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"Illiberal" misanthropy: *mîsanthrôpiâ* and *aneleutheriâ* in the rhetorical literature of 4th century BCE Athens

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Abstract

This article examines the interconnectedness of the concepts of classical misanthropy or *mîsanthrôpiâ* and *aneleutheriâ* or "illiberality" in a politico-legal context in the rhetorical literature of Classical Athens. My approach offers new insight into the complex nature of *mîsanthrôpiâ* and Athenian societal values, especially regarding the concept of freedom. *Mîsanthrôpiâ* is usually understood as the universal hatred of humanity, and it is in this sense that the concept is typically used in ancient Graeco-Roman literature. However, in the rhetorical literature of Classical Athens *mîsanthrôpiâ* is presented as the quality of a free male citizen who is contemptuous of his fellow citizens and who has failed to properly fulfil his obligations to society and exercise his freedom as a member of the *polis*. In this setting, *mîsanthrôpiâ* is closely associated with the multifaceted concept of *aneleutheriâ* and its moral and civic implications. I argue that this specific rhetorical use of *mîsanthrôpiâ* was unique to the historical context of Classical Athens and its democratic political system and values and that this explains its disappearance from ancient Greek literature at the end of the Classical period.

Keywords

misanthropy; aneleutheria; freedom; civic duties; Classical Athens; rhetorical literature

This article is based on my conference presentation *Misanthropy and Illiberality in the Rhetorical Literature of 4th Century BCE Athens* delivered at *Laetae Segetes VIII* at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic, 14.11.2022. Both my presentation and this article are results of my ongoing Ph.D. research on misanthropy in ancient Greece and Rome. The work is carried out at the department of History of Science and Ideas at Oulu University, Oulu, Finland.

1. Introduction

The history of classical misanthropy[1] as a distinguishable concept can be traced back to the Athenian dramatic literature of the late 5th century BCE. Misanthropy is embodied in the character of Timon of Athens mentioned in the plays of Aristophanes and Phrynichus presented in 415/414 BCE in Athens. Timon is depicted as a figure who hates all of humanity, shuns the company of other people and lives outside the human society.[2] These representations precede the first extant occurrences of the words *mîsanthrôpiâ* and *mîsanthrôpos* in Plato's writings by at least a few decades. In Plato's *Phaedo* (first half of 4th c. BCE), Socrates describes *mîsanthrôpiâ* as the psychological condition of an individual who has become disillusioned regarding the moral nature of human beings and has consequently come to hate everyone, thinking that all are evil.[3] This is the first philosophical definition of misanthropy in classical literature, and it describes the generalizing and hateful mental state of the misanthrope which would essentially come to define *mîsanthrôpiâ* in antiquity.

However, in the Greek Classical period (5th–4th centuries BCE) *mîsanthrôpiâ* had not yet established its meaning as the universal hatred of humans. Depending on the context, *mîsanthrôpiâ* could have a wide range of meanings: in a "weak" sense the word could be used to refer to impoliteness and rudeness,[4] but in a stronger sense it could also be associated with distrustfulness of others, unsociability, withdrawal from society and overt hatred of people.[5] It is some of the more atypical connotations of *mîsanthrôpiâ* that are of interest to this article. The broad range of meanings and modes of usage present in the extant contemporary literature, in addition to the emergence of the literary character of the misanthrope, suggest that misanthropy vocabulary entered into common usage in ancient Greek culture around the turn of the 5th and 4th centuries BCE.

In this article, I approach the concepts of *mîsanthrôpiâ* and *aneleutheriâ* or "illiberality"[6] from civic and moral-philosophical perspectives in Athenian political and legal rhet-

1 The term classical misanthropy is used here to refer to the kind of mentalities, thoughts, behaviour, or other manifestations of misanthropy that can be argued to have been characteristic, typical, or specific to the phenomenon in ancient Greek and Roman cultures and societies.

2 Ar. *Av.* 1549; Phryn. *Com.* 18.

3 Pl. *Phd.* 89d–89e. In this specific context, Plato uses *mîsanthrôpiâ* as an example of a mindset based on an epistemically false judgment in order to demonstrate the illogical and unreasonable nature of *mîsologiâ* or the hatred of argumentation.

4 This is the case especially in the comedic context: see e.g. Ath. 4.59, 5.3, 6.9 and Phryn. *Com.* 3.

5 See Berthelot (2003: pp. 56–61) for a brief previous treatment of this vocabulary in Greek sources.

6 *Aneleutheriâ* (lit. "non/un-freedom") is commonly translated with the obsolete English expression "illiberality" (from Lat. *illiberalitas*; OLD, 828) in the sense of "lack of freedom" or "illiberality or narrowness (meanness) of the mind". *Aneleutheriâ* also has the common meaning of "servility" or "slavishness". In certain contexts, it can also mean illiberality related to money and wealth in the sense of "lack of generosity" or "stinginess" (LSJ, 131); Aristotle says that "...the one who falls short (*elleipô*) in everything is *aneleutheros*" (*EE.* 1221a 33–34/II.iii.10). He also describes *aneleutheriâ* as a vice that is "far-reaching", caused by old age or a more fundamental incapacity or *adynamiâ* (*EN.* 1121b 14–15, 17/IV.i.37–38). Aristotle also uses *aneleutheriâ* with a broader meaning esp. in *Politics* to indicate activity or behaviour that is not suitable for free citizens (*Pol.* 1336a 29–30, 1336b 1–10, 1337b 5–7); Plato does not treat *aneleutheriâ*

oric of the 4th century BCE. I argue that the association of *mîsanthrôpiâ* with the concept of *aneleutheriâ* represents a mode of usage that was specific to the sociocultural context of democratic Classical Athens. In the philosophical and public discourses of 4th century BCE Athens, *eleutheriâ* or "freedom" and its derivatives had come to refer to the proper social and moral qualities and practices of a free male citizen. Their thematical opposite *aneleutheriâ* was unarguably inseparable from the civic implications of these concepts, and in the present context this term is often used to refer an individual's failure and deficiency as a citizen or a free individual. By demonstrating how these concepts were further tied to historical Athenian discourses on the freedom and duties of the male citizen, this article illustrates how the unique interconnectedness of *mîsanthrôpiâ* and *aneleutheriâ* represented a violation of fundamental Athenian democratic values. To the best of my knowledge, this particular topic has not been looked into before.

In his works tracing the "discovery" of the ancient Greek concept of freedom, Kurt Raaflaub has stated that after the Peloponnesian War of 431–403 BCE and the subsequent crises suffered by the Athenian society, the idea of freedom came to be seen as a social value that could be readily evoked and that responded to the needs of individuals and society. This is apparent in its use by public speakers, politicians, and literary authors. Philosophical discourses of the 4th century BCE deepened the insights into the nature and limits of individual and collective freedom. Different aspects of freedom came to be treated systematically and were further developed and incorporated into political theories and moral philosophies. The understanding of the fundamental differences between free men and slaves became more nuanced, and the conception of the idea of individual "inner" freedom consequently led to the emphasis of the inner worth of the individual in philosophical discourses. Essentially, this meant the conceptualization of intellectual and moral independence which was made visible in the conflicted relationship[7] between the theoretically free individual and the restricting society with its dependencies, social bonds, conventions, and obligations.[8]

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as systematically as Aristotle, but he associates it similarly with a desire for gain, stinginess, servility, and more broadly with "unworthiness" especially on the part of a free man (e.g. Pl. *Lg.* 5.747b–c, 8.843d; *R.* 3.391c, 6.486a–b, 9.577d, 9.590b); See also Raaflaub (1985: pp. 302, 305) and Volt (2003: pp. 74–76); For *aneleutheriâ* in respect to greed, see Balot (2001: pp. 26–29); For the meanings of *aneleutheriâ* in a wider context in ancient Greek literature, see Volt (2003).

7 K. J. Dover says that intellectual enlightenment and independence went hand in hand with their repression in ancient Greece (Dover 1976: pp. 46–54); For freedom of thought and intellectual persecution in 5th c. BCE Classical Athens, see e.g. Wallace (1994).

8 Raaflaub (1985: pp. 288–291, 295–296). Raaflaub maintains, and many sources seem to suggest, that *eleutheriâ* as democratic freedom meant that one was free to "live as they wished" without being restricted by the state or one's fellow citizens (e.g. Hdt. 3.83.3; Thuc. 2.37.2, 7.69.2; Isoc. 7.20, 12.131; Pl. *R.* 8.557b 4–6; Arist. *Pol.* 1310a 32–34, 1316b 24, 1317b 11–17, 1318b 39–41, 1319b 30). See Liddel (2007: pp. 12–14) for criticism of this; Aristotle states that central to democratic freedom was the idea that one ruled and was ruled in turn, which was congruent with democratic equality (*Pol.* 1317a 40–1317b 3). Both Plato and Aristotle critiqued this principle, stating that in a democracy one is not compelled to submit to being governed unless one wishes to (Pl. *R.* 8.557e 2–4; Arist. *Pol.* 1317b 14–16, 1318b 39–41); Jakub Filonik refutes the absolute view of "negative liberty" put forth by Raaflaub and says that Athenian 4th c. BCE orators emphasized compliance with the law as a democratic value (Filonik 2019: pp. 4–6); See Liddel (2007) for individual liberty and Filonik (2019) for social obligations and the rule of law in Classical Athens.

In the social typology of Classical Athens, *aneleutheriâ* and *aneleutheros* could cover a wide range of negative social and moral meanings related to a lack of freedom and virtue or types of behaviour and practices that were not fitting for a free individual (see note 6). Its opposite positive concept of *eleutheriâ* or "freedom" or "liberty" was one of the most important societal values in democratic Athens and it can be further distinguished to signify different types of freedom: freedom as opposed to slavery which is the absolute loss of freedom for the individual, political freedom or the external and internal sovereignty of the *polis*, and the freedom of the individual in the public and private spheres of life.[9] The derivative abstract noun *eleutheriôtês* (often translated as "liberality", cf. Lat. *liberalitas*; OLD, 1024) and adjective form *eleutherios* can signify the character or quality of someone or something that is fitting for a free citizen and that is consequently "liberal" in terms of virtue ethics.[10] These expressions can also refer to generosity and freeness of giving.[11] Ivo Volt reports that there is a remarkable degree of variance in the use of this terminology, with the parallel meanings of *eleutheriâ* and *aneleutheriâ* being used widely in some genres or texts of certain authors, whereas in other instances the words are used to express highly specific and more limited meanings.[12]

The first author to treat *mîsanthrôpiâ* and *aneleutheriâ* together is Plato, who in his *Laws* (348/347 BCE) says the following on the education and upbringing of children:

> whereas luxurious living renders the disposition of the young morose (*duskolos*) and irascible (*akrâkholos*) and too easily moved by trifles, its opposite (which is uttermost and cruel enslavement [*agriâ doûlôsis*]) makes them submissive (*tapeinos*) and [illiberal] [13] (*aneleutheros*) and misanthropic (*mîsanthrôpos*), and thus unfit to associate with others.[14]

Here Plato applies to *mîsanthrôpos* a weaker and looser meaning than he does in his classical definition of *mîsanthrôpia* in *Phaedo*, and rather than principled hatred it seems to refer to moral baseness, unsociability, or otherwise antisocial behaviour of badly reared

9 LSJ, 532; Volt (2003: p. 70); See also Hansen (2010: pp. 2–8).

10 LSJ, 532; Raaflaub (1985: pp. 298–300; 2004: pp. 244–247); Aristotle uses *eleutheriâ* and its derivatives to also refer to the qualities and behaviour associated with citizens and free men (e.g. *Pol.* 1335b 11, 1337b 5).

11 In terms of ethics, for Aristotle *eleutheriôtês* represents the ideal central position or the mean (*mesotês*) in giving and getting. *Eleutheriâ/eleutheriôtês* and *aneleutheriâ* represent morally discordant forms of the same practices and related qualities which can be further understood to reflect one's moral disposition and behaviour towards other people (*EN.* 1120a 9–30/IV.i.7–14, 1120b 20–35/IV.i.22–24). Although Aristotle speaks quite concretely in terms of the acquisition and preservation of wealth in this context, the fundamental ethical principle that cuts through his discourse suggests that *aneleutheriâ* represents an inability or unwillingness to act virtuously on the part of an individual. Consequently, *aneleutheriâ* could be used to express a wide range of moral and social faults or deficiencies. This shows that *eleutheriâ* and *eleutheriôtês* refer to complex and nuanced aspects of human worth that reflect the inner moral potential of the free individual; Cf.: Volt concludes that *eleutheriâ* and *aneleutheriâ* formed the conceptual basis for the relationship between citizens of a democratic society and that the negative aspect this concept indicated meanness (i.e. deficiency) in every moral and social sense (Volt 2003: pp. 80–81); See also Hansen (2010) on this matter.

12 Volt (2003: p. 71).

13 Replaced Bury's translation of *aneleutheros* as "mean-spirited".

14 Pl. *Lg.* 7.791d. Translated by R. G. Bury (1968).

young men. Although it is nevertheless possible that Plato might be referring to their behaviour being hateful, the context and the adjacent vocabulary suggests somehow poor and base behaviour rather than indiscriminate hatred of people. Either way, in addition to being *mîsanthrôpos*, such persons are also *aneleutheros* and submissive, which renders them unsociable and unfit to properly interact with other people. This single instance does not however reveal much of the connection between *mîsanthrôpiâ* and *aneleutheriâ*, only that both relate negatively to one's capacity for social conduct. This is similar to how Plato uses the word *mîsanthrôpos* in the dialogue *Protagoras* in a context that similarly deals with the importance of education and civilization. Plato argues that the most unjust man, as long as he was brought up in a human society of laws, would appear the most just if he had to stand alongside people who lacked education, courts, laws and a sense of virtue, like the "kind of wild folk (a*grioi*) such as Pherecrates the poet brought on the stage at last year's Lenaeum".[15] Plato further characterizes these rough rural people as *mîsanthrôpos*,[16] which heavily suggests that he uses the word to designate the uncivilized coarseness of these people who lived outside the city and its organized society and institutions, and who would thus not be expected to be able to properly associate with civilized people.

2. Misanthropy in Classical Greek Rhetorical Literature

The use of misanthropy vocabulary in a political and rhetorical context is first attested around the same time in the 4th century BCE in the writings of the Athenian orator Isocrates. In his *Antidosis* (354/353 BCE), Isocrates forms a theoretical legal defence for an Athenian statesman and general called Timotheus (late 5th/early 4th century BCE – 354 BCE), a successful military leader who later fell into disrepute due to his financial problems and the malicious actions of his rivals. Isocrates stresses that while the treatment of Timotheus was cruel and unjust, the man himself was partially responsible for the mistaken judgments that were passed on him.[17] On the character of Timotheus Isocrates says the following:

> For while he was no [hater of the commons] (*mîsodêmos*)[18] nor a misanthrope (*mîsanthrôpos*), nor arrogant, nor possessed of any such defect of character, yet because of his proud bearing (*megalophrosynê*) – an advantage to the office of a general but out of place in dealing with men from day to day – everyone attributed to him the faults which I have named; for he was by nature as inept in courting the favour of men as he was gifted in handling affairs.[19]

15 Pl. *Prt.* 327c–327d. Translated by W. R. M. Lamb (1967).

16 Pl. *Prt.* 327d.

17 Isoc. 15.129–130.

18 Replaced Norlin's translation of *mîsodêmos* as "anti-democrat". It is nowhere suggested that the issue would have been about Timotheus being considered an opponent of the democratic system.

19 Isoc. 15.131. Translated by G. Norlin (1980).

What Isocrates refers to here with *mîsanthrôpos* is not simple rudeness, but the hatred of humanity, as Yun Lee Too has suggested in her interpretation, does not quite fit the context either.[20] Katell Berthelot notes that Isocrates applies the word in a weak sense, conveying the idea of harshness or contempt.[21] I find myself agreeing with Berthelot, as this interpretation would suggest a severe kind of unsociability and generalized hostility. The preceding word *mîsodêmos* is typically used to refer to the hatred or contempt of the common people of the citizen body or the *dêmos* collectively as a political entity, and in some instances, it is related to an anti-democratic attitude (although this does not seem to be the case here). Therefore, *mîsanthrôpos* might in this instance be used to indicate contempt or a condescending attitude towards people in general and especially those of the lower social classes. Despite him not being an outright "misanthrope", Isocrates stresses that Timotheus was however exceedingly prideful and possibly socially awkward or tactless. This indicates that his problem might have been his incapability to appeal to the general populace rather than actually being hateful. Yun Lee Too has noted that the absence of the faults Isocrates mentions could be considered to be the good qualities of Timotheus' character that do not end up counting in his favour.[22]

Isocrates continues that while men who appear in public life should keep to what is noble, truthful, and just, they should also pay mind to how well they perform in front of the people in their deeds so that they might "appear to everyone to be speaking and performing graciously (*epikharitôs*) and with humanity (*philanthrôpôs*)",[23] or otherwise they could appear disagreeable and offensive to their fellow-citizens.[24] It is not therefore enough that a virtuous political or military leader is honest and just, for in this they may simply appear as oppressive or even hostile to the populace if they do not convince the people of their noble intentions and character. Timotheus could then be regarded as a military man who lacked the desirable rhetorical eloquence and social tactfulness of a politician; because of this, he was unable to reconcile his public behaviour with his accomplishments and what others thought of him.[25] Isocrates is then suggesting that Timotheus, despite his virtue, came to be regarded as *or* could potentially have been considered *mîsanthrôpos*, understood as someone with a contemptuous attitude towards others and especially the common citizens, among other negative qualities, due to the

20 Yun Lee Too has translated Isoc. 15.131 "*οὔτε μισόδημος ὢν οὔτε μισάνθρωπος*" as "he did not hate the common people, nor was he a misanthrope", interpreting the part about misanthropy as Timotheus not being generally averse to humanity (Too 2008: pp. 55, 158).

21 Berthelot (2003: p. 65).

22 Too (2008: p. 158).

23 *Philanthrôpiâ*, literally "love of humanity", is understood commonly as "humanity, benevolence, kindness, humane feeling" (LSJ, 1932). The historical emergence of the concept in Greek literature coincides with that of *mîsanthrôpiâ* and similarly it had a wide range of meanings and modes of usage. In this instance, the word seems to be used simply as the opposite of *mîsanthrôpiâ* to indicate cordial and humane treatment of others. *Philanthrôpiâ* could also be used to indicate generosity and affability. For a more detailed treatment, see Berthelot (2003: pp. 18–57) and Sulek (2010: pp. 390–394).

24 Isoc. 15.132. Translated by G. Norlin (1980).

25 Too (2008: p. 159).

contradiction between his seemingly exemplary performance as a military leader and the ineptitude of his public conduct.

Isocrates refers to *mîsanthrôpiâ* again in a quite similar sense later in the same work as he laments the prevalence of sycophancy over honest philosophizing in the public life of current day Athens.[26] Athenians of old are told to have punished sycophants more severely than other criminals, believing them to be worse than other offenders:

> for other criminals, at any rate, try to keep their evildoing under cover, while these flaunt their brutality (*ômotês*), their misanthropy (*mîsanthrôpiâ*), and their contentiousness before the eyes of all.[27]

26 The classical meaning of sycophancy or *sûkophantiâ* refers to manipulative acts in public life, such as dishonest prosecution or litigation, public deception, quibbling, or sophism (LSJ, 1671); Isocrates assigns sycophantic traits typically to dishonest orators, politicians, and demagogues and he portrays the phenomenon as a threat to society (Too 2008: pp. 234, 239); On sycophancy in Classical Athens, see e.g. Christ (1998: pp. 48–71), Hesk (2000: pp. 53–55), Wallace (2006), and Kucharski (2012: pp. 185–186, 190–195).

27 Isoc. 15.314–315. Translation by G. Norlin (1980); The association of *mîsanthrôpiâ* with sycophancy has been treated before by Rosalia Hatzilambrou (2022). Focusing on the speech *Against Aristogeiton* (Dem. 25), she argues that social withdrawal, antisociality, and *mîsanthrôpiâ* were archetypal characteristics of the classical sycophant (misanthropy terminology does not appear in this specific context). The speaker describes Aristogeiton, who is accused of sycophancy, as a man who avoids being of service to the state and who is not engaged in any profession, business, or farming. In addition, he is unsociable (*âmeiktos*), without charity and friendship or any of the qualities of a decent human being (Dem. 25.51–52). Hatzilambrou argues that these misanthropic tendencies are used to demonstrate the sycophantic character of Aristogeiton, who is told to have essentially isolated himself from Athenian civic life and the activities expected of a proper male citizen, virtually abolishing his right to belong to society (Hatzilambrou 2022: pp. 158–159). Aristogeiton is also suggested to be without humanity (*philanthrôpiâ*), a quality that is told to ensure the harmony and well-being of the Athenian society, and he is even told to wish to remove it from the entire society (Dem. 25.87–90). Hatzilambrou's analysis of the civic ramifications of the misanthropic characteristics of the sycophant shows striking similarities to the results of my examination of *mîsanthrôpiâ* and *aneleutheriâ*. Despite this, it can be argued that there are some key differences in the portrayal and treatment of these concepts, and "illiberal" *mîsanthrôpiâ* is not quite the same as sycophancy. Most notably, besides his unsociability and neglect of civic life, the speaker emphasizes Aristogeiton's willingness to cause harm to others (Dem. 25.38–40) and his outrageous abuse of his family (*id.* 54–55), something that does not come up in the instances involving *aneleutheriâ* and *mîsanthrôpiâ*, although these concepts otherwise deal with fairly similar matters. Hatzilambrou calls these "incidents of misanthropy" without any further elaboration (Hatzilambrou 2022: p. 159). I believe it can be demonstrably questioned whether behaviour like this should be considered an indicator of Aristogeiton's *mîsanthrôpiâ* rather than the moral baseness belonging to his sycophancy, which is additionally connected with other kinds of inhuman actions and qualities such as cannibalism, being reduced to the level of beasts and being fundamentally "polluted" (Dem. 25.32; 58; 61–62), which for their part have nothing to do with *mîsanthrôpiâ*. Against common belief even among some scholars, a tendency for violence or the wish to cause others harm is only rarely connected with classical misanthropy, hardly ever in the Classical period and only in certain contexts in Hellenistic and later sources. Attributing this behaviour to Aristogeiton's *mîsanthrôpiâ* is also not supported by the conventional literary definition of the concept given by Hatzilambrou in her article. This is not to say that I do not largely agree with her basic argument that classical sycophancy was associated with certain aspects of the contemporary understanding of *mîsanthrôpiâ*. It can certainly be accepted that definitions of *mîsanthrôpiâ* may have included characteristics that were uncommon or atypical, as my article in fact tries to demonstrate. Nevertheless, I strongly argue that *mîsanthrôpiâ* should not be understood simply as an umbrella term for any kind of "inhuman" or antisocial behaviour without proper argumentation and consideration for the specific meaning of the concept in that particular historical and textual context. Anything else would be a denial of the historical complexity of the concept of *mîsanthrôpiâ*.

Classical sycophancy, the act of public deception or manipulation by a speaker or a politician, can be interpreted to express contempt for the public or the citizenry as a whole. Yun Lee Too has interpreted *mîsanthrôpiâ* in Isoc. 15.315 as "inhumanity".[28] This can be potentially justified by the adjacent word *ômotês*, but it can also be argued that the use of *mîsanthrôpiâ* corresponds with Isocrates' earlier application of the concept in the politico-legal context. This is notably different from other contemporary meanings associated with *mîsanthrôpiâ*, but it is nevertheless significant that Isocrates implies the contemptuous attitude related to the disposition to be generalizing in nature (in the civic context). Earlier in *Antidosis*, Isocrates calls out the "savagery" (*agriotês*) of those who show disdain to education and neglect self-improvement, although this is not necessarily directly comparable to the "brutality" of sycophants.[29] I believe that Isocrates is using *mîsanthrôpiâ* consistently in this setting, and later occurrences of this vocabulary in other authors' works support this interpretation.

Following Isocrates, misanthropy terminology is next found in the Pseudo-Demosthenic legal speech *Against Stephanus* (350/349 BCE). The speaker mounts an attack against one Stephanus and accuses him of concealing his wealth and avoiding his public duties.[30] He further admonishes wealthy people who are derelict in their duties, stating that they are motivated by greed, covetousness, and insolence. The speaker then continues that

> neither should the airs which the fellow puts on as he walks with a sad face along the walls be properly considered as marks of prudence (*sôphrosynê*), but rather as marks of misanthropy (*mîsanthrôpiâ*). In my opinion a man whom no misfortune has befallen, and who is in no lack of the necessaries of life, but who none the less habitually maintains this demeanour, has reviewed the matter and reached the conclusion in his own mind, that to those who walk in a simple and natural way and wear a cheerful countenance, men draw near unhesitatingly with requests and proposals, whereas they shrink from drawing near in the first place to affected and sullen characters.[31]

Here *mîsanthrôpiâ* points to the character of a wealthy man who wishes to avoid showing general goodwill towards other people and who shirks from the public duties that his wealth and high social status obligate him to perform.[32] Rather than an indication of prudent reservedness (*sôphrosynê*), the sad countenance and withdrawn behaviour of this kind of a man is a testament to his *mîsanthrôpiâ* and lack of positive fellow-feeling

28 Too (2008: p. 82).

29 Isoc. 15.210–214; See Too (2008: p. 240).

30 For liturgies and other forms of obligatory or voluntary social participation or contribution in Athens, see e.g. Christ (2012). For the evasion of duties, see Christ (1998, 2006).

31 Dem. 45.68. Translation by A. T. Murray (1939).

32 The democratic ideology of Classical Athens set expectations for a certain degree of social harmony (*homonoiâ*) for its citizens. Matthew Christ argues that in terms of interpersonal relationships between citizens this was limited to respecting each other as free and equal individuals and working towards common goals, rather than engaging in mutual support or experiencing intimate kinship, which was more typical of friendship (*philiâ*). In contrast, reciprocity was expected in the ties between a citizen and the state (Christ 2012: pp. 48–49).

which serve to keep him inaccessible to other people and his wealth consequently intact. This case highlights the unsociability and social withdrawal related to *mîsanthrôpiâ*, and it strongly hints at the contemptuous attitude of a person thus affected.

This is the first application of *mîsanthrôpiâ* in relation to a lack of generosity. In earlier or later Greek literature, *mîsanthrôpiâ* is not typically associated with wealth, greed or stinginess. Its opposite *philanthrôpiâ* on the other hand is often connected to generosity and charitability, which might explain the unusual connotation given to *mîsanthrôpiâ* in this case. As the purpose of the author is to portray the nature of a person who keeps away from other citizens and who is also shunned by others, this instance shows an understanding of the social ramifications of *misanthrôpiâ*, even if the author is not talking about outright hatred of humanity.

The second example is the speech *On the Crown*, first delivered in 330 BCE. Demosthenes defends his good deeds as a citizen and a public servant against the accusations of his rival Aeschines and states that

> is there any law so full of [injustice][33] (*adikiâ*) and illiberality (*mîsanthrôpiâ*) that, when a man out of sheer generosity has given away his own money, it defrauds him of the gratitude he has earned, drags him before sycophants, and gives them authority to hold an audit of his free donations?[34]

This again appears to be a new use of *mîsanthrôpiâ* and for the first time it is applied to the abstract concept of the law instead of people, and thus the earlier connotations of the term do not seem to apply to this context. Berthelot has argued that *mîsanthrôpiâ* appears as the opposite of *philanthrôpiâ* throughout the Greek literature of the 4th century BCE, and it is possible that Demosthenes makes similar use of it here (this mode of usage was also noted in Isocrates' *Antidosis*).[35] Demosthenes defends his voluntary contributions to the city in addition to his official liturgies, emphasizing his generosity and benevolence. Any law or hostile action that would deny his benevolent deeds could then by this logic be called *mîsanthrôpos*. Demosthenes essentially describes himself as the opposite of a man like Stephanus who avoids his duties and whose behaviour can be associated with *mîsanthrôpiâ* in a civic sense.[36]

I believe that in the above translation of *On the Crown*, C. A. & J. H. Vince (1971 [1926]) may have caught on to the true complexity of the matter as they have translated *mîsanthrôpiâ* at Dem. 18.112 as "illiberality" (although without any commentary).[37]

33 Replaced "iniquity" in the original translation.

34 Dem. 18.112. Translation by C. A. Vince & J. H. Vince (1971).

35 Berthelot (2003: pp. 67–68).

36 The topic of wealthy citizens being accused of avoiding their duties are a recurring theme and a source of conflict in Classical Athenian oratory. While powerful Athenian citizens developed methods of easing the financial strain the state placed on them, they also expected public gratitude and privileges in return and therefore it was essential that they emphasized their public services to the community (Christ 2006: pp. 13–14); For more on this subject, see *id*.

37 Vince & Vince (1971: p. 91).

The implied meaning seems to be the opposite of "liberality" or freedom of giving and generosity associated with *eleutheriâ/eleutheriôtês*. Georges Mathieu (on whom Berthelot relies on regarding this instance) on the other hand has translated *mîsanthrôpiâ* rather mechanically as "inhumanity" (*inhumanité*), the opposite of *philanthrôpiâ* understood as "benevolence" and something that is decidedly different from *aneleutheriâ*.[38] I suggest that a more significant differentiation in the nuance of meaning can be made that is illustrative of my argument. As Demosthenes is asking rhetorically whether there is such an unjust law that would deny his generosity and benevolence (and thus potentially label him as *mîsanthrôpos* in the "illiberal" sense), he is not simply talking about what is typically understood as inhumanity. Rather, the accusation laid against him questions his contributions as a free citizen and his service as a public official. In this sense, the interpretation offered by Vince & Vince (1971 [1926]) could also be justifiable and semantically accurate, although it too is not readily understandable without further elaboration due to the highly nuanced meaning of the expression. My interpretation of Demosthenes' use of *mîsanthrôpiâ* suggests a more fundamental failure or disqualification as a citizen.

3. "Illiberal" Misanthropy

The examples cited above represent uses of *mîsanthrôpiâ* that could be considered atypical in the broader body of sources: the concept is not usually associated with socioeconomic matters or greed, wealth, or miserliness, but examining a mention of *mîsanthrôpiâ* in the post-Classical Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *On Virtues and Vices* can illuminate this potential connection. In cataloguing and defining different types of moral traits and qualities, Pseudo-Aristotle says that

> of illiberality (*aneleutheriâ*) there are three kinds, love of base gain, parsimony, [stinginess][39]... It belongs to illiberality to set a very high value on money and to think nothing that brings profit a disgrace – a menial and servile (*douloprepês*) and squalid mode of life, alien to ambition and to liberality (*eleutheriâ*). Illiberality is accompanied by pettiness, sulkiness, littleness of soul, baseness, unreasonableness, ignobleness, misanthropy (*mîsanthrôpiâ*).[40]

A potential connection between *aneleutheriâ* and *mîsanthrôpiâ* has been made earlier by Plato in *Laws* where he states that an unnecessarily strict or "slave-like" upbringing makes people submissive, illiberal, and misanthropic. The association of *aneleutheriâ* with the moral implications of servility and submissiveness comes from the ancient Greek understanding of the nature of slavery: a slave was not typically expected to display or be capable of virtue or goodness of character as opposed to a citizen and a free man.[41] This

38 Mathieu (2000: pp. 61–62).

39 Replaced "niggardliness" in the original translation.

40 Arist. *VV*. 1251b 4–17. Translated by H. Rackham (1971 [1952]).

41 Dover (1994: pp. 114–116).

indicates a fundamental social and moral division that went far beyond a simple legal classification.[42] The metaphorical imagery of slavery and servility was commonly used as a rhetorical device in ancient Greek literature. As Deborah Kamen has demonstrated, insinuations of servility could be used to symbolically undermine the legitimate status and dignity of individual citizens in Classical Athens.[43] This was also the case in the political and legal conflict between Demosthenes and Aeschines: the accusation of having slave parentage is used by both parties in their attempt to symbolically deny the legal rights of their opponent, in addition to them characterizing each other as slavish or servile.[44]

This conception of the nature of slavery explains Plato's statement about cruel slave-like upbringing making one "illiberal" and "misanthropic" and therefore incapable of life in society (in the way that would befit a free man and a citizen). This understanding of freedom is similar to how the contrast between democracy and tyranny could be explained in terms of freedom and slavery.[45] *Mîsanthrôpiâ* however is not typically associated with slavery or submissiveness, though it may be connected to contempt against the *dêmos* and therefore indirectly to tyranny.[46] I argue that in this case the word is linked with the absence of freedom in a much more fundamental sense through its association with the concept of *aneleutheriâ*: the "illiberal" aspect of *mîsanthrôpiâ* does not imply the loss of personal freedom or submission to external dominance, but rather one's incapability for virtue in society in relation to one's fellow citizens. Essentially, this compromises one's ability to live in society and fulfil one's civic duties to other citizens and the state as would be expected of a free citizen. This explains why Pseudo-Demosthenes connects *mîsanthrôpiâ* with not only unsociability but also an "illiberal" or uncharitable attitude in *Against Stephanus*. In this sense, *mîsanthrôpos* still maintains its meaning as the opposite of *philanthrôpos*, which is the quality of a person capable of and willing to associate normatively and cordially with others and contribute to society. It is also worth noticing that mirroring how *aneleutheriâ* is presented in *EN* and *Politics*, Pseudo-Aristotle associates the qualities attributed to *philanthrôpiâ* with *eleutheriâ*.[47]

42 This division is inherent for example in *EN* and *Politics* where freedom and "liberality" serve as a permanent backdrop in Aristotle's ethical doctrines. *Eleutheriâ/eleutheriôtês* signified being free from any kind of mastery or servility, which Aristotle considered an absolute requirement for virtue (e.g. *EN*. 1103a 4–10/I.xiii.20–25, 1107b 9–35/II.vii.4–8, 1119b 31–1121a 9/IV.i.6–28, 1122b 10–19/IV.ii.10; *Pol*. 1.1259b 21–1280a 33, 1336a 29–34, 1337b 4–21).

43 Kamen (2009: pp. 43–44, 46–47); For more on this subject, see e.g. Kamen (2009 and 2020).

44 Aeschin. 2.79, 2.180, 2.183, 2.22, 3.169; Dem. 18.128–130; Kamen has argued that this kind of "servile invective" was not directly related to slavery as such. Freeborn Greeks regarded themselves as the polar opposites of slaves in all regards, and consequently this kind of rhetoric could be used in the public sphere to invoke humorous responses and upset the status of the opposition (Kamen 2009: pp. 48, 55–56).

45 Volt (2003: p. 71).

46 Philodemus says that an angry and hateful emotional disposition may lead to *mîsanthrôpiâ*, and also to becoming tyrannical (*despotikos*) and *aneleutheros* (Phld. *Ir.* 28.14–35). *Aneleutheros* has in this instance been interpreted as "slavish" (Armstrong & McOsker 2020: p. 253), but it is unclear what is actually being implied. Plato says that being a slave to one's emotional impulses amounts to *aneleutheriâ* and being tyrannized by one's own soul, just as a city that suffers under tyranny is the least of all free (Pl. *R.* 577b–d).

47 Arist. *VV*. 1250b 5.

The motif of "illiberal" misanthropy can be further linked to the idea of bad citizenship, or more precisely what Matthew Christ has called "the self-interested citizen". He argues that Athenians were highly sensitive to the self-interested motives of public figures. The conflicted nature of self-interest was rooted in the relative individual freedom that Classical Athens afforded to its citizens and the demands of participation and contribution of the civic society. In practice, in the Athenian democratic system good citizens were expected to willingly carry out their duties for the sake of the mutual benefit of themselves and the society. When citizens felt that the civic duties levelled on them were unreasonable in terms of the expected return, they might feel inclined to evade or lessen their obligations.[48] As Peter Liddel has stated, living in the *polis* represented a kind of liberty in itself, and in order to comprehend the nature of the individual liberty of an Athenian citizen it is necessary to understand how their duties to the *polis* were negotiated and performed.[49]

The virtuousness of a free citizen was ultimately determined in light of their civic performance, and in the oratory context *mîsanthrôpiâ* clearly represents a fundamental failure in this regard. This is most evident in the orations of Demosthenes and Pseudo-Demosthenes where *mîsanthrôpiâ* is associated with the misuse of wealth in respect to one's obligations to society. This view can be illustrated further by examining the orations in regard of the aforementioned "illiberal" aspect of *mîsanthrôpiâ*, even if *aneleutheriâ* is not explicitly mentioned in the context. The characterization of an individual like Stephanus as *mîsanthrôpos* can be explained by the association of the concept with the contemporary understanding of *aneleutheriâ*, which is in line with Stephanus' covetousness, stinginess, and the neglect of his civic obligations. His *mîsanthrôpiâ* is implied to be a sign of his fundamental unfitness to associate with others as a free citizen, and not simply only of his contempt of people. This makes him *mîsanthrôpos* in an "illiberal" sense which is manifested in his inability or unwillingness to properly exercise the freedom granted to him as a citizen, which is the basis of civic morality.

4. Conclusions

Through a close study of the sources, this paper provides an entirely new understanding of the usage of the concept of *mîsanthrôpiâ* in the rhetorical literature of Classical Athens. This demonstrates how the established meanings associated with misanthropy terminology have traditionally been taken for granted in classical scholarship and that the full complexity of classical misanthropy remains largely undiscovered. In the rhetorical context of 4th century BCE Athens, *mîsanthrôpiâ* could be used to refer to condescension or avoidance of one's fellow citizens. This kind of "misanthropy" was markedly different from its literal meaning and other uses of the terminology in the 5th and 4th centuries

48 Christ (2006: pp. 9–10, 15); For more on the subject, see *id.*, pp. 15–44.

49 Liddel (2007: p. 36); Raaflaub says that the various components of the Athenian democratic political system were capable of establishing and guaranteeing freedom only in their entirety. So long as the citizens participated in the government, the community enjoyed freedom (Raaflaub 2004: pp. 230–231).

BCE. When *mîsanthrôpiâ* is discussed alongside *aneleutheriâ* and the context is adjusted to include the civic dimension, also the implications of *mîsanthrôpiâ* become more varied and atypical: in this specific setting, *mîsanthrôpos* is used to signify a male citizen who is fundamentally disqualified as a proper citizen and a free man due to his unsociability, moral deficiency, and "illiberality" regarding his civic responsibilities, including "slavishness" and a general lack of virtue, in addition to the neglect of his duties for the state and his fellow citizens.

A male citizen who was characterized as *mîsanthrôpos* essentially had his very status as a morally and socially complete citizen and human being questioned similarly to the way a slave was considered to be lacking humanity, virtue, and moral agency. This indicated their compromised position as a full member of society as their perceived inability or unwillingness to contribute to society and exercise their freedom rendered them morally and symbolically slave-like, submissive, and "illiberal" and therefore devoid of virtue and civic worth. This explains why in this context *mîsanthrôpiâ* is used to characterize a person as a member of a particular society rather than of the generic humanity, and consequently it primarily describes one's disposition towards their fellow citizens.

Despite the historical context in which it occurs, this "illiberal" *mîsanthrôpiâ* does not seem to be related to any principled opposition to Athenian democracy. Rather, it represents a public moral reaction to one specific aspect of the problematic position of a citizen who was perceived to have violated the democratic polity by transgressing the acceptable boundaries of individual freedom and, consequently, the egalitarian relationship between citizens.

The particular use of misanthropy terminology discussed in this article appears to have been unique to the Athenian rhetorical literature of the 4th century BCE. Its complete disappearance from Greek literature suggests that it did not survive the political and cultural changes that took place during the Hellenistic period. This understanding of *mîsanthrôpiâ* was demonstrably connected with the political system of Classical Athens, its democratic ideology, and civic obligations. Therefore, it is to be expected that this mode of usage became obsolete after the fall of the Athenian democratic system as a result of the Macedonian conquests. Inevitably, it would not have had the same relevance in the monarchical Alexandrian society that did not emphasize the liberties, duties, or societal participation of its subjects in a similar manner. During the Hellenistic period, *mîsanthrôpiâ* and its derivatives established their meaning as the universal hatred or aversion of humans, and therefore came to mean what is typically understood as misanthropy in antiquity.

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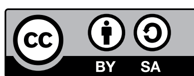

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