and ‘Salamonion’ understandings of philanthropy may also be discerned in the definition proffered by Jon Van Til, as:

“the voluntary giving and receiving of time and money aimed (however imperfectly) toward the needs of charity and the interests of all in a better quality of life.”<sup>9</sup>

A particularly interesting aspect of Van Til’s definition is the crucial importance he places upon intent. He considers philanthropy to encompass all acts of voluntary giving to meet charitable needs, even if those charitable aims are never attained, just so long as the donor *intended* to achieve ‘a better quality of life for all.’ One can easily question the underlying assumptions of this definition, and many probably have.<sup>10</sup> Serious challenges

have even been mounted, though, to the more robust assumptions behind the definition of philanthropy as voluntary service to a public good. As Paul Schervish points out, many things that are not philanthropic (such as government and the market) may also be seen to serve the public good. Not only that, but philanthropic behaviour is frequently defined more in terms of its ‘obligatory’ rather than its ‘voluntary’ nature. Given this state of affairs, Schervish chooses, instead, to define philanthropy as:

“a social relation governed by a moral obligation that matches a supply of private resources to a demand of unfulfilled needs and desires that are communicated by entreaty.”<sup>11</sup>

Like Van Til, then, Schervish also understands philanthropy as meeting unfulfilled human needs or wants. By contrast, though, he sees this process governed by a moral obligation to meet expressed needs, rather than stemming primarily from the intent, or free will, of the donor.

From this brief survey of contemporary academic definitions, a number of fundamental disagreements may be discerned among the leading scholars in the field of philanthropic studies as to the precise meaning of philanthropy. In particular, there is disagreement over:

- whether philanthropy is voluntary, or whether it is compelled by factors such as moral restraints, social obligations and the like;
- whether philanthropy serves a public good or purpose, a charitable need, or simply a communicated want or desire;

And finally:

- whether philanthropy is an intent to achieve a particular aim, is the actual attainment of that aim, or is just simply a private act of giving.

Given the limited degree of agreement among scholars as to the precise meaning of philanthropy, as well as the importance of precision in language to scholarly pursuits, a more comprehensive analysis of its wider contemporary and historical meaning(s) would seem to be in order. Such an analysis might help shed light on the full range of meaning encompassed by philanthropy, possibly allowing for a better synthesis of the varying definitions now current in academia. Tracing the usage of this term to its origins in classical Athens also presents a unique opportunity to recover a vital element to the meaning of philanthropy that has enabled it to endure as a relevant term, and in its current etymological form, for almost two and a half millennia.

## Modern Definitions

In tracing the historical evolution of the meaning of philanthropy, an essential starting point is, naturally, the dictionary. The definitions provided by modern dictionaries tend to reflect the usage of words in common parlance, as opposed to the more specialized meanings often assigned to them in academia; nevertheless, common and academic usages may be seen to frequently inform one another. One of the more authoritative standard references for contemporary American English usage is the Webster's dictionary, the current on-line edition of which defines philanthropy as:

- 1: goodwill to fellowmen; *especially* : active effort to promote human welfare
- 2 a: a philanthropic act or gift b: an organization distributing or supported by philanthropic funds<sup>12</sup>

In terms of the wider English speaking world, on the other hand, the most authoritative reference is the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the on-line version of which defines philanthropy as:

- 1a. Love of mankind; the disposition or active effort to promote the happiness and well-being of others; practical benevolence, now esp. as expressed by the generous donation of money to good causes.
- 1b. The love of God for humanity. Now *rare*."
2. A philanthropic action, movement, or agency; a charity. Chiefly in *pl*<sup>13</sup>

A couple observations: First, only the OED references the literal translation of philanthropy from ancient Greek as the 'love of humankind.' This would seem to indicate a fairly wide-spread awareness of its original literal meaning, at least among the wider English-speaking population. However, this may also simply reflect the fact that the OED definition has not been substantially revised since it was first published, in 1909. Second, both Webster's and the OED make a clear distinction between an inclination toward philanthropy – manifested as goodwill or a disposition to promote the happiness and well-being of others – and the 'philanthropic acts' and 'practical

benevolence' motivated by this inclination. It is interesting to note, too, Webster's emphasis on how philanthropy "especially" means "active efforts to promote human welfare"; while the OED describes the predominance of philanthropy's definition as "the generous donation of money to good causes" as a later development, as indicated by the preface: "now esp[ecially]."<sup>14</sup> Also, both the OED (in def. 2) and Webster's (in def. 2b) point to how the institutional beneficiaries of charitable acts are themselves sometimes referred to as 'philanthropies.' The meaning of philanthropy in these definitions may thus be seen to form something of a continuum: ranging from ideal inner state of mind, to objective reality in the world. It is also interesting to note, finally, the OED's reference (in def. 1b) to an archaic usage of philanthropy ("now *rare*") to describe God's love for humanity.<sup>15</sup> As can be seen from this brief survey, then, there is a significant degree of divergence between the academic meaning of philanthropy intended by most scholars, and its meaning as generally understood by society at large. And while donating money to charity is an aspect of philanthropy recognised in both sets of definitions, the predominance of this particular aspect of its meaning is regarded as a somewhat recent development in common parlance, at least by Oxford.

The definition of philanthropy gets even more complex when considered in historical perspective, for its meaning widens considerably in the early modern era. In the landmark dictionary of early American English usage first published in 1828 by Noah Webster (1758-1843), he defines philanthropy as:

"The love of mankind; benevolence towards the whole human family; universal good will. It differs from friendship, as the latter is an affection for individuals"<sup>16</sup>

This definition is only slightly modified in the revised 1864 edition of Webster's Dictionary, edited by Noah Porter, who defines philanthropy as:

“Love to mankind; benevolence toward the whole human family; universal good will; desire and readiness to do good to all men; -- opposed to misanthropy”<sup>17</sup>

In the second edition of Webster’s dictionary first published in 1934, finally, philanthropy is defined as:

“a desire to help mankind as indicated by acts of charity, etc.; love of mankind.”<sup>18</sup>

In all three of these editions, then, the literal meaning of philanthropy as the ‘love of mankind’ is explicitly cited; although the second edition (1934) assigns it a far less prominent place – at the very end of the definition – an indication, perhaps, of the receding relevance of philanthropy’s literal meaning to its actual one, at least in American English. All three editions also point to philanthropy as a desire or readiness to do good to mankind. However, there are certain elements in the definitions of the first editions not explicitly present in the second. Of particular interest is the strong universalist sentiments expressed by the earlier two editions: “benevolence toward the *whole* human family; *universal* good will; desire and readiness to do good to *all* men;”<sup>19</sup>

Webster’s appeal to the good of the whole human family, as opposed to one of its constituent parts, strongly suggests the influence of Enlightenment thought.<sup>20</sup> This universalist aspect of philanthropy is also reflected in the usage of prominent American political thinkers contemporary to Webster, such as Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804).<sup>21</sup> The idea of universal good will, on the other hand, strongly evokes a prime injunction of the moral system of the latest and greatest of the Enlightenment’s rational moralists, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who states that:

“There is no possibility of thinking of anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be regarded as good without qualification, except a good will.”<sup>22</sup>

Like Webster, Kant, writing in 1785, also draws a sharp distinction in the meaning of philanthropy: between friendship stemming from affection for individuals, on the one

hand, versus acts of beneficence stemming from universal good will on the other.<sup>23</sup> Of these two aspects of philanthropy, only the latter does Kant consider capable of fulfilling the moral imperative of a duty, as only it stems from the volitions of a rational good will, as opposed to the irrational and involuntary impulses of love.

Webster's 1828 dictionary constitutes an important early record of the definition of philanthropy in American English before it undergoes significant changes. Within just a few decades, the universalist shades of meaning attributed to it by Webster fade, largely as a result of shifts in popular usage. During this time, philanthropy becomes increasingly employed in reference to the many new charitable societies dedicated to social and political reform that arose in the early American republic, as described by DeTocqueville, and in England following the Industrial Revolution.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, philanthropy also becomes prominently employed to describe the generous benefactions made to this new generation of charitable institutions by the wealthy industrialists produced by these revolutions. In the process, and much to the chagrin of some of the more pre-eminent philosophers of the period, philanthropy comes to primarily indicate either a social-political movement,<sup>25</sup> or donating money to the charitable institutions that embody that movement.<sup>26</sup> In this respect, Porter's revised 1864 edition of Webster's dictionary is somewhat anachronistic in its definition of philanthropy, at least with regard to common American usage; it choosing, instead, to maintain continuity with the (by then outdated) Enlightenment outlook expressed in the 1828 definition. A final point regarding the 1864 Webster definition: the way in which it posits misanthropy as the antonym of philanthropy not only points once again to classical Greek usage; it also

underlines yet again how, not so long ago, philanthropy was *not* considered synonymous with charitable giving or a charitable organization.<sup>27</sup>

Seventy-three years before Webster published his dictionary in America, Samuel Johnson (1709-84) published a highly influential dictionary in London, in 1755, that set the standard for English word usage from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century onward. In it, he defines philanthropy as simply:

“love of mankind; good nature.”

He then goes on to reference a prominent instance of its use by Joseph Addison (1672-1719) in Addison’s *Spectator*, a popular early 18<sup>th</sup> century British literary magazine:

“Such a transient temporary good nature is not that *philanthropy*, that love of mankind, which deserves the title of a moral virtue.”<sup>28</sup>

As a matter of definition, then, ‘good-nature,’ for Addison as for Johnson, must be a constant and consistent feature of a person’s character in order to count as philanthropy; for only then does it deserve to be designated a ‘moral virtue.’ A temporary good humour would thus not qualify, even if it resulted in an ostensible act of charity, and even if it achieved a beneficial charitable aim or outcome as a result. What is still more interesting about Johnson’s definition, and its cited use by Addison, though, is how both authors point directly to the usage of Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), whose essay ‘On Goodness and Goodness of Nature’ opens with the following lines:

“I take goodness in this sense, the affecting of the weal of men, which is that the Grecians call *philanthropia*; and the word *humanity* (as it is used) is a little too light to express it.”<sup>29</sup>

First published in a 1612 collection, this essay constitutes one of the very earliest published instances of the use of the word philanthropy in modern English.<sup>30</sup> In it, Bacon defines goodness, or *philanthropia*, as the habit of doing good; while goodness of nature he defines as the inclination to do good. He then describes ‘goodness’ as the greatest

virtue of the mind, answering to the theological virtue of charity, and which admits of no excess except error. Bacon's critique of "humanity" as being "a little too light to express" the meaning of *philanthropia* is also significant, given its consistent translation as *humanitas* in the Vulgate Latin Bible.<sup>31</sup>

Given Bacon's definition of *philanthropia*, or goodness, as synonymous with the habit of doing good, there is some question as to whether or not he would have considered it 'voluntary'; for habitual behaviour tends to be situated on the frontiers between the natural inclinations of the passions and the conscious volitions of 'free will.' In deciphering Bacon's meaning on this count we are aided by his earlier employment of *philanthropia* in a letter to his uncle, Lord Burghley, written in 1592. In it, Bacon describes how his *philanthropia*, or some such aspect of his nature, practically impels him to undertake a radical epistemological reformation of science.<sup>32</sup> This usage would seem to indicate that Bacon considers *philanthropia* to be more a constituent element of human nature that, with education, training and habituation, beneficially tempers acts of 'free will,' rather than being a voluntary act in and of itself.<sup>33</sup>

## A Synthesis of Modern Definitions

As varied, and even contradictory, as academic, contemporary and early modern definitions of philanthropy can sometimes be, they nevertheless share a sufficient degree of commonality to synthesize their meanings into an overall framework. One of the ways in which to do this would be to arrange them under the following categories and criteria, according to the nature of the phenomenon to which the definition refers:

- **Literal** – encompassing definitions that reference the ancient Greek meaning of philanthropy as the love of mankind.
- **Ideal** – to describe the attainment of ideal aims, outcomes, or objectives in terms of meeting a human need and/or advancing the well-being and happiness of humankind.
- **Theological** – to describe the love of God for humankind.
- **Natural** – to describe an innate desire, moral sentiment, predisposition, or other such aspect of human nature that impels people to want to help others.
- **Volitional** – to describe the good will, intent, or readiness of people to voluntarily help others.
- **Actual** – to describe an objective act, such as the giving of money, time or effort to a charitable cause or public good.
- **Social** – to describe a relation, movement, organisation or other such social entity larger than the individual that embodies an explicitly defined cause or good.

With these categories and criteria, the major definitions reviewed above may be arranged according to the table below:

<b>Table 1 – Modern Modes of Philanthropy</b>							
	Liter- al	Ideal	Theo- logical	Natural	Volition- al	Actual	Social
Salamon						Private giving for public purposes	
Payton		Voluntary action for the public <b>good</b>			<b>Voluntary</b> action for the public good	Voluntary <b>action</b> for the public good	
Van Til		Voluntary giving with the <b>aim</b> or intent of meeting a <b>charitable need</b>			<b>Voluntary</b> giving with the aim or <b>intent of meeting</b> a charitable need	Voluntary <b>giving</b> with the aim or intent of meeting a charitable need	
Schervish		Social relation <b>governed by moral obligation</b> to meet a communicated need				Social relation governed by moral obligation <b>to meet a communicated need</b>	<b>Social relation</b> governed by moral obligation to meet a communicated need
Oxford (1909-2007)	Love of mankind		The love of God for humanity (now rare)	Desire or disposition to help mankind		>2002 esp: Practical benevolence; Donation of \$ to good causes	Charitable movement, agency or organization
Webster (2008)					goodwill to fellowmen	philanthropic act or gift; <i>Esp.</i> active effort to promote human welfare;	an organization distributing or supported by philanthropic funds
Webster (1934)	Love of mankind			Desire or disposition to help mankind		Charitable acts	
Webster (1864)	Love of mankind	<b>Universal good will</b>		Desire and readiness to do good to all men	Universal good <b>will</b>	Benevolence toward all humans	
Webster (1828)	The love of mankind	<b>Universal good will</b>		Differs from friendship, as an affection for individuals	Universal good <b>will</b>	Benevolence towards the whole human family	
Johnson	Love of mankind			Goodness of Nature			
Bacon		Goodness, affecting the weal of men		The habit of doing good			

A general pattern may be seen to emerge in Table 1 whereby the further back one goes, the less philanthropy may be understood as simply an outward act of charity or a charitable society. What happens as one goes back, in fact, is that the definition of philanthropy gradually recedes from these outward manifestations of ‘charity’, and comes to primarily refer to inner ideals, aspects of rational consciousness, or dispositions of human nature. Significantly, though, ideals of ‘the good,’ originally present in Bacon’s seminal definition of philanthropy as ‘goodness affecting the weal of men,’ continue to inform some prominent contemporary academic definitions: mostly notably that of Payton’s, in terms of voluntary service for the public good; but also present in the definitions of Val Til and Schervish in terms of meeting moral obligations, attaining charitable aims and/or having good intentions. And finally, deference is consistently expressed by many highly influential authors, thinkers and lexicographers toward an ineffable meaning of *philanthrôpía* in ancient Greek ‘for which we have not a proper word in English to express.’ Uncovering the original meaning of *philanthrôpía* upon which our modern definitions of philanthropy are fundamentally based, therefore, requires an exploration of the word as it was conceived and understood in classical Greece. The second part of this paper is dedicated to recovering that original meaning.

## Archaic Greek Origins

The meaning of *philanthrôpía* in ancient Greek has received relatively little attention in the scholarly literature of philanthropic studies.<sup>34</sup> It has been examined by classical philologists, with an inaugural dissertation and a published monograph on the subject.<sup>35</sup> As well, controversy has occasionally erupted among classical scholars over the precise meaning of *philanthrôpía* in key passages in important texts, such as Aristotle's *Poetics*.<sup>36</sup> Besides philologists, scholars with an interest in classical Greek philosophy have also noted the Ancients' distinctive understanding of *philanthrôpía*.<sup>37</sup> Its meaning in antiquity has also been briefly examined by some historians in the course of their investigation of related subjects.<sup>38</sup>

*Philanthrôpía* is a compound word, consisting of the root words *phileô* and *anthrôpos*. The particular aspect of love usually signified by *phileô* is affectionate regard or friendship.<sup>39</sup> *Phileô* represents one of four major word groups usually employed in ancient Greek to express the concepts of love, attraction or desire, the other three being: *eros*, *stergô* and *agape*. *Eros* is the most all-encompassing form of love, while *stergô* tends to signify the form of love encompassed by the concept of loyalty; *agape*, finally, tends to signify brotherly love.<sup>40</sup> *Anthrôpos*, on the other hand, is the generic word for 'mankind,' signifying human beings in the widest sense of the word, including both men and women, civilized and barbarian, master and slave.<sup>41</sup>

*Philanthrôpía* does not appear as a composite word in the epic poetry of archaic Greece. This may be because its polysyllabic rhythm does not fit well into the strict hexameter of epic verse. Compound words with the prefix *philo-* are relatively rare in archaic Greek poetry; De Ruyter counts only thirteen such words in Homer, five of which

occur only once. He does offer several other words in Homer that he believes closely approximate the meaning of *philanthrôpía*, though: most notably, *philophrosúne*.<sup>42</sup> In the classical age of Greece, the frequency of occurrence of words with the prefix *philo-* dramatically increases. Craig counts thirty-one such words in Plato's *Republic* alone.<sup>43</sup> In total, more than 280 words in ancient Greek begin with the prefix *philo-* or *phil-*.<sup>44</sup>

## The Genesis of *Philanthrôpia* in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century Greek Enlightenment

*Philanthrôpia* does not appear as an extant word before the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, although it does make an appearance in works pseudonymously attributed to some authors who pre-date this time period.<sup>45</sup> On the weight of existing evidence, though, the earliest extant instance of *philanthrôpia* as a composite word occurs in the tragic drama, *Prometheus Bound*. In the prologue of this play, Prometheus, a Titan whose name literally means ‘forethought,’ is dragged on stage by the gods Kratos (‘Power’) and Bia (‘Violence’) followed by Hephaestus, the god of blacksmithing, fire and craft. These three gods drag Prometheus to the ends of the earth (the Caucasus) to bind the Titan to a mountain with adamantine chains. They do so on the orders of Zeus, who just recently finished wresting the kingship of heaven from his father, Kronos, whom he also had bound, and then cast into Tartarus.

Before the three gods assigned to crucify Prometheus perform their anointed task, the more thoughtful Hephaestus expresses grave reservations at the prospect of punishing a fellow god. In the opening lines of the tragedy, therefore, Kratos reiterates to him why they are compelled to carry out Zeus’ order:

“It was your treasure that he stole, the flowery splendor  
Of all-fashioning fire, and gave to men - an offence  
Intolerable to the gods, for which he now must suffer,  
Till he be taught to accept the sovereignty of Zeus [*ôs ân didachthê tèn Diòs tyrannída*]  
And cease acting as champion of the human race [*stérgein, philanthrôpou dè paúesthai trôpou*].”<sup>46</sup>

A few lines on, echoing Kratos’ words, Hephaestus chides Prometheus:

“Your kindness to the human race has earned you this [*toi aut’ epêurô tou philanthrôpou trôpou*].  
A god who would not bow to the gods’ anger – you,  
Transgressing right, gave privileges to mortal men [*brotoisi timas ôpasas pera dikês*].”<sup>47</sup>

In these passages, then, two gods describe ‘the way’ [*trôpou*] of Prometheus as

‘philanthropic’ [*philanthrôpou*] for having failed to remain ‘loyal’ [*stérgein*] to the

‘tyranny of Zeus’ [*Diòs tyrannída*], as manifested by stealing ‘fire’ [*pûros*] and giving this ‘privilege’ [*timas*] to ‘mortal humans’ [*brotoisi*].<sup>48</sup> Zeus had wanted to exterminate these brutish humans, originally created by his deposed father, so as to replace them with a golden race of his own making. With Prometheus’ gift, though, primitive humans were enabled to survive in the absence of a divine benefactor; for fire went on to become their ‘great resource’ [*mégas póros*],<sup>49</sup> teaching many crafts that allowed humans to rise above the condition of brutes. Significantly, though, Prometheus later had to again save humankind from extinction, by supplementing his original gift of divine fire with the additional gift of ‘blind hopefulness’ [*tuphlas elpidas*]<sup>50</sup> in order to cure people of the despair caused by foreknowledge of their mortality.

Since at least the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, authorship of *Prometheus Bound* and the trilogy to which it belonged has been ascribed to Aeschylus (525-456 BCE). More recent scholarship, though, has placed the authenticity of the great tragedian’s authorship in considerable doubt.<sup>51</sup> Given what we now know of its language, ideas and poetic style, it seems more likely that *Prometheus Bound* was composed by a later, lesser author sometime between 440 and 435.<sup>52</sup> Given this later date of composition, as well as the presence of many sophistic ideas in the play,<sup>53</sup> it seems the author of the Promethean trilogy was likely influenced by views of Protagoras of Abdera (±490-420), widely considered the greatest sophist of his age.<sup>54</sup> As it happens, Protagoras relates his own particular version of the Promethean myth in the Platonic dialogue named for him.<sup>55</sup> Significant elements of the Promethean Trilogy are also parodied by two later major comic poets: Cratinus (ca.520-after 423) in *Ploutoi*, likely written around 429, and Aristophanes (448-369) in *Birds*, which premiered in 414.

The next extant instance of *philanthrôpía* as a composite word after *Prometheus Bound*, and the only other example that can be positively dated prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, occurs in an earlier comedy of Aristophanes entitled *Peace*. Written in 421, the premiere of this play coincided with the Peace of Nicias, a landmark treaty between Athens and Sparta that inaugurated the single longest truce of the Peloponnesian War.<sup>56</sup> In the play, the main character, Trygaeus, flies to heaven on the back of a giant dung beetle in order to beseech the gods to grant peace to the Greeks who, by this time, had endured ten years of persistent war. Upon his arrival, though, he finds heaven abandoned by the gods, who have left Hermes behind to look after things in their absence.<sup>57</sup> And among the things they have left behind is the goddess Peace, represented in the play by a mute statue.

Trygaeus makes a sacrificial offering to Hermes, who then proceeds to explain that, before leaving, Zeus buried Peace deep in a cave, and left orders that anyone attempting to dig her up be put to death. Despite Hermes' warning of Zeus' explicit threat, Trygaeus later attempts to dig up Peace anyway, but is caught in the act by the divine messenger. Hermes declares that he now must "boom and scream" of the offense to Zeus or be demolished by him. Desperate, Trygaeus again attempts to bribe him with a sacrificial offering, this time of meat. Hermes is not so easily bought off this time, though; so, desperate, Trygaeus invokes the aid of the Chorus, composed of country folk of Greece, who plead with him:

"Don't be so hostile  
 to our entreaties  
 as to prevent our getting her;  
 but be gracious (*cháris*'),  
*philanthrôpôtate* ('most philanthropic') and most bountiful (*megalodôrotate*)  
 of divinities (*daimónôn*),  
 if you feel any loathing for Pisander's<sup>58</sup> crests and brows,  
 and we will always, Lord,

pay you homage continually  
with holy sacrifices and great processions.’<sup>59</sup>

Again, *philanthrôpia* here<sup>60</sup> concerns gifts bestowed upon mortal humans by a god, in this case Hermes. For Zeus’ messenger does eventually reciprocate the praise of the Chorus by graciously refraining from informing his master, thereby allowing for the attainment of Peace. In contrast to *Prometheus Bound*, though, *philanthrôpia* is employed in *Peace* by mortal humans to flatter a god so as to receive divine future favour, rather than by Olympian gods to reprimand a Titan for past transgressions. Also significant is the close proximity of other key words in the Chorus’ praise of Hermes, such as: ‘greatest-giftedness’ [*megalodôrotate*], ‘grace’ [*châris*] and ‘daemon’; each of which impart important related shades of meaning.

Taken together, then, the two passages from *Prometheus Bound*, plus the one from Aristophanes’ *Peace*, constitute the only verifiable, extant instances of the occurrence of *philanthrôpia* as a composite word in Greek literature prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

While caution must be exercised in drawing too strong of conclusions from such a limited sample of primary source texts, these passages do share some remarkable similarities.

All three employ *philanthrôpia* in adjective form to describe divine beings; thus, in its very inception, *philanthrôpia* occurs in a ‘theological mode.’<sup>61</sup> There are many salient differences between Prometheus and Hermes; the former is an Ouranian Titan, for example, while the latter is an Olympian god. Despite these contrasts, both divinities also share a number of similarities that allow for a degree of consistency in drawing out the intended meaning of *philanthrôpia*. And among these similarities are their mutual association with transgression, theft and deception,<sup>62</sup> and a ‘daemoniac’ nature that impels them to ferry messages and gifts between immortal gods and mortal humans.

## Plato and *Philanthrôpía* in the Philosophical Mode

*Philanthrôpía* occurs only three times as a word in all the authentic works of Plato (428-348 BCE) as does the word *misanthrôpía*.<sup>63</sup> While this does not constitute a very high incidence of occurrence, given the overall volume of his preserved works, these few instances may be seen to occur at some highly significant junctures. In *Laws*, which is traditionally classed among Plato's later dialogues in terms of its date of composition,<sup>64</sup> the Athenian Stranger converses with two old men, a Cretan and a Spartan, who are looking to establish a new *polis*. Midway through Book IV, he describes Kronos as *philánthrôpos* for how he ruled via *daemons* over humans during their mythic golden age.<sup>65</sup> This passage is particularly interesting for how the Athenian Stranger thus inverts the 'progressive' sense of *philanthrôpía* embedded in the sophisticatedly influenced *mythos* of *Prometheus Bound*. Rather than seeing humanity as having gradually ascended from the primitive conditions of brutes, stemming from the divine gift of fire, human myth-history is once again recast in terms of a fall from an original state of divine grace, as depicted in the Hesiodic Promethean *mythos*. In exercising his philanthropic rule over humanity, the Athenian Stranger asserts, Kronos acted in the same way as humans who exercise husbandry over domesticated animals, and to much the same beneficial effect. In this particular instance of the theological mode of usage, then, the nascent political mode of *philanthrôpía* may also be discerned.<sup>66</sup> This political mode of usage would reach its apex in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, when it came to be frequently employed to describe the ideal qualities of political leadership, particularly during times of peace.<sup>67</sup>

The earliest use of *philanthrôpía* in a Platonic dialogue, in terms of its dramatic date, occurs in *Symposium*. The main dramatic action of this dialogue occurs in 416 BCE,

shortly before the Athenian expedition to Sicily that effectively ended the Peace of Nicias. Traditionally assigned to Plato's 'middle period,' *Symposium* depicts several banqueters prominent in Athenian intellectual circles, including Aristophanes and Socrates, who stage an *impromptu* competition to see who can best extemporaneously eulogise Eros. In *the* central speech of the dialogue, Aristophanes opens his praises of *Eros* with the following words:

“Human beings, in my opinion, have been entirely unaware of the power of Eros, since if they were aware of it, they would have provided the greatest sanctuaries and alters for him, and would be making him the greatest sacrifices, and not act as they do now when none of this happens to him, though it most certainly should. For Eros is the most philanthropic [*philanthrôpôtatos*] of gods, a helper of human beings as well as a physician dealing with an illness the healing of which would result in the greatest happiness for the human race.”<sup>68</sup>

Again, *philanthrôpia* is here employed in the theological mode previously established by pseudo-Aeschylus and Aristophanes. Interestingly, too, both the character of Aristophanes in Plato's dialogue and the actual playwright Aristophanes employ *philanthrôpia* in its superlative adjective form.<sup>69</sup> This is significant, given that *Peace* premiered only five years prior to the dramatic setting of *Symposium*. This sensitivity to verisimilitude in language provides confirming evidence of the care Plato took to authentically portray the language and ideas of the characters depicted in his dialogues.<sup>70</sup>

Probably the earliest work of Plato to employ *philanthrôpia* as a word is *Euthyphro*, which has been traditionally assigned to his early period. While this dialogue's exact date of composition is unknown, its dramatic setting is known to a high degree of precision, occurring as it does on the very day of Socrates' trial in 399 on charges of impiety and corrupting the youth, and on the very steps of the Athenian law court where he is to stand trial. There, Socrates engages a young priest named Euthyphro in a discussion that eventually gravitates to the question of what piety is. Euthyphro initially expresses shock at hearing the charges being leveled at Socrates, hailing him as a fellow diviner on the

basis of their mutual relationship with the divine. Socrates sharply distinguishes the nature of his relationship with his divine sign [*daemon*] from that of Euthyphro, though, with the following words:

“Perhaps *you* seem to make yourself available only infrequently and not to be willing to teach your wisdom. But I fear that *I*, because of my *philanthrôpias*, seem to them to pour out whatever I possess to every man, not only without pay, but even with pleasure if anyone is willing to listen to me.”<sup>71</sup>

Assuming an early date of composition for *Euthyphro* (say, the mid-390s) this passage would constitute the first extant reference to the *philanthrôpia* of something other than a god,<sup>72</sup> and in noun, as opposed to adjective, form. This constitutes an important precedent in terms of later 4<sup>th</sup> century usage, when the theological mode – to describe the qualities of divine beings – becomes exceedingly rare and somewhat archaic.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, *philanthrôpia* still maintains its association with divinity in *Euthyphro*, in terms of distinguishing the nature of Socrates’ relationship with his *daemon* or divine sign from that of Euthyphro.<sup>74</sup> Due to Socrates’ status as the epitome of the philosopher, this passage also constitutes the first instance of the ‘philosophical mode’ of *philanthrôpia*’s usage; which is to say, employed in reference to either the status of the knower or a form of knowledge.<sup>75</sup>

## Widening Usage in 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE Athens

During the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, *philanthrôpía* becomes disseminated ever more widely in the discourse of Athenian society. This process of transmission was likely facilitated by the establishment of various institutions of higher learning in Athens at this time, such as Plato's Academy, founded in approximately 387, and Aristotle's Lyceum, founded in 335. As well, several oratorical schools also founded around this time decisively influenced later generations of Athenian orators, most notably Demosthenes (384-322 BCE) and Aeschines (389-322 BCE).

Isocrates (436-338 BCE) founded his renowned school of oratory in approximately 392, where he expounded upon the literary and written elements of speech-making. His approach to oratory stood in marked contrast to that of his chief rival, Alcidas, who praises the extemporaneously spoken word as being more philanthropic.<sup>76</sup> The first extant speech of Isocrates to employ *philanthrôpía* as a word is *Panegyricus*; a 'festival oration' presented at the pan-Hellenic gathering at Olympia in 380. In it, he argues for the Greek city-states to politically unify under Athenian leadership in order to counter continued Persian aggression in Asia Minor. To justify this claim to leadership, Isocrates relates a myth of how the Athenians once sheltered the suppliant, Demeter,<sup>77</sup> after her wanderings following the rape of her daughter, the young maiden [*Kore*] Persephone. In gratitude, Demeter taught Athenians the agricultural arts, as well as the Eleusinian Mysteries, "the holy rite which inspires in those who partake of it sweeter hopes regarding both the end of life and of all eternity".<sup>78</sup> Isocrates then goes on to describe how the early Athenians then openly shared these divine teachings with others:

" – our city was not only so beloved of the gods [*theophilôs*] but also *philanthrô'pôs* ('devoted to mankind') that, having been endowed with these great blessings, she did not begrudge them to the rest of the world, but shared with all men what she had received."<sup>79</sup>

Athenians are thus the most fit to lead the Greeks, Isocrates argues, because they are both god-loving and philanthropic [*philanthrô'pôs*] as demonstrated by how they openly shared the knowledge and beliefs bestowed upon them by the gods. In this way, *Panegyricus* marks another crucial transition in the usage of *philanthrôpia*, from a term of theological and philosophical import, to one of political significance. As the theological and philosophical modes of *philanthrôpia* gradually fade, then, its political mode of usage comes to the fore; especially in Isocrates, who consistently associates it with the virtues of the ideal leader or ruler.<sup>80</sup>

In the generation of orators immediately following Isocrates, *philanthrôpia* continues to be closely associated with a number of civic virtues associated with political leadership, including: justice,<sup>81</sup> clemency<sup>82</sup> and generosity.<sup>83</sup> As it is employed to describe an ever wider array of political and social phenomenon, though, the idealised content of *philanthrôpia* steadily fades. In a speech dating from 354/3, in which he offers a defense against an *antidosis* brought against him in court,<sup>84</sup> Isocrates describes how wise men must conduct themselves with 'graciousness' [*épicharîtôs*] and *philanthrô'pôs*.<sup>85</sup> He goes on to say, though, that most people appear to prefer those who cheat them to do so with 'bright smiles' [*phaidrotêtos*] and *philanthrôpies*.<sup>86</sup> The notion of projecting a false or deceptive appearance of *philanthrôpia* in order to burnish one's public image is a theme expounded upon by later orators.<sup>87</sup> Demosthenes even suggests that *philanthrôpia* must be supplemented by thoughtfulness, or risk becoming mere benevolence;<sup>88</sup> which is surely the utter antithesis of its original meaning, to describe the way of Prometheus. For Demosthenes' chief rival, Aeschines, by comparison,

*philanthrôpía* often signifies little more than friendliness or kindness,<sup>89</sup> signaling the advent of its social mode of usage.

Sometime in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century, members of Plato's Academy assembled a comprehensive dictionary of philosophically significant terms. Of these, 183 were subsequently included in the definitive ancient edition of Plato's works, published by Thrasyllus in Alexandria during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Included in this list is a formal definition for *philanthrôpía*:

*Philanthrôpía.* A state of 'well-educated habits' [*eûágôgos êthous*] stemming from 'love of humans' [*ânthrô'pon philían*]. A state of being 'productive of benefit' [*eûergetikê*] to humans. A state of 'grace' [*cháritos*]. Mindfulness [*mnê'mê*] together with 'good works' [*eûergesías*].<sup>90</sup>

In this passage – the only formal definition for *philanthrôpía* extant from the classical age of Greece – many shades of its 5<sup>th</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> century meaning are still discernable,<sup>91</sup> except the philanthropic beings described in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE are exclusively mortal, not divine.

Plato's most famous student, Aristotle (384-322 BCE) consistently employs *philanthrôpía* as a word and concept in his philosophical treatises on aesthetics, ethics, politics and natural science. One of the more noted instances of his use of the word occurs in *Poetics*, where he discusses how the tragic poet attempts to evoke the emotions of pity, fear and *philánthrôpon* ('fellow-feeling') in order to trigger the desired dramatic effect of *catharsis*, or emotional release, in the audience. The most successful form of plot construction for achieving this effect, Aristotle argues, is portraying people who are essentially good in nature, but who possess a minor, but significant, character flaw [*harmaton*] that causes them to inexorably pass from good fortune to bad. One of the less effective plot structures examined by Aristotle, in terms of producing the desired tragic effect, involves portraying the bad man who goes from good fortune to bad. This

construction evokes a sense of *philánthrôpon* ('sympathy'), he argues, but evokes neither pity nor fear, as the audience presumably does not sufficiently identify with the fate of the character of a bad man.<sup>92</sup> In these instances, the meaning Aristotle imputes to *philanthrôpía* may be interpreted as either a generalised sympathy for every fellow human being, regardless of merit, or as "a sense of justice which makes us grieve at the downfall of the good and the prosperity of the wicked."<sup>93</sup>

Another revealing instance of Aristotle's use of *philanthrôpía* occurs in *Nicomachean Ethics*. It appears only once, in the later part of the work, where he states:

"[A] parent would seem to have a natural friendship for a child, and a child for a parent, not only among human beings but also among birds and most kinds of animals. Members of the same race, and human beings most of all, have a natural friendship for each other; that is why we praise friends of humanity [*philanthrô'pous*]. And in our travels we can see how every human being is akin and beloved to a human being."<sup>94</sup>

In this instance, then, *philanthrôpía* refers to an innate emotional attachment that people naturally possess toward other human beings, as members of the same species. In other words, it constitutes for Aristotle what the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers would much later designate a 'moral sentiment.'<sup>95</sup> Aristotle thus continues a scientific mode of usage initially coined by Xenophon, whereby *philanthrôpía* refers to an innate quality of a person or thing that causes them to be attracted to human beings.<sup>96</sup>

Toward the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, *philanthrôpía* enters into ever more common parlance; in the process, it comes to indicate little more than an innate sociability or kindness.<sup>97</sup> This trend may be observed, for instance, in the 'New Comedy' of the playwright Menander (343-291 BCE).<sup>98</sup> There are a few instances in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century of *philanthrôpía* being employed to describe financial generosity,<sup>99</sup> although such complimentary language was usually directed more toward the character, rather than the deed, of the generous person described.<sup>100</sup> In some isolated instances, it is employed in

reference to beneficent associations,<sup>101</sup> and even to describe sexual intercourse.<sup>102</sup> It is not until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, though, and then primarily in non-literary papyri and commemorative inscriptions, that *philanthrôpía* is consistently employed in reference to the financial generosity of private citizens toward public purposes, and visa-versa.<sup>103</sup> De Ruiter notes that: “The word *philanthropon* first means ‘grant, or some kind of property’ in a papyrus from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.”<sup>104</sup> In the early Greco-Roman era, *philanthrôpía* becomes more or less synonymous with *tímên* (‘honourarium’) and *lêtourgían* (‘compulsory fee or tax’), although it still continues to carry a shade of meaning as a more voluntary form of ‘good deed’ or ‘unsolicited amount.’ Later in the Greco-Roman era, the fiduciary mode of *philanthrôpía* becomes narrowed even further to mean a so-called ‘salary,’ ‘compensation,’ and even a ‘mercenaries’ pay.’<sup>105</sup> At the same time, though, at least among the educated elite of Greco-Roman society, *philanthrôpía* continued to retain many of the original connotations of its meaning, which became its “glory and ornament.”<sup>106</sup>

From this brief etymological history, it becomes clear that the meaning of *philanthrôpía* evolved considerably between the mid-5<sup>th</sup> and late-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE. Many schools of thought in classical Athens – sophistic, poetic, philosophical and oratorical – played pivotal roles in propelling this evolution; coining, refining and redefining the meaning of *philanthrôpía* to suit their various rhetorical purposes. Given the extreme divergence in the outlooks of these various schools, as well as the political conflicts in which their members were frequently enmeshed, it should come as little surprise to learn their usage also widely varied. Generally speaking, though, these

various modes of usage may be arranged under six broad categories, according to the nature of the primary subject they reference:

- **Theological**, in reference to divine beings;
- **Philosophical**, in reference to the status of the knower, knowledge, learning and other associated concepts;
- **Political**, in reference to rulers, magistrates and other civic leaders;
- **Scientific**, in reference to an innate love of, or attraction to, human beings;
- **Social**, in reference to the possession of certain social graces;
- **Fiduciary**, in reference to financial generosity.

There is considerable room for overlap in such conceptions, of course; and, indeed, among the classical Greeks, a person would have been considered somewhat deficient in his *philanthrôpia* if he possessed only one aspect of it, whilst fundamentally lacking the others. Be that as it may, arranging these modes according to the chronological sequence in which they occur in extant sources produces a discernable pattern, as illustrated in Table 2, below.

<b>Mode of Usage:</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> cent. BCE</b>	<b>400 to 350 BCE</b>	<b>350 to 300 BCE</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> cent. to 1<sup>st</sup> cent. BCE</b>
Theological	Pseudo-Aeschylus Aristophanes	Plato Xenophon		
Philosophical		Plato Xenophon Alcidamas		
Political		Xenophon Isocrates	Aristotle Demosthenes Hyperides Demades	Diodorus Sicilus Papyri & Inscriptions
Scientific		Xenophon	Aristotle	
Social		Xenophon	Demosthenes Aeschines Aristotle Menander	Diodorus Sicilus
Fiduciary		Isocrates Androtion	Demosthenes	Papyri & Inscriptions

While there is considerable variety in the usage of *philanthrôpía* among ancient authors, there is also a fairly consistent association of it with the highest ideals of civilised humanity; and because Athens was situated at the epicenter of Greek philosophical life,<sup>107</sup> philosophy fundamentally informed Athenian conceptions of *philanthrôpía*.<sup>108</sup> In this mode, it is practically synonymous with the concept of *paedeía*, or the conscious shaping of human intellect and culture through education and acculturation, with the aim of attaining the virtues, or excellence.<sup>109</sup> At the same time, though, it is hard not to notice a marked degree of degeneration in the usage of *philanthrôpía* in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE: from its initial grandeur in *Prometheus Bound*, its sublime parody in Aristophanes, its profundity of expression in Plato, and its precision in Aristotle; to the relative pettiness of what it would come to signify in Aeschines and Menander; never mind its ‘end-stage’ fiduciary mode of usage in the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman eras, when it comes to signify little more than a ‘financial disbursement’ emptied of any intellectual, moral or aesthetic value.

“So far, all that has given colour to existence still lacks a history: where could you find a history of love, of avarice, of envy, of conscience, of piety, of cruelty?”<sup>110</sup>

## Conclusion

Given the extreme historical remoteness of the classical Greek and Modern eras, the parallels in the trajectories of the evolution of the meaning of philanthropy within each of them are rather remarkable. In the classical Greek era, *philanthrôpía* begins life in a theological mode, initially employed in the late 5<sup>th</sup> by the Prometheus poet and Aristophanes century to describe mythological divinities who advance the cause of human civilisation. In the early 4<sup>th</sup> century, the term is appropriated by the Socratic philosophers, largely to describe the seminal role played by knowledge and the knower in the advancement of human society. In the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century, *philanthrôpía* enters a political mode of usage – both in the Socratic philosophers and the speeches of orators, beginning with Isocrates, and continuing through Demosthenes – to describe the various virtues of civic leaders. At the same time, it also assumes a scientific mode of usage in the treatises of Xenophon and, later, Aristotle. In the later 4<sup>th</sup> century, the social mode of *philanthrôpía* predominates, especially as manifested in the speeches of Aeschines and the plays of Menander. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, finally, the fiduciary mode of the *philanthrôpía*, already present as early as Androtion, becomes much more pronounced, particularly in commemorative inscriptions and non-literary papyri, although the social mode remains dominant through later antiquity.

In the Modern era, by comparison, philanthropy is reborn as a term of philosophical significance in the late Renaissance writings of Francis Bacon, who uses it to describe the concept of goodness, as well as his own efforts at “affecting of the weal of men” through

the reform of human knowledge vis-à-vis the sciences.<sup>111</sup> English theologians also coin a theological mode of usage early in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, likely following the example of the Septuagint Greek Bible. A scientific mode of usage may be discerned in Johnson's 1755 definition of philanthropy as 'goodness of nature;' a usage not uncommon in discussions of the moral sentiments among Enlightenment political philosophers. With Webster's 1828 definition, a volitional mode of philanthropy receives a prominence in American English that doesn't have a precise corollary in classical Greek usage.<sup>112</sup> The definition of philanthropy as the act of giving time or money (i.e. 'benevolence') also makes an early appearance in Webster's 1828 definition; an 'Actual' mode of expression that would eventually come to dominant the meaning of philanthropy in late 20<sup>th</sup> century English. In this way, the modern usage of *philanthrôpía* may be seen to somewhat parallel developments in the late Hellenistic and Greco-Roman eras; except that the modern corollary to the fiduciary mode of philanthropy is more limited in scope, encompassing only private giving for public purposes. And finally, the Oxford definition of philanthropy as a form of 'social movement' roughly correlates with the social mode of ancient Greek usage; although the former refers to duly constituted societies, while the later tends to refer to less formal modes of socialising, such as *symposia*.

In closing, I wish to briefly consider how the history of the meaning of *philanthrôpía* in classical Greece and the Western philosophical tradition may be useful in thinking about philanthropy today. I believe it is clear, from the survey and analysis presented in this paper, that philanthropy is a multi-faceted term, with many layers of meaning in both its historical and contemporary usage. Occasionally, a particular meaning will contradict others; but overall, there's a sufficient degree of harmony and interdependence between

these various definitions and modes of usage to allow for them to be designated an organic unity. The implications of these findings for scholarly study are, simply, that philanthropy has a much wider array of meanings than is generally considered by its contemporary academic study, which is usually limited to its Salamonion definition, as private giving for public purposes. The drawback to limiting inquiry into philanthropy to this particular definition is that it does not sufficiently call scholars to account for the root motivations of why people give in the first place; for it does not provoke or convey much insight into the extremely complex considerations that often precede the act of giving. There are many factors to consider in correctly discerning the manifold motives behind a philanthropic act – whether expressed in terms of love of the beautiful, the good, the divine, wisdom, rational understanding, moral sentiments, social standing, the genesis of will, or even just what it means to be human. Consideration of these and related factors are the necessary prerequisites for truly understanding the full nature of voluntary actions performed to advance the cause of human civilisation. This paper has, I hope, offered a useful step toward developing this more comprehensive understanding.

## Bibliography

- Addison, Joseph: *The Spectator – Complete Edition*, ed. H. Morley, George Routledge & Sons, 1892(?)
- Aeschines: *The Speeches of Aeschines*, trans. Adams, Harvard Univ. Press, 1968 (org. publ. 1919)
- Aeschylus: *Prometheus Bound, The Suppliants, Seven Against Thebes, The Persians*, trans. Velacott, Penguin Books, 1988
- Aeschylus: *Vol. I – Prometheus Bound*, trans. H.W. Smyth, Harvard University Press, 1926
- Aesop: *The Complete Fables*, trans. Temple, Penguin Classics, 1998
- Aesop: *ΑΙΕΩΠΕΙΩΝ ΜΥΘΩΝ ΕΥΝΑΓΩΓΗ – Fabulae Aesopicae Collectae*, ed. Caroli Halmii, University of Leipzig, 1852
- *Aesopi Fabulae*, 2 Vols., ed. Chambry, Société D’Édition “Les Belles Lettres”, 1925-1926
- Alcidas: *The Works & Fragments*, ed. & trans. John V. Muir, Bristol Classical Press, 2002
- *American Political Writing during the Founding Era – 1760-1805*, Vol. 1, eds. Charles Hyneman & Donald Lutz, Liberty Press, 1981
- Aristophanes: *Vol. II (Clouds, Wasps, Peace)*, ed. & trans. Henderson, Harvard Univ. Press, 1998
- Aristophanes: *Vol. III (Birds, Lysistrata, Women at the Thesmophoria)*, ed. & trans. Henderson, Harvard Univ. Press, 2000
- Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. T. Irwin, Hackett Publishing Co., 1985
- Aristotle: *Vol. XI (History of Animals)*, trans. Balme, Harvard Univ. Press, 1991
- Aristotle: *Vol. XXI (Politics)*, trans. Rackham, Harvard Univ. Press, 1998 (org. publ. 1932)
- Aristotle: *Vol. XXIII (Poetics, trans. Halliwell; Longinus On the Sublime, trans. Fyfe; Demetrius on Style, trans. Innes)*, Harvard Univ. Press 1999 (org. publ. 1995)
- *Babrius and Phaedrus*: ed. & trans. Perry, Harvard Univ. Press, 1990 (1<sup>st</sup> publ. 1965)
- Bacon, Francis: *The Essays*, ed. J. Pitcher, publ. Penguin, 1985
- Bauman, Richard A.: *Human Rights in Ancient Rome*, Routledge Classical Monographs, 2000
- Berk, Lucas: *Epicharmus*, publ. J. B. Wolters, 1964
- Carey, C.: “Philanthropy” in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, *Eranos*, vol. 86, 1988, pgs. 131-9
- Carnegie, Andrew: *The Gospel of Wealth*, Indiana University Center On Philanthropy,

1993

- *Charity, Philanthropy and Civility in American History*, ed. Friedman & McGarvie, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003
- Chernow, Ron: *Titan – The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.*, Random House, 1998
- Cicero: *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. King, Harvard Univ. Press (org. publ. 1927)
- *Corpus Fabularum Aesopicarum*, 2 Vols. eds. Hausrath & Hunger, BSB B.G.Teubner Verlagshesellschaft, 1970
- De Ruyter, S. Tromp: ‘De Vocis Quae Est ΦΙΛΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΑ Significatione Atque Usu’, *Mnemosyne*, vol. 59, 1932, pgs. 271-306
- De Ruyter, S. Tromp: ‘On the Meaning and usage of the Word “Philanthropia”’, (English translation) ed. Sulek, from: *Philanthropy In America – A Comprehensive Encyclopedia*, vol. III, pgs. 824-839, publ. ABC-CLIO, 2004.
- Demosthenes: *Complete Orations & Letters in Six Volumes*, trans. Vince & Murray, Harvard Univ. Press, orig. publ. 1926-1939
- Demosthenes: *Vols. I-VI*, trans. Vince, Harvard Univ. Press, 1964-71
- Diderot, Denis: *Oeuvres Complètes – Tome XIV*, ‘Opinions des anciens philosophes’, Société encyclopédique française et le Club français du livre, 1972
- *Die Fragmente der Tragödien des Aischylos*, ed. Mette, 1959
- Diogenes Laertius: *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* (Vols. I&II), trans. Hicks, Harvard Univ. Press, 2000 (org. publ. 1925, rev. 1931)
- Else, Gerald F.: *Aristotle’s Poetics: The Argument*, Harvard Univ. Press, 1963
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo: *Essays & Lectures*, ed. J. Porte, publ. Literary Classics of the United States, 1983
- *Encyclopedia of Politics and Religions*, Ed. R. Wuthnow, Congressional Quarterly, 1998
- Epicharmo de Siracusa: *Testimonios y fragmentos*, ed. Guilén, Universidad De Oviedo, 1996
- *Euripides tragoediae superstites et deperditarum fragmenta*, 2 vols., ed. Nauck, 1854
- Farnell, Lewis Richard: *The Cults of the Greek States* (in 5 vols.), Oxford Univ., 1909
- Gates, Frederick Taylor: *Chapters in My Life*, MacMillan Publ. Co., 1977
- Gerard, John: *The Herball – Or General Historie of Plantes*, publ: John Norton, 1597
- *Greek-English Lexicon*, eds. Liddell & Scott, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1961
- Griffith, Mark: *The Authenticity of ‘Prometheus Bound’*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977
- Harding, Phillip: *Androtion and the Atthis*, Clarendon Press, 1994
- Herington, C.J.: ‘A Study in the *Prometheia* – Pt. II: *Birds and Prometheia*’, *Pheonix*,

Vol. 17, No. 4 (Winter, 1963) pg. 236

- Hesiod: *Works & Days* and *Theogony*, trans. S. Lombardo, Hackett Publ. Co., 1993
- Homer: *Iliad*, trans. R. Lattimore, The Univ. of Chicago Press, org. publ. 1951
- Isocrates: *Complete Speeches Vols. I-III*, trans. Norlin & Van Hook, Harvard Univ. Press, 1991-2000 (org. publ. 1928-1945)
- Jaeger, Werner: *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* (3 vols.), Oxford Univ. Press, 1962 (1<sup>st</sup> publ. 1939-45)
- Johnson, Samuel; *1755 English Dictionary*, reprint: Times Books, 1977
- Kant, Immanuel: *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, & On a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns*, Hackett Publ. Co., 1981
- Karl, Bary D.: *Andrew Carnegie and His Gospel of Philanthropy: A Study in the Ethics of Responsibility*, Indiana Univ. Centre On Philanthropy, 1990
- Lamberton, Robert D.: ‘*Philanthropia* and the Evolution of Dramatic Taste’, *Phoenix*, vol. 37 (1983) 2, pgs. 95-103, Univ. of Toronto Press, 1983
- Lampert, Laurence: *Nietzsche & Modern Times – A Study of Bacon, Descartes, and Nietzsche*, Yale Univ. Press, 1993
- *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England. Being a collection of documents, for the most part never before printed, illustrating the history of science in this country before the Norman Conquest.* Ed. Rev. O. Cockayne, org. publ. 1864 by Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, Reprinted by Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1965
- Locke, John: *Political Writings*, ed. D. Wootton, Hackett Publ. Co. 1993
- Locke, John: *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Carpenter, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1977
- Lorenz, Sigfried” *De Progressu Notionis φΙΛΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΑΣ – inaugural dissertation*, Leipzig, 1914
- Menander: *Vol. I*, trans. Arnott, Harvard Univ. Press, 2000 (org. publ. 1979)
- *Minor Attic Orators, Vol. II – Lysurgus, Dinarchus, Demades, Hyperides*, trans. Murtt, Harvard Univ. Press, 1962 (org. publ. 1954)
- Moles, John: ‘*Philanthropia* in the Poetics’, *Phoenix*, vol. 38, no. 4, pgs. 325-35, publ. Univ. of Toronto Press, 1984
- Nietzsche, Friedrich: *The Gay Science*, ed. Williams, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001
- Nietzsche, Friedrich: *The Will to Power*, trans. Kaufman & Hollingdale, Vintage Books, 1968
- Pearson, Birger A.: *Ancient Roots of Western Philanthropy*, Indiana Univ. Center On Philanthropy, 1997
- *Philanthropy In America – A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, vols. I-III, ed. Burlingame, ABC-CLIO, 2004

- Plato: *Complete Works*, eds. Cooper & Hutchinson, Hackett Publ. Co., 1997
- Plato: *Phaedo*, trans. Brann, Kalkavage & Salem
- Plato: *Plato's Symposium*, trans. Benardete, The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001
- Plato: *The Collected Dialogues*, eds. Hamilton & Cairns, Princeton Univ. Press, 1987
- Plato: *The Laws of Plato*, trans. Pangle, The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980
- Plato: *Vol. II – Laches, Protagoras, Meno, Euthydemus*, trans. W.R.M. Lamb, Harvard University Press, 1924 (1962 reprint)
- Pliny the Younger: *The Historie of the World. Commonly called, The Natvrall Historie of Plinivs Secvndvs*, trans. Pillamon Holland, publ. Adam Filip, 1603
- Polybuis: *The History of Polybius the Megalopolitan: Containing a General Account of the Transactions of the World, and Principally of the Roman People, During the First and Second Punick Wars*. trans. Sir H. Sheere, with an introduction by John Dryden, publ. W. Onley, 1698
- Robertson, D. S: 'An Unrecognised Extract from Menander's Epitrepontes?' *The Classical Review*, Vol. 36, No. 5/6. (Aug. - Sep., 1922), pp. 106-109.
- Salamon, Lester M.: *America's Nonprofit Sector – A Primer*, The Foundation Center, 1992
- Schmid, W.: 'Untersuchungen zum Gefesselten Prometheus' (Tüb. Beitr. 9, Tübingen 1929)
- Smith, Adam; *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Liberty Classics, 1976
- Spencer, Herbert: *The Principles of Ethics*, vols. 1 & 2, ed. Tibor Machan, Liberty Classics, 1978
- Strauss, Leo: *On Plato's Symposium*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001
- Strauss, Leo: *Socrates & Aristophanes*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980 (1<sup>st</sup> publ. 1966)
- Strauss, Leo: *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism – An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989
- *The Encyclopedia of Politics and Religions*, ed. Wuthnow, Congressional Quarterly, 1998
- *The Federalist*, ed. Cooke, Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1961
- The Perseus Project on-line at: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>, June, 2002
- *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*: CD-ROM, Feb., 2002; and website at: [www.tgi.uci.edu](http://www.tgi.uci.edu)
- Thoreau, Henry David: *Walden*, ed. W.H. Dircks, W.J. Gage & Co. 1888
- *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, vol. 3, ed. S. Radt, 1985
- Van Hook, LaRue: 'Alcidamas Versus Isocrates – The Spoken Versus the Written Word', *The Classical Weekly*, Vol. XII, No. 12, Jan. 20, 1919, publ: The Classical Association of the Atlantic States
- Van Til, Jon: *Critical Issues in American Philanthropy*, AAFRC Trust for

Philanthropy, 1990

- Veyne, Paul: *Bread and Circuses – Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism*, trans. Pearce, Penguin, 1990
- Webster, Noah: *American dictionary of the English Language*, (facsimile of the 1828 first edition), publ. Foundation for American Christian Education, 1989.
- *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary Unabridged*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Ed. J.L. McKechnie, The World Publ. Co., 1970
- *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, Ed. Noah Porter, publ. the C. & G. Merriam Co., 1913 (org. publ. 1864)
- Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>
- West, Martin L.: 'The Prometheus Trilogy', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 99 (1979) pgs. 130-148
- Xenophon; *Oeconomicus*, trans. Lord, St. Augustine's Press, 1998
- Xenophon; *Vol. IV – Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium, Apology*, trans. Marchant & Todd, Harvard Univ. Press, 1997 (org. publ. 1923)
- Xenophon; *Vol. VII – Scripta Minora*, trans. Marchant & Bowersock, Harvard Univ. Press, 2000 (org. publ. 1925)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Bk. II, sec. 58, trans. Nauckhoff

<sup>2</sup> It makes a great difference to the nature of this inquiry as to whether one understands philanthropy as, for example, private donations to public purposes, voluntary giving to charitable organisations, a form of social relation, an innate moral sentiment, or a divine disposition.

<sup>3</sup> Salamon, pg. 10

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Castle: 'Contemporary Philanthropy', in *Philanthropy In America*, vol. I, pg. 100-3, where the definition of philanthropy as charitable giving is simply assumed throughout, although never explicitly stated.

<sup>5</sup> Sealander: 'Curing Evils at Their Source: The Arrival of Scientific Giving', in *Charity, Philanthropy and Civility in American History*, pgs. 217-240

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Gates, Chernow

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Carnegie, Karl

<sup>8</sup> Gross, 'Giving in America: From Charity to Philanthropy', in *Charity Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, pgs. 29-48

<sup>9</sup> Van Til, pg. 34

<sup>10</sup> Carnegie certainly did, for example, in his famous critique of charity in his own time.

<sup>11</sup> Schervish, 'Philanthropy', in the *Encyclopedia of Politics and Religions*, pgs. 600-3

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/philanthropy>

<sup>13</sup> Oxford Dictionary online (2007): <http://dictionary.oed.com>. This definition is virtually identical to the one provided in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Oxford dictionary, first published between 1888 and 1928, with volume VII ('O-P') first published in 1909. The notable exception is the last phrase of def. 1a ("now esp. as expressed by the generous donation of money to good causes.") which does not appear in neither the first (1909) or second (1989) editions of the OED.

<sup>14</sup> This later development in the OED's definition of philanthropy – the only significant change in the dictionary's first century of existence – dates to sometime after Oct. 11, 2002, as this modification did not appear in the on-line version of that date.

<sup>15</sup> Oxford references to the use of this theological mode of philanthropy date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present, the earliest example being from 1631 and the latest dating from 1991. In this usage, educated English clergymen took much inspiration, no doubt, from the Letter of Paul to Titus in the Septuagint Greek Bible, where (pseudo-)Paul makes reference to: "the goodness [*chrēstotēs*] and philanthropy [*philanthrōpia*] of God our savior" (*Titus*, Chp.3, vs.4)

<sup>16</sup> Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828

<sup>17</sup> *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, Ed. Noah Porter, 1913 (orig. publ. 1864)

<sup>18</sup> *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary*, (unabridged, second edition, 1970, 1<sup>st</sup> publ. 1934) ed. McKechnie

<sup>19</sup> My emphasis in italics. This universalist aspect is what most strongly distinguishes Webster's 1828 definition from most contemporary academic definitions of philanthropy, which tend to emphasise the charitable support of private institutions in service of a 'public good'. Positing the existence of a 'public' good, though, implies a particular civil society served by that good; and the good of any particular society has the potential (indeed, in many cases an obligation) to come in conflict with rival societies that do not share reverence for that good. A 'public good,' therefore, is not necessarily a 'universal good of humankind.'

<sup>20</sup> The universal aspect of humanity was, for Enlightenment thinkers, nothing less than human nature – the primary object of inquiry for Enlightenment political philosophy.

<sup>21</sup> In the first *Federalist Paper* (published Oct. 27, 1787) Alexander Hamilton rhetorically asks whether a society is capable of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether people are forever destined to depend on accident and force for their political constitutions. If it does, in fact, prove possible to establish good government in the newly independent American colonies based upon purely rational principles, he hastens to add, it:

“will add the inducements of philanthropy to those of patriotism to heighten the solicitude, which all considerate and good men must feel for the event. Happy will it be if our choice should be directed by a judicious estimate of our true interests, unperplexed and unbiassed by considerations not connected with the public good.” (*The Federalist*, pg. 3-4)

---

In Hamilton's sense, then, philanthropy is a kind of 'patriotism' exercised by statesmen on behalf of the human species as a whole. Cf. The Preceptor, 'Social Duties of the Political Kind', (1772) in *American Political Writing during the Founding Era – 1760-1805*, Vol. I.; Locke, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Treatise of Government*, pg.162 (ed. Carpenter)

<sup>22</sup> Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, pg. 393 (Academy Ed.)

<sup>23</sup> "A friend of mankind in general (i.e., a friend of the entire race) is one who takes a sensitive (*ästhetisch*) interest (rejoicing) in the well-being of all men and will never disturb that well-being without inner regret. However, the expression 'friend of mankind' has a somewhat stricter meaning than that of 'philanthropist,' which designates those who simply love mankind." (Kant, *The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*, pgs. 472-3, Academy Ed.) Cf. pgs. 401-2, 456, 458, 465; but especially pg. 450: "Since the love of mankind (philanthropy) is here thought of as practical and, consequently, not as complaisant love taken in men, it must be placed in active benevolence, and thus concerns the maxim of actions." (trans. Ellington)

<sup>24</sup> In 1675 John Locke incorporated a society dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of 'truth' that named itself 'Philanthropoy, or The Christian Philosophers' (Locke, pg. 232, ed. Wooton). By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, self-described 'Philanthropic Societies' had become somewhat more commonplace in Britain; one such even going so far as to title its 1789 annual report: 'First Report of the Philanthropic Society instituted in London, Sept. 1788, for the prevention of Crimes' (OED online). Much the same situation also came to prevail in America. A journal published in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, a Quaker organisation that sought to abolish slavery, was simply entitled: *The Philanthropist*.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century shift in the meaning of philanthropy may also have been influenced by the rise of newspapers and the popular modes of usage that they both followed and coined for readers. William Russell, for example, writing as the world's first war correspondent during the Crimean War (1854-6), describes the need to address medical reform in the British military in the following terms:

"Among the objects of philanthropy for some time past has been the improvement of the condition of the soldier. Progress may have been made in some respects, but how much remains to be done will be recognized by every one who has seen the condition of the sick and wounded during the last fortnight." (*The London Times*, Oct. 13, 1854, pg. 8 [from a Sep. 28 dispatch])

In speaking of the 'objects of philanthropy', Russell would seem to have in mind the goals of the philanthropic societies of his time, many of which were successful in advocating for the implementation social and political reform in England, abolitionists (anti-slavery advocates) in particular.

<sup>25</sup> Cf: Emerson & Nietzsche:

In a lecture first read in 1842, Emerson writes: "Few persons have any magnificence of nature to inspire enthusiasm, and the philanthropies and charities have a certain air of quackery." *The Transcendentalist*, quoted from: *Emerson – Essays and Lectures*, pg. 203, ed. Porte)

Nietzsche, between Nov. 1887 and March 1888, writes in his notebooks: "'Toward a critique of the big words' – Christianity, the revolution, the abolition of slavery, equal rights, philanthropy, love of peace, justice, truth: all these big words have value only in a fight, as flags: not as realities but as showy words for something quite different (indeed, opposite!)." (*The Will to Power*, Book 1, aphorism 80, trans. Kaufman & Hollingdale)

<sup>26</sup> Cf: Emerson & Thoreau:

Emerson: "I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? . . . I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent, I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong." (*Essays: First Series*, 'Essay II. *Self-Reliance*', [first publ. 1841] quoted from *Emerson – Essays and Lectures*, pg. 262, ed. Porte)

Thoreau: "Philanthropy is not love for one's fellow-man in the broadest sense. Howard [a 'philanthropist'] was no doubt an exceedingly kind and worthy man in his way, and has his reward; but, comparatively speaking, what are a hundred Howards to us, if their philanthropy do not help us in our best estate, when we are most worthy to be helped? I never heard of a philanthropic meeting in which it was sincerely proposed to do any good to me, or the like of me. . . I would not subtract anything from the praise that is due to philanthropy, but merely demand justice for all who by their

---

lives and works are a blessing to mankind.” (*Walden*, ‘Economy’, [first publ. 1854] pgs. 73 & 75, ed. Dircks)

In the writings of Emerson, Thoreau and Nietzsche, then, it is hard not to notice a lament for the loss of an important former aspect of philanthropy, as support for the most worthy of mankind, and the degradation of its contemporary meaning to mere charity.

<sup>27</sup> Unless, of course, we are to understand misanthropy as withholding or taking away money from charity; or organizations dedicated to the downfall of humanity and/or the support of such organizations, or the absence of charitable organizations...

<sup>28</sup> *The Spectator*, ‘No. 177. Saturday, Sept. 22, 1711’, pg. 258 (ed. Morley). Addison’s *Spectator* was a literary journal published on a daily basis in London by Joseph Addison between 1711 and 1714. Looking to the article cited by Johnson, the context of the passage is an anecdote Addison attributes to Sir Francis Bacon, who told of:

“a cunning solicitor, who would never ask a favour of a great man before dinner; but took care to prefer his petition at a time when the party petitioned had his mind free from care, and his appetites in good humour.” Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Bacon, *Essays*, No. 13 – ‘On Goodness and Goodness of Nature’, pg. 96 (ed. Pitcher)

<sup>30</sup> The only instances of the use of the word philanthropy in English that predate Bacon’s signal use of the term (as far as this author has been able to find) occur in medieval herbariological texts. The earliest of these is an Old English herbal, c.1000 AD, that employs the adjective form of philanthropy as follows:

“Ðas wyr̃t man phylantropos nemneþ, þæt ys on ure ðeþeode menlufiðende, forþy heo wyle hrædlice to ðam men ðeclufian.”

(translation: “This wort is named φιλάνθρωπος, and is in our language menloving, because it will readily cleave to a man, and it hath a seed like a mans navel.”)

(‘Herbarivm’, in *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England*, vol. I, pgs. 306-7)

This text is based, in turn, on an Old English translation of a medical herbal dating from the 5th century AD, entitled *De herbarum virtutibus*, by pseudo-Apuleius. This particular usage of ‘*phylantropos*’ – to describe the qualities of certain plants whose seeds tend to stick to people – continues with remarkable consistency in medieval Middle English for the next 600 years. In a 1398 translation by Trevisa of an herbal by Bartholomeus Anglicus, he states:

“And groweþ by olde walls and hatte *phylantropos*, as it were ‘louynge mankynde’, for he cleueþ to mannes cloþes by a maner affeccion and loue, as it semeþ.” (*De Proprietibus Rerum*, II. 984, cited from OED on-line)

Among the later instances of this ‘natural mode’ of philanthropy are two works penned by John Gerarde and Philemon Holland, in 1597 and 1601 respectively, in which they describe plants with seeds that readily stick to people as *phylantropos* [‘philanthropic’]. Holland, in his English translation of Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History*, literally renders a passage whereby Pliny describes a flower known in Europe as the Kleefkruid (*Galium aparine*) and sometimes named ‘stickywilly’ in America:

“There is a certain rough and prickie hearbe, which the Greeks call by a pretie name  
\*Philanthropos, for that it sticketh to folks cloaths as they passe by.” (*Pliny*, vol. I, bk. 24, pg. 206)

Gerarde, by comparison, employs this exact same usage in his English work to describe a plant called Agrimonie (*Lappa inuersa*):

“because the seedes which are rough like burres, do hand downwarde; of some *phylantropos*, of the clueing qualities of the seedes hanging to mens garments.” (bk. 2, ch. 229 – ‘Of Egrimonie’, pg. 575)

It is thus likely no exaggeration to claim that Bacon is primarily responsible for preventing philanthropy from being indelibly coined in modern English as an horticultural term for describing plants whose seeds stick rather too readily to people, following a usage solidly established in Old and Middle English.

---

<sup>31</sup> Cf: *Titus*, 3.4 (*philanthrôpía* = humanitas = ‘love toward mankind’); *Acts*, 27.3 (*philanthrôpôs* = humane = ‘kindly’), 28.2 (*philanthrôpian* = *humanitatem* = ‘no common kindness’) English translations: Rainbow Missions, Inc.

<sup>32</sup> “I confess that I have as vast contemplative ends, as I have moderate civil ends: for I have taken all knowledge to be my province; and if I could purge it of two sorts of rovers, whereof the one with frivolous disputations, confutations, and verbosities, the other with blind experiments and auricular traditions and impostures, hath committed so many spoils, I hope I should bring in industrious observations, grounded conclusions, and profitable inventions and discoveries; the best state of that province. This, whether it be curiosity, or vain glory, or nature, or (if one take it favourably) *philanthropia*, is so fixed in my mind as it cannot be removed.” Bacon, ‘Letter to my Lord Treasurer Burghley’ (1592)

<sup>33</sup> Bacon’s deference to what “the Grecians call *philanthropia*” is a refrain heard in several other notable 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century writers and thinkers. John Dryden, for example, remarks, in the introduction to a 1693 English translation of the Greek historian Polybius, that:

“This Philanthropy (which we have not a proper word in English to express) is every where manifest in our Author.” (‘The Character of Polybius, and his Writings’ in: Polybius, *The History of Polybius the Megalopolitan*, trans. H. Sheeres, vol. V, pg. xiv)

Greek studies were introduced to England in the last years of the 15<sup>th</sup> century at Oxford University by Grocyn, Linacer and Latimer (Gibbon, vol. VII, pg. 135). By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, knowledge of Greek was widespread enough among England’s educated elite to allow for the use of Greek terminology in English works. This practice was still not yet so widespread, though, as to not occasionally require some prefacing remarks to the use of an exotic term such as philanthropy. Some prominent English writers in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries avoid the term altogether, although they were undoubtedly aware its meaning, probably to appeal to a wider audience. Instead they simply employ the phrase ‘love of humanity’ when referring to the concept in their writings: Cf. Locke, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Treatise of Government*, pg.162 (ed. Carpenter); Gibbon, *The Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. I, chp. IV, pg. 93 (ed. Bury); and Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Part VI, Section II, pg. 374 (ed. West).

A similar process of referencing the ancient Greek meaning of ‘*philanthropia*’ may be seen to occur in French usage of the word. One of the earliest examples of the use of philanthropy in a work published in French dates from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. In that instance, Denis Diderot comments on the philosophy of Leibniz, citing his assertion that:

“Justice, or that virtue which rules the sentiment which the Greeks designated under the name of *philanthropie*, is the charity of the wise (‘charité du sage’).” (Diderot: *Opinion des anciens philosophes*, Chapter V. – ‘Principles du droit naturel selon Leibnitz’, trans. Syme & Misanchuk)

In each of these highly influential writers, then – Bacon, Dryden, Diderot and Leibniz – a close familiarity with, and deference to, the ancient Greek meaning of *philanthropia* is demonstrated by their direct referencing of it in their own use of the term.

<sup>34</sup> The few exceptions would seem to be a published essay (Pearson) and a masters thesis (Sulek, 2003). In Pearson’s essay, though, he falls into the classical conundrum of projecting modern definitions of English words with Greek roots onto ancient Greek word usage; or, at the very least, of not providing a sufficient framework for understanding what, exactly, the Greeks meant by *philanthrôpía*, and how it differs from contemporary conceptions of philanthropy.

<sup>35</sup> Lorenz, De Ruitter

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Lamberton, Moles, Carey, Else

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times*, throughout; & Strauss, ‘On the Euthyphron’ in: *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism*, pgs. 190-1; *Socrates & Aristophanes*, pgs. 141, 185-6, 191; & *On Plato’s Symposium*, pgs. 56 & 122

<sup>38</sup> Veyne, Bauman

<sup>39</sup> For this reason, classical philologists sometimes translate *philanthrôpía* as ‘friend’ rather than ‘lover’ of humanity.

<sup>40</sup> *Agape* is also the primary form of love employed in the Greek *New Testament*.

<sup>41</sup> *Anêr* is employed in ancient Greek to specifically refer to men or manliness, as opposed to *gynê* for women. *Anthrôpos*, on the other hand, is sometimes used to distinguish human beings from the beasts

---

(*boton*). It could also be used contemptuously to describe someone who is *merely* human, without any other redeeming qualities.

<sup>42</sup> De Ruiter, ed. Sulek, pg. 825. This nonce word is spoken by Ulysses in his capacity as leader of Agamemnon's embassy to Achilles. At the outset of the *Iliad*, prince Achilles quits the Achaean army in anger after king Agamemnon unjustly takes back his gift of the girl, Briseus. Without the strength of Achilles, though, the Achaean army is thrown back by the Trojans, putting their beached ships in grave danger of capture. At this point, Agamemnon reconsiders his ungracious behaviour, and commissions a delegation to go and convince Achilles to rejoin the army. In his attempt to persuade the great warrior to rejoin the Achaeans, Ulysses reminds the eminent prince of the parting words of his father, Peleus, who warned:

“... hold fast in your bosom  
The anger of your proud heart, for *philophrosúne* [‘consideration’] is better.”  
(Homer, *Iliad*, Bk.9, lines 255-6, trans. Lattimore)

Significantly, Achilles' inability to take this good counsel to heart sets in motion the tragic chain of events that eventually lead to the death of his 'dear companion,' Patroklos, at the hands of Hector, and ultimately Achilles himself after he takes revenge upon the Trojan prince.

<sup>43</sup> Craig, pg. 51

<sup>44</sup> *Greek-English Lexicon*, eds. Liddell & Scott

<sup>45</sup> The only author solidly situated in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE to employ *philanthrôpia* as a word in extant works attributed to him is the fabulist Aesop (d.~564). It occurs in three fables in the Aesopian corpus (Fables 62.1.7 & 307.1.12, ed. Hausrath and Hunger, 1970; & Fable 63.2, ed. Chambry, 1925-1926). On the *primaefacia* evidence, Fables #63 ('The Bear and the Fox') and #307 ('The Pup and the Frogs') were most likely penned by later authors. This assessment is based on two factors: both employ naturalistic rather than supernatural characters; and the epilogues of both refer to them as *mythos* ('a fable') rather than *logos* ('a story'). These tend to be features associated with later, spuriously attributed additions to the Aesopian corpus. (*Aesop – The Complete Fables*, trans. Temple, Introduction, pgs. xiii & xiv) Fable #62 ('The Farmer and the Snake') also employs naturalistic characters, but its epilogue refers to it as a *logos*. Another similar version of 'The Bear and the Fox' also exists in the fables collected by Babrius, which likely dates from sometime before the 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. AD, that employs the phrase "*phileîn anthropon*" rather than *philanthrôpia*. (*Babrius and Phaedrus*, Fable 14, ed./trans. Perry) This author currently operates from the assumption that all three of the fables that employ *philanthrôpia* as word are later additions to the Aesopian corpus.

*Philanthrôpia* occurs in two fragments and a play attributed to two early 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE authors, but their authenticity is doubtful. It occurs in two fragments attributed to the comic poet, Epicharmus (c.540-450): Frag. 31.2 & *Fragmenta Pseudepicharmea* 274.1, ed. Kaibel; and *Prometheus Bound*, lines 8 & 28, which has been traditionally attributed to the tragedian, Aeschylus (525/4-456/5). Epicharmus' Fragment #274 was likely substantially altered (at least in regard to its usage of *philanthrôpia*) by Plutarch, the author who records it (in Plutarch, *Moralia*, 'Concerning Talkativeness', 510 C). As Berk has noted: "none of the philosophical maxims of Epicharmus handed down by men such as Plutarch or Stobaeus are reliable." (pg. 159) While *Prometheus Bound* was likely not composed by Aeschylus, it was likely composed in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century, probably sometime between 440 and 435 BCE (Griffin, West).

Authors active during the later half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE who employ *philanthrôpia* in extant works attributed to them are:

- Euripides (484 or 480-406) in Fragment 953.41 (ed. Nauck) and Letters  $\Gamma$  &  $\Delta$  (ed. Duncan);
- Hippocrates (460-377) in *Precepts*, section 6; and
- Aristophanes (448-388) in *Peace*, line 392.

The only one of these works for which the authorship is known for certain to be authentic is Aristophanes' *Peace*. It was once conjectured that the fragment attributed to Euripides belonged to his lost tragedy, *Chresphontes*; more recent scholarship, though, believes it to more likely belong to a lost comedy of Menander, *Epitrepontes*. (Robertson) The letters attributed to Euripides are most certainly Ptolemaic forgeries, while the *Precept* of Hippocrates was likely authored by his later followers. The above works attributed to Euripides and Hippocrates thus most likely date from the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century BCE or later.

<sup>46</sup> *Prometheus Bound*, lines 7-11, trans. Velacott

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 28-30

---

<sup>48</sup> Modern classical scholars have noted the extreme rarity of these phrases and sentiments in early Greek literature as a whole. (Herington, pg. 236.) As it happens, though, many elements of *Prometheus Bound*, including these very same passages, are parodied by Aristophanes (448-369 BCE) in *Birds*, which premiered in 414. This comedy contains many close parallels to the language and ideas of the earlier tragedy, including close equivalents to the words spoken by Kratos in the opening prologue, chiding Prometheus for his philanthropic character [*philanthrôpou trôpou*], and for having brooked the tyranny of Zeus [*Diôs tyrannída*]. Toward the end of *Birds*, Prometheus describes his “constant and habitual goodwill toward men [*aei pot' anthrôpois gar eunous eim' egô*]” (line 1545) as well as how he “hates the gods [*misô d' hapantas tous theous*].” (line 1547) Perhaps Prometheus’ ‘goodwill’ [*eunous*] toward men in the cited passage indicates that he has yet to have become a ‘friend of humanity’ [*philanthrôpian*], as they have yet to reciprocate his expressions of goodwill. (For the standard definition of friendship in ancient Greek, as the mutual exchange of goodwill between two people, see: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155b1.)

<sup>49</sup> *Prometheus Bound*, line 110

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, line 252

<sup>51</sup> Griffith

<sup>52</sup> West

<sup>53</sup> Schmid

<sup>54</sup> Protagoras was generally viewed by his contemporaries as an harbinger of the 5<sup>th</sup> century Greek Enlightenment, exposing Athens to Ionian philosophy during his first visit there sometime in the 440s. As it happens, Plato depicts his second visit to Athens, in 432, in the dialogue named for the great sophist. Protagoras is famous for having promoted a kind of cultural relativism, encapsulated in the pithy phrase: ‘man is the measure of all things.’ (cf: Plato, *Theaetetus*, 152a; Frag. 80B1 ed. Diels-Kranz) Lesser known are his rather revolutionary views on the essentially progressive nature of human civilisation, particularly in relation to the development and application of knowledge. The progressive view of human history propounded by Protagoras is captured by Plato’s depiction where the sophist relates his own particular version of the Promethean myth (*Protagoras*, 320d-323a).

In Protagoras’ rendering of the Promethean *mythos*, the fore-thinking Titan’s theft and gift of fire and craft allows human to more successfully defend themselves against the beasts. Rather than being supplemented by blind hopefulness, though, Prometheus’ initial gifts are later augmented by Zeus’ additional gifts of a sense of shame and justice; thereby rendering them better able to cultivate the civic virtues necessary for living together peacefully in a *polis*, or civil society. (The translation of *polis* in English as ‘civil society’ may be traced to Thomas Hobbes, *Elements*, Pt. I, ch. 19, § 8. One can debate whether or not Hobbes’ conception of civil society is relevant to the modern definition of the term. At the very least, though, the terms *polis* and civil society [both in its Hobbesian and contemporary senses] share the characteristic of being fundamentally based on the premise of living together in peaceful co-existence, albeit with the presence of a competitive element, or *agon*.) Protagoras’ revolutionary account of human history flew in the face of traditional mythic accounts, most prominently related by Hesiod, who depicts Prometheus gift of fire as having triggered humanity’s fall from its golden age or of divine state of grace. (*Theogony*, lines 537-59 & 563-9 *Works & Days*, lines 66-70 & 79-110) Not incidentally, Protagoras also promoted himself as the pre-eminent teacher of civic virtue among the Greeks.

<sup>55</sup> The dramatic setting of Plato’s *Protagoras* occurs during the great sophist’s second visit to Athens, in 432, on the very eve of the onset of the Peloponnesian War.

<sup>56</sup> The Peloponnesian War lasted from 431-404, while the Peace of Nicias lasted from 421-415.

<sup>57</sup> This dramatic situation – the heavens abandoned by the gods – may be interpreted on one level as a revealing commentary on secularising trends present in 5<sup>th</sup> century Athenian society; a trend greatly accelerated by the traumatic events of the war.

<sup>58</sup> Pisander was a Greek politician during the Peloponnesian Wars whose vainglorious, pro-war stance contributed to Athens’ pursuit of war with Sparta.

<sup>59</sup> Aristophanes, *Peace*, line 390-9, trans. Henderson

<sup>60</sup> In the superlative adjective form: *philanthrôpôtate*.

<sup>61</sup> i.e. it is employed in reference to the qualities of a divine being

<sup>62</sup> For an appraisal of Hermes’ status as the patron god of “thieves, liars and defrauders”, see: Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, vol. V, pgs. 23. The record of Prometheus on this count presumably speaks for itself.

<sup>63</sup> Given Noah Webster’s definition of philanthropy as the antonym of misanthropy, a brief overview of *misanthrôpia* in ancient Greek would also seem to be in order. The earliest extant occurrences of

*misanthrôpia* as a word occur in Plato's dialogues. (It also occurs a couple times in a later speech of Isocrates [*Antidosis* 15.131&315] written in 354-3; 4 or 5 years before Plato's death.) In Plato's dialogue, *Protagoras*, the great sophist refers to a chorus composed of 'misanthropes' in a comedy by Pherecrates (fl.440-430, d.415 BCE). In the play, the misanthropes leave the city in disgust at the injustice of men, but then find themselves among wild savages who make even the most wicked city dwellers seem just by comparison. (327d-e) In *Laws*, by comparison, the Athenian Stranger points out how "luxurious living renders the disposition of the young morose and irascible and too easily moved by trifles," while the opposite condition – uttermost and cruel slavery – "makes them lowly and mean-spirited and misanthropic, and thus unfit to associate with others." (VII, 791d, trans. Bury)

The most philosophically significant use of *misanthrôpia* in Platos' works occurs in *Phaedo*. In this dialogue, Socrates advances several arguments to demonstrate the immortality of the soul on the very day of his execution. Midway through the discussion, though, he and his friends find themselves in a state of perplexity [*aporia*] after several unsuccessful attempts at conclusively proving the immortality of the soul. Seeing his friends sinking into despair over his fate, Socrates warns them to be on guard against misology, which he calls the greatest evil anyone can experience. He then describes how both misologists [*misologoi* – haters of reasoned argument], and misanthropists [*misanthrôpoi*] come to be in the same way:

“. . . hatred of human beings [*misanthropia*] arises from artlessly trusting somebody to excess, and believing that human being to be in every way true and sound and trustworthy, and then a little later discovering that this person is wicked and untrustworthy – and then having this experience again with another. And whenever somebody experiences this many times, and especially at the hands of just those he might regard as his most intimate friends and comrades, he then ends up taking offense all the time and hates all human beings and believes there's nothing at all sound in anybody." (*Phaedo*, 89d-e, trans. Brann, Kalkavage & Salem)

In the end, Socrates is finally executed, much to the dismay of his friends. But by simultaneously warning them and girding them against the twin evils of misology and misanthropy in his discourse, though, Socrates helps preserve the life of philosophy, which is the single most significant manifestation of his *philanthrôpia*.

<sup>64</sup> Attempts to positively date the composition of Plato's dialogues have been largely unsuccessful. There is evidence, moreover, that Plato revised his writings throughout his life.

<sup>65</sup> "Kronos understood that, as we have explained, human nature is not at all capable of regulating the human things, when it possesses autocratic authority over everything, without becoming swollen with hubris and injustice. So, reflecting on these things, he set up at that time kings and rulers within our cities - not human beings, but daemons, members of a more divine and better species. He did just what we do now with sheep and the other tame herd animals. We don't make cattle themselves rulers of cattle, or goats rulers of goats; instead we exercise despotic dominion over them, because our species is better than theirs. The same was done by the god, who was *philánthrôpos* ('a friend of humanity'): he set over us the better species of daemons, who supervised us in a way that provided much ease both for them and for us." (Plato, *Laws*, 713d, trans. Pangle)

<sup>66</sup> This political mode of *philanthrôpia* is all the more significant, given that *Laws* is basically a mythologised version of *Republic*, Plato's political dialogue *par excellence*.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Xenophon: *Cyropaedia*, 1.2.1, 1.4.1, 4.2.10, 7.5.73, 8.2.1, 8.4.7, 8.4.8, 8.7.25; *Agesilaus*, 1.22, 11.10; *Hellenica*, 1.7.18

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, *Symposium*, 189c-d, trans. Benardete

<sup>69</sup> *Philanthrôpôtatos* in *Symposium*, versus *philanthrôpotate* in *Peace*.

<sup>70</sup> *Symposium* is the single most comprehensive account of the Greek understanding of *eros*, or all-encompassing love. And in Aristophanes' account, which constitutes *the* central speech of the dialogue, *Eros* is described as the most philanthropic of gods for treating an illness, the healing of which would result in the greatest happiness for the human race. The comic poet elaborates upon the nature of this illness in the form of *mythos*: as arising from out of the primordial separation of our selves from the other half of our being. This separation resulted in a longing for reunion with our alienated half, and it is this longing that causes our attraction to others; impelled by the hope of finding our missing half to 'complete' us and make us whole again. *Eros*, then, in Aristophanes' view, is a recognition of the persistent sense of incompleteness we feel as human beings, that results in us reaching out to others to embrace in brotherhood and love.

---

Aristophanes' theme is subsequently elaborated upon by Socrates in terms of *logos* in his subsequent eulogy of *eros*, where he also arrives at the conclusion that love is fundamentally a desire for that which one lacks (200e). The problem arises for Socrates, though, when the lover actually succeeds in securing possession of his or her beloved. Not only is the sublime power of *eros* terminated in the lover, but the good of the beloved is endangered besides. The dangers posed by the lover to the beloved was a great problem for the Greeks, as demonstrated by the speech of Lysias recited by the beautiful young man, Phaedo (who also presents the first eulogy of *eros* in *Symposium*) in the dialogue named for him (*Phaedo*, 231a-234c).

*Phaedo* is the other great Platonic dialogue on love, where Socrates is moved to mount a spirited defense of *eros*, even in the face of the manifest difficulties it presents in terms of attainment of the good. In Lysias' speech the lover is considered a prime source of harm to the beloved, insofar as lovers sometimes seek their own gratification at their beloved's expense. Too often, this situation leads lovers to try and weaken their beloved in order to render them more dependent, thereby rendering their possession the more secure. The love of the lover is thus no guarantee of the good of the beloved or, for that matter, the lover – and, in fact, quite the contrary. This ontological reality of *eros* presents no small hurdle to associating the love of human beings with true beneficence. The idea of love as fundamentally motivated by the absence or lack of something is also pertinent to the contemporary understanding of philanthropy as fulfilling 'community needs,' usually defined in terms of what is lacking.

Socrates, in his eulogy, extracts the divine power of *eros* from this unseemliness by sublimating desire up a 'ladder of love,' whereby the practitioner of a perfected form of erotics is gradually turned: away from the love of bodies, and toward the love of souls; away from the love of particular instances, and toward the love of universals; away from the possession of knowledge, and toward a love of the wisdom that reveals what causes the growth of the love of knowledge in the beloved. In this way, the true lover permanently turns "to the vast open sea of the beautiful," beholding it and giving birth – in ungrudging philosophy – "to many beautiful and magnificent speeches and thoughts; until, there strengthened and increased, he may discern a certain philosophical science," an *epistêmê* of erotics that renders the lover predisposed to love nothing more than observing and promoting the growth of the love of wisdom in the beloved. (210a-211b)

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, *Euthyphro*, 3d-e

<sup>72</sup> The nearest contender to *Euthyphro*, in terms of the next extant use of *philanthrôpía* after Aristophanes' in *Peace*, is Alcidas' only extant work, *On The Sophists*, written sometime between 391 and 380 (Van Hook, footnote 15).

<sup>73</sup> In fact, the all the extant instances of *philanthrôpía* in the theological mode of usage in the 4<sup>th</sup> century occur, interestingly enough, in the Socratic philosophers. Cf. Plato, *Laws*, section 713d, in reference to Kronos (cited above), and *Symposium*, sec. 189c, in reference to Eros (also cited above); and Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 4.3.5 & 7, in reference to the gods generally. Significantly, all these instances, except for the passage from *Laws*, which has no discernable dramatic date, reference conversations from the 5<sup>th</sup> century in which Socrates participated.

<sup>74</sup> Socrates' sense of his *philanthrôpía* and its relationship to his daemon fits quite well with his reputation in antiquity as "the first to call philosophy down from the heavens and set her in the cities of men and bring her also into their homes and compel her to ask questions about life and morality and things good and evil:" (Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, V.iv.10-11, pg. 435, tr. King) The precise way in which Socrates professes his *philanthrôpía* in *Euthyphro* also establishes its relation with Socrates' famous sense of irony, dissimulation and esotericism, in terms of it being what *seems* to make him pour out everything he knows without pay (as opposed to what is *really* happening).

<sup>75</sup> Some of the other prominent instances of the philosophical mode of usage in the classical age include: Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 15.4 & 19.17. in reference to the *technê* of agriculture, and *Memorabilia* 1.2.60 in reference to Socrates; and Alcidas, in reference to extemporaneously spoken *logos*, as cited above.

<sup>76</sup> Alcidas praises extemporaneously spoken speechmaking as being more *philanthrô'pôs*, or "in a way that people like," than pre-composed, written-out speeches (*On the Sophists* section 16, trans. Muir). Both Isocrates and Alcidas were fellow pupils of Gorgias (487-376 BCE) the great 5<sup>th</sup> cent. orator, sophist and rival of Protagoras, whose school of rhetoric Alcidas is thought to have carried on after his death. Isocrates is also linked to Socrates by Plato, albeit critically, in *Phaedrus*, 274c-275b.

<sup>77</sup> The patron goddess of agriculture, Demeter's name translates as 'barley-mother.'

<sup>78</sup> Isocrates, *Panegyricus* (Speech 4), sec. 28-9, trans. Norlin

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, section 29

---

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Isocrates, Speeches 2.15; 9.43.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Demosthenes, Speeches 6.1; 7.31; 16.9.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Demosthenes, Letter 2. 21; Speeches 8.33; 24.193.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Demosthenes, Speech 36.55, Damades, Speech 1.30; Hyperides, Speech 5, frag. 6.; Aeschines, Speech 1.137

<sup>84</sup> In the practice of making private benefactions for public purposes in classical Athens, an “exchange” or *antidosis*, was a “law according to which a man charged with performing a public duty could challenge someone he believed richer than himself either to take on the duty or to exchange his property for that of the challenger.” (Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, VII (3), trans. Carnes Lord, pg. 29; translator’s footnote)

<sup>85</sup> Isocrates, Speech 15 – *Antidosis*, sec.132

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 133

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Demosthenes, Speech 24.156

<sup>88</sup> Demosthenes, Exordia 16.1

<sup>89</sup> Aeschines, Speech 2, secs. 13, 30, 39 & 40.

<sup>90</sup> Plato (pseudo), *Definitions*, 412e (trans. by author based on Liddell & Scott)

<sup>91</sup> The definition of *philanthrôpía* as mindfulness in combination with good works evokes the genesis of the word to describe Prometheus. *Philanthrôpía* as a state of grace, on the other hand, strongly evokes the Chorus’ praise of Hermes in Aristophanes’ *Peace*. *Philanthrôpía* as well educated habits evokes its philosophical mode, in which sense it became practically synonymous with *paideia*. And *eûergetikê*, finally, points to the political mode of *philanthrôpía* in terms of the civic virtues to which the ruling class was expected to adhere.

<sup>92</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1452b, line 35 to 1453a, line 5

<sup>93</sup> Else traces the debate over the meaning of *philanthrôpía* in *Poetics* as far back as the two great classicists, Gotthold Lessing (1729-81) and Thomas Twining (1735-1804). The former thought it to mean “a general feeling of sympathy with our fellow-men,” while the latter thought it to mean and “a sense of justice which makes us grieve at the downfall of the good and the prosperity of the wicked.” (Else, pg. 368)

<sup>94</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, bekker page 1155a, line 15, trans. Irwin

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Hume, Smith, Ferguson. What is particularly interesting about Aristotle’s use of *philanthrôpía* in *Nicomachean Ethics*, though, is that he emphatically does *not* employ it to indicate ‘philanthropy’ in the modern sense of the term – a.k.a. to designate large-scale voluntary private giving for public purposes. This is particularly interesting, as these very subjects occupy some of the most important and central passages of *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle describes the pre-eminent political virtues. Rather than employing *philanthrôpía* to describe the proper exercise of the virtue of large-scale giving, Aristotle instead employs the word *megalopropeia*, or ‘great-appropriateness,’ in league with *megalopsychos*, or ‘great-souledness.’ Interesting also is Aristotle’s understanding of voluntary [*hekousios*], which is predicated more on the presence of knowledge than the lack of compulsion. (bekker page 1109b, lines 30-5) Interestingly, though, Aristotle does critique those (such as Socrates in Plato’s *Republic*) who argue that laws calling for property to be held in common are more philanthropic. (*Politics*, bekker page 1263b, line 15) Aristotle, by contrast, concludes that “it is better for possessions to be privately owned, but to make them common property in use; and to train the citizens to this is the special task of the legislator.” (*Ibid.*, bekker page 1263a, line 40, trans. Rackham)

<sup>96</sup> In *History of Animals*, for instance, Aristotle refers to the innate philanthropic qualities of the woodcock (617b, 26) and the jackel (630a, 9). Xenophon, by comparison, refers to the philanthropic nature of particular horses (which he considers good) in *On Horsemanship*, 2.3, and to that of hunting dogs (which he considers bad) in *On Hunting*, 3.9 & 6.25. For instances of the scientific mode of *philanthrôpía* in later antiquity, cf: Philodemus Philosphus, *De Oeconomia*, p.54J; Plutarch, *Cato the Elder*, 3; *Sertor*. c.XI; and *On the Cleverness of Animals*, II, 982 F; Dioscurides, *De materia medica*, 3, 104; Pliny, *The Natural History*, 24, 19, 116 & 27, 5 & 15.

<sup>97</sup> The social mode appears to have been the dominant mode for the usage of *philanthrôpía* for much of later antiquity, from the Hellenistic age onward, given Diogenes Laertius’ 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. AD definition:

“Philanthropy is of three kinds. One is by way of salutations, as when certain people address every one they meet and, stretching out their hand, give him a hearty greeting; another mode is seen when one is given to assisting every one in distress; another mode of philanthropy is that which makes certain people fond of giving dinners. Thus philanthropy is shown either by a courteous

---

address, or by conferring benefits, or by hospitality and the promotion of social intercourse.”  
(*Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, ‘Book III – Plato’, section 98, trans. Hicks)

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Menander, *Dyskolos*, lines 105 & 147

<sup>99</sup> Demosthenes, Speech 8 – *On the Chersonese*, section 70

<sup>100</sup> Cf: Demosthenes, *Letters*, card 1.5; Androtion, *Atthis*, Frag. 34, ed. Harding

<sup>101</sup> Demosthenes, Speech 24 – *Against Timocrates*, sec.156. Although Demosthenes’ description of the *philanthrôpian* so named as *onomatos* [‘so-called’] indicates that he is being highly ironic in his usage.

<sup>102</sup> Aeschines, Speech 1 – *Against Timarchus*, sec. 171

<sup>103</sup> For *philanthrôpia* was also used in reference to the financial disbursements of a *polis* to individuals, for instance, and even to other city-states.

<sup>104</sup> De Ruiter, pg. 837 (2004)

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 833

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 837

<sup>107</sup> Which is to say, philosophy understood as the realisation of the highest human potential through the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge.

<sup>108</sup> As De Ruiter (2004) observes: *philanthrôpia* keeps its meaning, even after it spreads to literature “and even approaches the meaning of the word *philósophos*.” De Ruiter also references Wilhelm Nestle on this point, from his critique of Lorenz’s 1914 dissertation. (pg. 837)

<sup>109</sup> Jaeger, vol. I, chp. 3

<sup>110</sup> Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Bk. I, sec. 7, trans. Nauckoff

<sup>111</sup> Notwithstanding the early natural mode of usage of philanthropy preserved in Old and Middle English, as a result of the copying of Greco-Roman herbal texts during the medieval era, and ending with Gerarde and Holland, who largely followed the scientific usage of Pliny.

<sup>112</sup> This lack of congruity likely stems from the much different views of the nature of free will between the Ancients and Moderns. The Modern definition of what constitutes ‘voluntary’ is an action performed in the absence of coercion. For the ancient Greeks, by contrast, doing something voluntarily meant not only doing it in the absence of coercive force, but also in full knowledge of the ends of one’s action, and how the actions employed relate to that end. (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1110a)