



ROUTLEDGE
HANDBOOKS



The Routledge Handbook of Love in Philosophy

Edited by Adrienne M. Martin

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF LOVE IN PHILOSOPHY

The Routledge Handbook of Love in Philosophy collects 39 original chapters from prominent philosophers on the nature, meaning, value, and predicaments of love, presented in a unique framework that highlights the rich variety of methods and traditions used to engage with these subjects. This volume is structured around important realms of human life and activity, each of which receives its own section:

- I. Family and Friendship
- II. Romance and Sex
- III. Politics and Society
- IV. Animals, Nature, and the Environment
- V. Art, Faith, and Meaning
- VI. Rationality and Morality
- VII. Traditions: Historical and Contemporary.

This last section includes chapters treating love as a subject in both Western and non-Western philosophical traditions. The contributions, all appearing in print here for the first time, are written to be accessible and compelling to non-philosophers and philosophers alike; and the volume as a whole encourages professional philosophers, teachers, students, and lay readers to rethink standard constructions of philosophical canons.

Adrienne M. Martin is Akshata Murty '02 and Rishi Sunak Associate Professor of Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, and George R. Roberts Fellow, at Claremont McKenna College. She is the author of *How We Hope: A Moral Psychology* (2013).

ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOKS IN PHILOSOPHY

Routledge Handbooks in Philosophy are state-of-the-art surveys of emerging, newly refreshed, and important fields in philosophy, providing accessible yet thorough assessments of key problems, themes, thinkers, and recent developments in research.

All chapters for each volume are specially commissioned, and written by leading scholars in the field. Carefully edited and organized, *Routledge Handbooks in Philosophy* provide indispensable reference tools for students and researchers seeking a comprehensive overview of new and exciting topics in philosophy. They are also valuable teaching resources as accompaniments to textbooks, anthologies, and research-orientated publications.

Also available:

The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy and Science of Addiction

Edited by Hanna Pickard and Serge Ahmed

The Routledge Handbook of Moral Epistemology

Edited by Karen Jones, Mark Timmons, and Aaron Zimmerman

The Routledge Handbook of Love in Philosophy

Edited by Adrienne M. Martin

The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Childhood and Children

Anca Gheaus, Gideon Calder, and Jurgen De Wispelaere

The Routledge Handbook of Applied Epistemology

David Coady and James Chase

For more information about this series, please visit: www.routledge.com/Routledge-Handbooks-in-Philosophy/book-series/RHP

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF LOVE IN PHILOSOPHY

Edited by Adrienne M. Martin

First published 2019
by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2019 Taylor & Francis

The right of Adrienne M. Martin to be identified as the author of the editorial matter, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A catalog record for this title has been requested

ISBN: 978-1-138-18444-2 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-64520-9 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo
by Wearset Ltd, Boldon, Tyne and Wear

CONTENTS

<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	ix
Introduction <i>Adrienne M. Martin</i>	1
PART I	
Family and Friendship	11
1 Love and Friendship <i>Diane Jeske</i>	13
2 Early Relationships, Pathologies of Attachment, and the Capacity to Love <i>Monique Wonderly</i>	23
3 “Mama, Do You Love Me?”: A Defense of Unloving Parents <i>Sara Protasi</i>	35
4 Loving and (or?) Choosing Our Children: Disability, Unconditional Parental Love, and Prenatal Selection <i>Joseph A. Stramondo</i>	47
PART II	
Romance and Sex	59
5 Love, Romance, and Sex <i>Troy Jollimore</i>	61

Contents

6	All Hearts in Love Use Their Own Tongues: Concepts, Verbal Disputes, and Disagreeing About Love <i>C.S.I. Jenkins</i>	72
7	The Normative Potency of Sexually Exclusive Love <i>Jennifer Ryan Lockhart</i>	83
8	Queer Bodies and Queer Love <i>Maren Behrens</i>	93
9	Plato on Love and Sex <i>Jeremy Reid</i>	105
10	<i>Eros</i> and <i>Agape</i> in Interpersonal Relationships: Plato, Emerson, and Peirce <i>Daniel G. Campos</i>	116
11	Threats, Warnings, and Relationship Ultimatums <i>Hallie Liberto</i>	128
PART III		
Politics and Society		139
12	Love and Marriage <i>Brook J. Sadler</i>	141
13	Love, Anger, and Racial Justice <i>Myisha Cherry</i>	157
14	Love and Political Reconciliation <i>Colleen Murphy</i>	169
15	The Morning Stars Will Sing Together: Compassion, Nonviolence, and the Revolution of the Heart <i>Cheyne Ryan</i>	180
PART IV		
Animals, Nature, and the Environment		191
16	Love and Animals: Simone Weil, Iris Murdoch and Attention as Love <i>Elisa Aaltola</i>	193
17	On the Love of Nature <i>Rick Anthony Furtak</i>	205

Contents

18	Caring to Be Green: The Importance of Love for Environmental Integrity <i>Cheryl Hall</i>	215
PART V		
Art, Faith, and Meaning		227
19	Love and Beauty in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics <i>Paul Guyer</i>	229
20	Love Songs <i>Noël Carroll</i>	242
21	How Faith Secures the Morality of Love <i>Sharon Krishek</i>	252
22	What Is This Thing Called Love? <i>Luc Bovens</i>	264
PART VI		
Rationality and Morality		275
23	Reasons for Love <i>Esther Engels Kroeker</i>	277
24	Reasons of Love <i>Katrien Schaubroeck</i>	288
25	Love and Agency <i>Kyla Ebels-Duggan</i>	300
26	Love, Practical Reasons, and African Philosophy <i>Sandy Koullas</i>	313
27	Love and Moral Structures: How Love Can Reshape Ethical Theory <i>J.L.A. Garcia</i>	325
28	Moral Normativity and the Necessities of Love <i>Harry Frankfurt</i>	333
29	Love and Hatred <i>Jens Haas and Katja Maria Vogt</i>	344

PART VII	
Traditions: Historical and Contemporary	357
30 The Confucian and Daoist Traditions on Love <i>David B. Wong</i>	359
31 Love: India's Distinctive Moral Theory <i>Shyam Ranganathan</i>	371
32 Love in the Jewish Tradition <i>Lenn E. Goodman</i>	382
33 Love in Islamic Philosophy <i>Ali Altaf Mian</i>	395
34 Three Models of Christian Love: Platonic, Aristotelian, and Kantian <i>Eric J. Silverman</i>	409
35 European Concepts of Love in the 17th and 18th Centuries <i>Gábor Boros</i>	422
36 Love in 19th-Century Western Philosophy <i>Michael Strawser</i>	441
37 (The Varieties of) Love in Contemporary Anglophone Philosophy <i>Benjamin Bagley</i>	453
38 Love in Contemporary Psychology and Neuroscience <i>Berit Brogaard</i>	465
<i>Index</i>	479

CONTRIBUTORS

Elisa Aaltola works as a Senior Researcher in Philosophy at the University of Turku, Finland. Her publications include *Animal Suffering: Philosophy and Culture* (2012), *Animal Ethics and Philosophy: Questioning the Orthodoxy* (co-edited with John Hadley, 2014), and *Varieties of Empathy: Moral Psychology and Animal Ethics* (2018).

Benjamin Bagley is a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Virginia. His publications include “Loving Someone in Particular” and “Properly Proleptic Blame,” both in *Ethics*.

Maren Behrensen is a Post-Doc at the Institute of Christian Social Ethics at the University of Münster, Germany. Their recent book, *The State and the Self* (2017), explores the metaphysics and ethics of identity maintenance in modern societies.

Gábor Boros is Professor of Philosophy at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary and Professor of General Humanities at Gáspár Károli University of the Reformed Church in Hungary. Beyond monographs and articles on 17th-century philosophers, he is author of *Philosophies of Love* (in Hungarian, 2015) and *Cult and Culture of Love in China and Europe* (together with P. Santangelo and R. Gigliucci, forthcoming with Brill).

Luc Bovens is Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He co-authored *Bayesian Epistemology* (with Stephan Hartmann) in 2003.

Berit Brogaard is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Miami and a Professor II at the University of Oslo. Her areas of research include philosophy of perception, philosophy of emotions, and philosophy of language. She is the author of *Transient Truths* (Oxford University Press, 2012), *On Romantic Love* (Oxford University Press, 2015), *The Superhuman Mind* (Penguin, 2015), and *Seeing & Saying* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

Daniel G. Campos is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Brooklyn College of The City University of New York. He is the author of *Loving Immigrants in America: An Experiential Philosophy of Personal Interaction* (Lexington Books, 2017).

Contributors

Noël Carroll is a Distinguished Professor in the Philosophy Program of the City University of New York. He is the author of *Living in an Artworld*, *Humor: A Very Short Introduction*, and *The Philosophy of Horror*.

Myisha Cherry is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Riverside whose research interest lies at the intersection of moral psychology and social and political philosophy. Cherry's books include *The Moral Psychology of Anger* co-edited with Owen Flanagan (Rowman and Littlefield, 2018) and *Unmuted: Conversations on Prejudice, Oppression, and Social Justice* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). Her research has appeared in *Hypatia*, *Radical Philosophy Review*, and *Critical Philosophy of Race* as well as mainstream publications like *Salon* and *The Los Angeles Times*.

Kyla Ebels-Duggan is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Northwestern University. She specializes in moral and political philosophy and their history, working in a broadly Kantian tradition. Her work has appeared in *Ethics*, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, *Philosophical Studies*, and *Philosophers' Imprint*.

Harry Frankfurt is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Princeton University. He is the author of numerous articles and books, including *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (1999) and *The Reasons of Love* (2004).

Rick Anthony Furtak is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Colorado College. He is the author of *Wisdom in Love: Kierkegaard and the Ancient Quest for Emotional Integrity* (2005) and *Knowing Emotions: Truthfulness in Affective Experience* (2018). He has also published a translation of Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* (2007).

J.L.A. Garcia is Professor in Boston College's Philosophy Department. Garcia served on the American Philosophical Association's Committee on Hispanics and chaired its Committee on Philosophy and Black Experience. His article, "The Heart of Racism," from *The Journal of Social Philosophy*, has been widely reprinted, sometimes in translation.

Lenn E. Goodman is Professor of Philosophy and Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Vanderbilt University. His books include *Judaism: A Contemporary Philosophical Investigation* (Routledge, 2016), *On Justice* (2008), *Creation and Evolution* (Routledge, 2010), *In Defense of Truth: A Pluralistic Approach* (2001), *God of Abraham* (1996), and his Gifford Lectures: *Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself* (2008).

Paul Guyer is the Jonathan Nelson Professor of Humanities and Philosophy at Brown University. He is the author of many works on the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, including *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (1979), *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (1993), and *Kant* (2006) in the "Routledge Philosophers" series. He is also the editor of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and of several multi-author collections on Kant's aesthetics. He recently published *A History of Modern Aesthetics* in three volumes (2014). He is currently writing a monograph on Kant and Moses Mendelssohn.

Jens Haas trained as a lawyer specializing in criminal appeals law and now works on agency and ignorance. He is interested in the reasons and causes that figure in crimes like murder and in the nature of life-changing actions. He recently began to co-author papers in normative

Contributors

epistemology and value theory with Katja Maria Vogt, for example “Ignorance and Investigation” in *The Routledge International Handbook on Ignorance* (2015).

Cheryl Hall is Associate Professor in the School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies at the University of South Florida. Her recent publications include “What Will It Mean to Be Green? Envisioning Positive Possibilities Without Dismissing Loss” (2013) and *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Political Theory*, which she co-edited (2016).

C.S.I. Jenkins is Canada Research Chair and Professor of Philosophy at the University of British Columbia, and Principal Investigator on the SSHRC-funded interdisciplinary research/creation project “The Metaphysics of Love.” Her book, *What Love Is and What It Could Be*, appeared in 2017.

Diane Jeske is a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Iowa. Her research areas are ethics, history of ethics, political philosophy, and philosophy of law. She is the author of *Rationality and Moral Theory: How Intimacy Generates Reasons* (Routledge, 2008) and *The Evil Within: Why We Need Moral Philosophy* (Oxford, 2018).

Troy Jollimore is Professor of Philosophy at California State University, Chico. His philosophical books include *Love’s Vision* (Princeton University Press, 2011) and *On Loyalty* (Routledge, 2012). His books of poetry include *Syllabus of Errors* and the National Book Critics Circle Award-winning *Tom Thomson in Purgatory*.

Sandy Koullas is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Expository Writing Program at Johns Hopkins University and teaches part-time in the Philosophy Department at Georgetown University. She completed her doctoral dissertation, *On the Value of Relationships*, at Johns Hopkins University in 2017.

Sharon Krishek is a Lecturer in the philosophy department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. She is the author of *Kierkegaard on Faith and Love* (2009) and *Kierkegaard’s Philosophy of Love* (2011, in Hebrew).

Esther Engels Kroeker is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Antwerp. She is interested in the history of modern philosophy, and especially in the moral philosophy of Thomas Reid and David Hume, as well as in the contemporary discussion of love and practical reasons. Together with Katrien Schaubroeck, she edited the volume *Love, Reason and Morality* (2017), and has published various articles on love, morality, and the work of Reid and Hume.

Hallie Liberto is an Associate Professor at the University of Maryland—College Park. She researches topics in normative ethics and social philosophy, such as the nature of rights, exploitation, coercion, consent, and promises.

Jennifer Ryan Lockhart is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Auburn University. She has research interests in ethics and the history of philosophy, especially the work of Kant and Kierkegaard.

Ali Altaf Mian is currently Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies at Seattle University, where he teaches classes on the Qur’an, comparative religion and mysticism, and gender and sexuality

in Islam. He is the author of *Muslims in South Asia* (forthcoming) and is also working on a manuscript entitled *Surviving Modernity: Ashraf 'Ali Thanvi (1863–1943) and the Politics of Muslim Orthodoxy in Colonial India*.

Colleen Murphy is Professor of Law, Philosophy, and Political Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in the United States. She is the author of *A Moral Theory of Political Reconciliation* (Cambridge, 2010) and *The Conceptual Foundations of Transitional Justice* (Cambridge, 2017), and is co-author with Linda Radzik of the “Reconciliation” entry in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Sara Protasi is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Puget Sound, USA. Her primary research focus is on the moral psychology of emotions, especially love and envy, which she investigates in a way that is both empirically minded and historically sensitive. For updated info see: <https://saraprotasi.weebly.com>.

Shyam Ranganathan is a member of the Department of Philosophy and York Center for Asian Research, York University, Toronto. His latest contribution to translation theory includes “Context and Pragmatics” in the *Routledge Handbook of Translation and Philosophy* (2018). He is commentator and translator of *Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra* (2008) from the Sanskrit, editor and contributor to the *Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Ethics* (2017), and author of *Ethics and the History of Indian Philosophy* (2007; 2nd edn, 2017) and *Hinduism: A Contemporary Philosophical Investigation* (Routledge, 2019).

Jeremy Reid is a Post-Doctoral Associate at the University of Maryland, College Park. He works on the history of ethics and political philosophy, with a specialization in ancient philosophy. His work has appeared in *Plato's Symposium: A Critical Guide* (2017).

Cheyney Ryan is Senior Fellow, Program in Ethics, Law, and Armed Conflict, University of Oxford, where he is also a member of Merton College. He is also co-chair of the Oxford Consortium for Human Rights which conducts student workshops on human rights and various topics in Oxford, New York, and other places. He has been engaged with the politics of non-violence since becoming involved in the civil rights movement in the 1960s and working with Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. Most recently, his work has focused on the dialogue between pacifism and contemporary just war thinking.

Brook J. Sadler is Associate Professor of Philosophy in the Department of Humanities and Cultural Studies at the University of South Florida. She has published articles on marriage, Kantian ethics, meta-ethics, plagiarism, and philosophical pedagogy. She also publishes poetry and criticism in many literary journals and magazines.

Katrien Schaubroeck is Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Antwerp. Her research focuses on practical reasons and the importance of love. She authored *The Importance of What We Care About: A Love-Based Theory of Practical Reasons* (2013) and co-edited (with Esther Kroeker) *Love, Reasons and Morality* (Routledge, 2017).

Eric J. Silverman is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Christopher Newport University in the USA. He has 20 publications on topics in ethics, philosophy of religion, and medieval philosophy. His publications include a monograph, *The Prudence of Love: How Possessing the Virtue of*

Contributors

Love Benefits the Lover (Lexington Books, 2010), and a co-edited collection, *Paradise Understood: New Philosophical Essays about Heaven* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

Joseph A. Stramondo is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at San Diego State University. His writing focuses on the intersection of bioethics and philosophy of disability and can be found in *The Hastings Center Report*, *The Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, *Science and Engineering Ethics*, *The International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics*, and *Social Philosophy Today*.

Michael Strawser is Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Central Florida. His recent books include *Kierkegaard and the Philosophy of Love* (2015), *Asking Good Questions: Case Studies in Ethics and Critical Thinking* (co-authored, 2015), and *Kierkegaard's God and the Good Life* (co-edited, 2017).

Katja Maria Vogt specializes in ancient philosophy, normative epistemology, ethics, and theory of action. She is interested in questions that figure in both ancient and contemporary discussions: What are values? What kind of values are knowledge and truth? What is a good human life? She recently began to co-author articles in normative epistemology and value theory with Jens Haas.

Monique Wonderly is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, San Diego. Much of her recent work concerns the nature and ethics of emotional attachment. She has published in the areas of ethics, philosophy of emotion, and history of philosophy.

David B. Wong is the Beischer Professor of Philosophy at Duke University. His works in moral philosophy, moral psychology, and Chinese philosophy include *Natural Moralities: A Defense of Pluralistic Relativism* (2006).



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

INTRODUCTION

Adrienne M. Martin

A two-part idea is at the heart of this Handbook. First, love and loving relationships are a human constant, a constant that is a source of reasons, motivation, meaning, and value in human life; but, second, the nature and significance of love and loving relationships vary widely across cultures and times, and even across areas of activity within a single culture and time. Love and loving relationships, what unifies and distinguishes them, what they do for and to us, why we value them, and how it is appropriate to value them, are thus natural and important topics for philosophical inquiry. Unsurprisingly, then, such topics are persistent themes throughout the history of philosophical inquiry and thought. They are also enjoying burgeoning attention in the contemporary literature, and classes on the philosophy of love are regular offerings at many colleges and universities.

Both the historical and the contemporary literature on love encompass a broad diversity of philosophical methods. Consider: Plato's Socratic dialogues; experiential and practice-based forms of Daoism and Confucianism; Kierkegaard's narratives; a prioristic analysis and synthesis in the traditional Western, Arabic, and Indian canons; philosophical anthropology in the same; *ubuntu* in sub-Saharan African philosophy; Simone de Beauvoir's feminism; Iris Murdoch's literary-perceptual philosophy; Thoreau's and Emerson's transcendentalism; Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speeches; James Baldwin's essays; Rawlsian reflective equilibrium; recent experimentally based and neuroscientifically informed methods. All of these, and more, are deployed within this volume in service of philosophers' efforts to understand the nature and significance of love and loving relationships.

When we consider the idea that love and loving relationships are human constants that vary widely across human societies, it is natural to frame a survey of philosophical literature on the subject by areas of human life and activity. The volume is thus divided into seven Parts: I. Family and Friendship; II. Romance and Sex; III. Politics and Society; IV. Animals, Nature, and the Environment; V. Art, Faith, and Meaning; VI. Rationality and Morality; and, finally, VII. Traditions: Historical and Contemporary. This framework facilitates access to a broad diversity of methods that have been brought to bear on questions about the nature and significance of love. Readers may come to this volume with a primary interest in one of these areas, and focus on the contributions within a single Part. However, what has been striking to me, as the editor, is the numerous and fascinating themes that cut across these subject areas, and across the various philosophical methods and traditions represented here. I will therefore use this Introduction to

highlight and connect some of these themes, rather than to summarize each individual chapter or section.

Diotima's Ascent

Plato's Socratic dialogue, *The Symposium*, is perhaps the most famous philosophical treatise on love in Western history. In it, Socrates reports a speech about love he "once heard from a woman of Mantinea, Diotima" (201d). (Pause for a moment to contemplate that Western philosophy of love thus begins in large part with a woman's wisdom.) Diotima's view is that "to go aright, or be led by another, into the mystery of Love" is to ascend a ladder of appreciation or pleasure in beautiful things, beginning with the beautiful body of a mortal beloved, then

from one body to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, then from beautiful bodies to beautiful customs, and from customs to learning beautiful things, and from these lessons he arrives in the end at this lesson, which is learning of this very Beauty, so that in the end he comes to know just what it is to be beautiful.

(*Symposium* 211c–d)

Love, at the peak of ascent, is pleasure in and knowledge of the Platonic form of Beauty; earthly love and its pleasures are, it seems, left behind. The reader can find additional discussions of this view in the chapters by Daniel Campos and Paul Guyer, as well as a detailed bibliography for further reading in Jeremy Reid's chapter. We also see several versions of Diotima's ascent in Michael Strawser's chapter on "Love in 19th-Century Western Philosophy," through the works of Hegel, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche.

Interestingly, Eros and the erotic are, in the contemporary popular imagination, most centrally associated with lust and sex, and "Platonic" love is love between people who do not sexually desire each other. But it is in fact Eros who is the subject of Diotima's ascent, and thus the view Plato has Socrates adopt from Diotima is that what we would popularly call "erotic love" contains the potential to be trained and transformed first into "Platonic love"—as in "I love you (merely) Platonically"—and finally into a transcendent form of knowledge without attachment to any of the usual stimuli of erotic arousal or, indeed, to any person or persons at all. I will trace a series of intertwined themes, drawn from this view: The philosophical contemplation of love often leads to questions, first, about the relation between carnal erotic love and love—Divine or secular—oriented away from bodily pleasure and toward goodness or virtue. Second, setting aside or at least decentering attention to physical eroticism, questions arise regarding the relation between and relative value of attached or partial love—especially love for particular people such as romantic interests, friends, or family members—and universal or impartial obligations oriented toward all humanity, or all creation. Third, it is important not to neglect the epistemic dimension of Diotima's ascent, which brings our attention to another theme running through several chapters in this volume, regarding the idea that loving someone or something constitutes a distinctive kind of perception that generates insight and knowledge about the beloved that may be otherwise inaccessible. From here, a fourth theme develops that runs counter to those who think loving partiality is in tension with moral obligations or virtue: several chapters develop the idea that love or a loving attitude is the cornerstone of moral theory and practice. In the following, I'll say a bit about each of these themes in turn, indicating some of the chapters in which they feature most prominently. I also note chapters that raise skeptical challenges or problems to the conceptual space within which these themes and questions are articulated.

Is Carnal Love an Obstacle to the Achievement of Virtue?

That earthly love is, at best, a diminished reflection and instrument to achievement of a love that appreciates and comprehends the Divine source of all goodness and beauty is a theme that runs forward from Diotima through the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic theological and philosophical traditions: Lenn Goodman, in his chapter on “Love in the Jewish Tradition,” emphasizes the practical-epistemic dimension of this theme, tracing a route from the practice of grace, piety, justice, and science to knowledge of God and His love. Ali Altaf Mian, in the course of describing a robust, complex, and multi-valenced set of views about human/earthly and divine/heavenly love(s) in his contribution on “Love in Islamic Philosophy,” reports of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), “Humans might commence by loving imperfect instances of goodness and beauty, but they eventually come to love the ultimate and perfect source of all goodness and beauty, namely God” (p. 402). In Gábor Boros’s chapter, “European Concepts of Love in the 17th and 18th Centuries,” this aspect of Diotima’s ascent continues to be central in the work of Nicolas Malbranche, René Descartes, and Mary Astell and John Norris.

In several extensions of this view, the lowest rung of pleasure in a beautiful body also presents a hazard and a potential obstacle to the possibility of ascent. At worst, that is, earthly love and in particular lustful pleasure in sex is antithetical to virtue and knowledge of Divine goodness and beauty. In “Plato on Love and Sex,” Jeremy Reid turns from the *Symposium* to the *Laws* and *Phaedrus*, where the central feature of “bad love”—which is bad indeed: controlling, obsessive, jealous, and clingy—is its focus on the beloved’s body. In these texts, there is a “good love” initially inspired by bodily beauty, but it must turn toward the beloved’s character and away from sex and sexual desire. The importance of controlling “carnal love” with reason and directing passion toward either epistemic or political ends is also a central theme running through several of the Islamic philosophies in Mian’s chapter. As for the Christian tradition, Eric Silverman identifies three models of Christian love, and emphasizes that the neo-Platonist model not only values “spiritual immaterial love over physical earthly love,” but follows on Augustine’s dim view of physical beauty and pleasure in it:

What was there, to delight me, except to love and to be loved? Yet, I did not keep to the bright path of friendship and moderation of loving from soul to soul, instead my heart was darkened, obscured, and overcast by clouds from the polluted lust of the flesh and gushing energy of adolescence, so I could not discern between serene chaste love and the darkness of lust.

(p. 412)

Secular versions of Diotima’s ascent that take a negative view toward carnal love appear in several chapters in this volume. Among the arguments that Troy Jollimore surveys (and critiques) in his chapter, “Love, Romance, and Sex,” is that of Raja Halwani, who sees self-interested sexual desire as incompatible with genuine love, which is supposed to be entirely other-regarding (p. 63). In her chapter on “Love and Marriage,” Brook Sadler demonstrates how an Augustinian anxiety about sex develops in Immanuel Kant’s arguments that the purpose of the institution of marriage is to secure the religious or moral permissibility of sexual intimacy (pp. 143–144).

Even Ralph Waldo Emerson, who rejected so much of the Christian doctrine of his time, held that sexual desire—and personal attachment more generally—should give way to love of Universal Being. In his chapter, “*Eros* and *Agape* in Interpersonal Relationships: Plato, Emerson, and Peirce,” Daniel Campos reports that it is this aspect of Emerson’s thought—that “romantic

love is training ‘for a love which knows no sex, nor person, nor partiality, but which seeks virtue and wisdom everywhere, to the end of increasing virtue and wisdom’” (p. 123)—that ultimately leads him, Campos, to look elsewhere for a philosophical understanding of his own experience with romantic love. Since Campos’s disenchantment with both Diotima’s and Emerson’s ascents arises not only from a desire to see the value in physical acts of love, but also more broadly the value of particularized interpersonal love, his ruminations point us toward the second theme I articulated above, regarding the relation between attached or partial love and obligations of impartial concern. Before turning to that, however, let me note some of the more sex-positive views represented in the volume.

For example, Jollimore argues that, insofar as there is legitimacy to the notion that sexual desire is an obstacle to good love, even of the romantic variety, it is due to the desire that love be founded in something both stable and essential to the beloved. Jollimore argues that this desire for stability, however, does not present an irresolvable tension with either sexual desire or the desire to be the object of sexual desire. (Reflecting back on the original ascent prescribed by Diotima and its uptake in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic philosophy, it is noteworthy that Divine goodness and beauty are perhaps the most paradigmatic examples of stable and essential properties. It is plausible that the concern in contemporary Anglophone philosophy to capture the so-called “constancy” of love—that it does not change even when the beloved’s loveable qualities change—has its genetic origins in these religious ancestors. See Benjamin Bagley’s chapter on “(The Varieties of) Love in Contemporary Anglophone Philosophy” and Luc Bovens’ “What Is This Thing Called Love?” for discussions of love’s purported constancy.)

In even more direct opposition to the negative view of sex framed by Diotima’s ascent, Boros presents 18th-century French materialist, Julien Offrey de la Mettrie, who, inspired by Voltaire and tracing his philosophical ancestry to Epicurus, Lucretius, and Catullus rather than Plato, celebrated the lover of joy, *le voluptueux*, who enslaves reason to “love consisting in corporeal acts” (p. 433). Enjoying the same ancestry, Emilie du Chatelet “considers love to be the most vivid and lively passion, unrivalled in its capability to render us happy,” and offers “psychological advice to women (of the same rank) regarding how to nourish the fire of love in their partners” (p. 437).

Following in this anti-Platonic, empiricist vein, Berit Brogaard in her chapter on “Love in Contemporary Psychology and Neuroscience” presents findings in empirical psychology connecting the origins of romantic and passionate love with arousing or unusual environments. She also demonstrates that feelings of sexual attraction and dispositions toward sexual intimacy are central elements of several recent psychological theories of love. In attachment theory, indeed, unhealthy forms of attachment are purported to be evidenced by, among other things, failures to associate sex with intimacy and the tendency to use sex as “a means to satisfy unmet needs for security” (p. 473). Intimacy of both sexual and non-sexual personal forms also features in Monique Wonderly’s chapter, in “Early Relationships, Pathologies of Attachment, and the Capacity to Love,” where she argues that “an understanding of the infant–primary caregiver attachment reveals philosophically underappreciated respects in which love improves us and contributes to our identities via the role of felt security” (p. 27).

Finally, I want to indicate some points in the volume where contributors raise important challenges to common assumptions about the connection between romantic relationships and sexual intimacy. In their groundbreaking contribution, “Queer Bodies and Queer Love,” Maren Behrens argues that contemporary conceptions of love, sexual attraction, and gendered bodies create a conceptual and practical space in which queer romantic love becomes impossible. Carrie Ichikawa Jenkins, in “All Hearts In Love Use Their Own Tongues: Concepts, Verbal Disputes, and Disagreeing About Love,” provides the theoretical and conceptual resources for

identifying when disagreements about what is “really” romantic love are “verbal”—that is, when the equal rights advocate declaring “love is love” and the social conservative denying that same-sex love is “real love” are using different concepts of love—and when such verbal disputes are nonetheless serious. Jennifer Lockhart, in “The Normative Potency of Sexually Exclusive Love,” argues that supporting the plausible belief that sexual monogamy is a worthy (though not necessarily superior) lifestyle choice requires abandoning the common assumption that there is no distinctively sexual ethics.

Is Partial, Attached Love in Tension with Obligations of Impartiality?

I turn now from surveying treatments of the possible relations between sexual desire or carnal love, romantic love, and virtue to questions about the relation between attached or partial love and obligations of impartial concern. Such questions provide an organizing principle for several lasting philosophical debates and discourses about love.

In Western philosophy, the primary obligations of impartial concern are, of course, the obligations of impartial morality, but first consider a parallel within aesthetics. Paul Guyer, in “Love and Beauty in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics,” organizes several of the theories surveyed around the question of whether the “disinterestedness” of our pleasure in beauty does or does not distinguish this pleasure from the sentiment of love. For those who follow in Plato’s footsteps, the possibility and even superiority of impartial love opens up the space for conceiving of beauty as a genuine object of love. In the Earl of Shaftesbury’s work, for example, although disinterested pleasure in beauty and love of the good are distinct, they ultimately have the same object, and thus are, as Guyer says, “intimately connected” (p. 230). Later, and outside of a Platonist vein, Moses Mendelssohn makes a place for both the love of the artist (through their art) and the love of characters in a more complex model of aesthetic responses (pp. 235–237).

Now consider a worry about the relation between the attachments of love and impartial morality, which may be most familiar to the contemporary reader of philosophy from the literature spawned by Bernard Williams’s and Michael Stocker’s attacks on deontological and consequentialist moral theories. Sharon Krishek finds this worry addressed earlier, in Søren Kierkegaard’s extensive work on love and faith. In “How Faith Secures the Morality of Love,” Krishek articulates the worry thus:

If we accept the moral demand to treat all humans as equals and thus as equally deserving of our concern, it is clear how love posits a threat to this demand. The romantic lover, the friend, the parent—all these lovers naturally focus their attention on their beloveds. Such particularistic concern may either exhaust their ability to care for others (who are not their beloveds) or render them indifferent to them.

(p. 253)

Krishek argues that this worry can be resolved with a love conditioned by Kierkegaardian faith, as the latter allows a reconciliation between partialist loving relationships and impartial morality.

Williams and Stocker, however, place fundamental value on essentially partialist loving relationships without requiring any conditions on those relationships such as faith or morality. Loving relations are, on their view, unconditionally valuable, and give rise to important practical motivation and reasons. That unconditional love is valuable and loving relationships are unconditionally valuable is certainly a widespread view that plays out in a number of practically important contexts. For example, as Joseph Stramondo presents (and critiques) in “Loving and

(or?) Choosing Our Children: Disability, Unconditional Parental Love, and Prenatal Selection,” many disability advocates argue that the unconditional acceptance and love a parent should have for their child precludes prenatal selection against disability. (In the interest of noting nodes of philosophical disagreement, I should report that not only does Stramondo critique these arguments in his chapter, but Sara Protasi argues against such an idealized view of parental love in “‘Mama, Do You Love Me?’ A Defense of Unloving Parents.”) Less controversially, many people feel the pull of the possibility that one can be torn between love and moral obligation.

Katrien Schaubroeck, in “Reasons of Love,” relates Williams’s and Stocker’s arguments and develops a taxonomy of responses to these arguments where the main dividing line is between “reductionism,” whereby the reasons of love are actually a subset of moral reasons, and “separatism,” whereby the reasons of love are separate from and sometimes more important than moral reasons. The literature she surveys thus puts the philosopher in a kind of predicament, requiring abandoning either the intuitive unconditional value of loving attachment or the intuitive unconditional authority of morality.

Two chapters on non-Western philosophical traditions present similar predicaments, but the worry is not about the relation between partial and impartial forms of *love itself*, but rather between partial love and impartial morality (where morality is not itself fundamentally a matter of love). Sandy Koullas looks to African ethics, which might have been thought to evade potential conflict between love and morality, given the centrality of the concept of loving relationships, or *ubuntu*. Koullas argues, however, that the kind of relationship at the foundation of dominant modern African ethical theories is in fact a communal relationship potentially between all human beings—and it seems partial, attached loving relationships have as much potential to be in conflict with this ethical value as with impartial moral obligations in deontic and utilitarian moral theory.

In his chapter on the oldest philosophical traditions represented in this volume, “The Confucian and Daoist Traditions on Love,” David Wong organizes the comparison of these two schools of thought around disagreement about the relative priority of partial and impartial love. As Wong presents it, the central Confucian virtue, *ren*, may center on the virtue of loving persons, and Mengzi (Mencius) thus centered his theory and practice on “love with distinctions”: virtuous relations and duties of love that vary with their object, with familial love and its duties having particular importance. The Daoists, by contrast, begin their practice with attunement to the primordial and undifferentiated source of all things, *wu*. The love of the Daoist sage (*ci*) thus transcends distinctions through an openness and receptiveness to everyone and everything needing care, responsive to but not defined by their particularities.

How to find our way out of such predicaments? One way out would be to opt for morality, at least as far as practical reasons are concerned. Jens Haas and Katja Maria Vogt provide a useful argument for anyone pursuing this option. In “Love and Hatred,” they argue that love does not in fact provide final or defeasible justifying reasons, “for otherwise the same would apply to hatred, a line of thought we consider a *reductio ad absurdum*” (p. 344). Schaubroeck and Wong propose different programs for resolution that, in a certain way, amount to opting for love. Wong suggests that Daoism contains the key concept, in its idea that “we are capable of adopting multiple perspectives on ourselves and our relationship to the rest of the world.” Confucian love with distinctions may guide us insofar as we strive to love well within a system of social practices, while Daoist *ci* guides us insofar as we aim to “tune into the immediate presence of the other person in front of us,” in an effort to escape “the structure of distinctions we have established for ourselves” (p. 369). Both are worthy, even necessary endeavors.

Schaubroeck proposes that the key to resolving the predicament posed by the divide between separatism and reductionism may be to “interpret love as a guide to explore morality” (p. 296). She draws on R.J. Wallace, Troy Jollimore, and Raymond Gaita to articulate “the vision theory

of love” and suggests that the knowledge and appreciation to be gained through loving attachment may be either itself a moral perspective, or a model for a moral perspective.

Does Love Perceive Value?

The vision theory of love points us back to the epistemic dimension of Diotima’s ascent, and to the conceptions of love developed within Jewish, Islamic, and Christian philosophy: the highest and best form of love is a way of comprehending the Divine source of all goodness and beauty. As Elisa Aaltola traces in her chapter, “Love and Animals: Simone Weil, Iris Murdoch and Attention as Love,” Weil and Murdoch place loving attention in the context of another Platonic metaphor—the Allegory of the Cave from *Republic*—in order to argue that love is a distinctive epistemic capacity: “Within this allegory, attentive love is the effort to look toward the sun at the cave’s entrance, thereby finally perceiving truth, beauty and goodness, and thus reality” (p. 193). Aaltola combines the thesis that loving attention is epistemically valuable perception with Weil’s and Murdoch’s additional, Zen Buddhist-inspired directive to “un-self” and perceive non-human animals without the filters of anthropocentric logic or stereotypes. The result is an argument for “a radical alteration in how animals are perceived,” revealing “how we are interrelated to other beings, how they impact our psyches, and how they yet remain their own creatures, filled with awe-inspiring distinctness” (p. 201).

In “On the Love of Nature,” Rick Furtak finds a similar view in Henry David Thoreau’s writing:

Loving attention to the natural world, [Thoreau] claims, enables us to apprehend emotionally the values inherent in our surroundings, values available to us through our sensory experience if we are suitably attuned to them.... [H]e implores his readers to awaken to the beauty of nature by transforming their subjective orientation—and this is accomplished by becoming loving subjects who are receptive to beauty and meaning.

(p. 207)

Thus, in Weil, Murdoch, and Thoreau, we find a love that comprehends beauty and goodness in the natural world through receptiveness unconstrained by preconceived notions of that world in all its particularities. That this approach is indebted to Diotima’s ascent is obvious, but equally as important is the directive of concern for loving/perceiving the natural world and its inhabitants on their own terms, rather than as embodiments of either an abstract Form or a supernatural Divinity.

In Cheyney Ryan’s “The Morning Stars Will Sing Together: Compassion, Nonviolence, and the Revolution of the Heart,” love’s receptive perceptiveness comes together with its partiality and resistance to impersonality within Martin Luther King, Jr.’s nonviolent “revolution of values.” One of the key perceptions of the compassionate, nonviolent outlook is of basic human vulnerability constituting inviolability or sacredness. Quoting Gabriel Marcel, Ryan writes that, from an impersonal perspective, a “sleeping child is completely unprotected and appears to be utterly in our power; from that point of view, it is permissible for us to do what we like with the child.” However, from the perspective of what Murdoch might have called the loving gaze, and what Marcel calls “the point of view of mystery,” “it is just because this being is completely unprotected, that it is utterly at our mercy, that it is also invulnerable or sacred” (p. 187). King’s nonviolence, argues Ryan, is a conviction produced through love’s perceptiveness that motivates with the force of loving attachment.

The idea that love distinctively perceives and knows its object leads naturally into the final theme I will cover here: that a loving attitude or orientation might be at the heart of either or both moral theory and practice. However, I want to note some important challenges to this idea. The first appears in Diane Jeske's chapter, "Love and Friendship." Jeske argues that, conceptually speaking, love is consistent with significant ignorance, even false belief about its object:

two people can love and be friends with each other even if they have false beliefs about each other, and not just false beliefs about small, trivial things: love and, thus, friendship can exist even in the light of false beliefs about core values or key character traits.

(p. 13)

Second, the idea that love perceives value is intimately tied to the view that, when we love someone or something, we do so for *reasons*. However, it is not always so clear that we do love for reasons. Esther Kroeker, in "Reasons for Love," provides a systematic overview of recent accounts of the relationship between love and practical reasons—that is, on whether we have reasons for what we love; or love without reason; or whether, perhaps, love may sometimes unify both rational and a-rational attitudes. Kyla Ebels-Duggan, too, in "Love and Agency," argues that the relationship between love and reasons is complex—we both love for reasons (and thereby express our agency) and find ourselves passively in the grip of love. Ebels-Duggan believes that the tension is deeper than Kroeker suggests, and that a resolution to these difficulties would provide important insight not only into the character of love, but also the nature of agency itself.

Could Love Be the Keystone of Moral Theory or Practice?

As noted above, Schaubroeck argues that the best approach to the apparent tension between moral reasons and reasons of love might be to use a loving perspective, or an understanding of what love asks of us, to understand moral relations. Similar themes appear in several chapters. In some chapters, the prominent notion is that love is at the base of moral theory—that is, that true general moral principles are, at base, principles of love. In his chapter, "Moral Normativity and the Necessities of Love," Harry Frankfurt urges that there are "some ends-in-themselves which, by our very nature as human animals, we all seek and love," (p. 339) and that these natural necessities provide the normative foundations of moral obligation. In "Love and Moral Structures: How Love Can Reshape Moral Theory," J.L.A. Garcia proposes centering benevolent love as the organizing principle or virtue of moral theory and argues that this proposal has several salutary effects on moral theory, including highlighting the inadequacy of "thin" moral evaluations—like "right" and "wrong," "permitted and forbidden"—and reorienting moral discourse toward evaluations that reveal the deeper moral character of our actions.

Other chapters highlight the ways in which a love-based approach to moral theory and a loving way of life are intertwined. As we saw in our earlier look at Wong's chapter, for example, love with distinctions, *ren*, may be the central organizing virtue in Confucian practice, and the Daoist sage lives with an open and loving compassion toward all beings. This may also be a fair characterization of the chapters just reviewed under the heading of love as perception or knowledge: although the authors of these chapters are certainly developing *theoretical* accounts of the role that loving attention and orientation should play in our relationships with animals, nature, and human beings, the most powerful message is the value to be found in *living* through loving

Introduction

attention and concern. In this vein, Cheryl Hall argues, in “Caring to Be Green: The Importance of Love for Environmental Integrity,” that human societies are unlikely to develop in ways that preserve or restore the well-being of the highly complex web of life on Earth unless a critical mass of individuals within those societies live in loving attunement to what will actually support the integrity of that web.

The most explicit example of a chapter where love as theory and practice are inseparable is Shyam Ranganathan’s “Love: India’s Distinctive Moral Theory.” Ranganathan argues that the theory of “Yoga” or “Bhakti” is a unique moral theoretical alternative to virtue ethics, consequentialism, and deontology. Bhakti is, according to Ranganathan, a “radically procedural” moral theory, where the Good (which is love) is produced by a practice of approximating a procedural ideal provided by the Lord (the Right, which is also love).

In the chapters within Part III: Politics and Society, the loving way of life becomes a matter of justice. This is, of course, central in Ryan’s chapter on nonviolence: the loving perception of life’s inviolability arises from and gives rise to a life dedicated to political resistance against the injustices of war and oppression. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s nonviolence also appears in Myisha Cherry’s chapter on “Love, Anger, and Racial Justice,” where she argues that moral anger at the perpetrators of racial injustice is not only compatible with but is an expression of love of an agapic form—a universal love bound up with compassion. Colleen Murphy, in “Love and Political Reconciliation,” also refers to King’s view that anger and love are not incompatible, in her examination of the role of love in the pursuit of transitional justice for societies “dealing with atrocities taking place during the course of protracted periods of conflict and/or repression” (p. 170). Although the literature on political reconciliation has, until now, focused primarily on negative emotions, Murphy argues that cultivating the conditions for the possibility of reconciliation means cultivating loving care and recognition of the value of others.

Conclusion

These questions represent, ultimately, only a small subset of the wide array of themes in this Handbook. I hope to have provided a number of entry points for the reader, as well as something of a model for thinking about connections and contrasts across chapters and sections. I also urge the reader to consider this volume, as large as it is, a starting point for the philosophical investigation of love, rather than a comprehensive overview. The methods, traditions, and questions put forward within these pages range broadly and delve deeply, but much of importance has been left out. If there are any universally accepted propositions about love, that its nature and meaning are unplumbable is surely one of them.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

PART I

Family and Friendship



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

1

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

Diane Jeske

When we think about those people whom we count as our friends, we will think about people whom we have known for many years but also about people whom we have known for only a few months. We will think about people with whom we share nothing more than an interest in, say, horror movies, and also about people with whom we share our hopes, dreams, fears, and anxieties. We will think about people whom we love deeply and about people whom we think of ourselves as being fond of or as liking. Why do we describe such a disparate range of people as friends? Do all of these relationships have something in common which picks them out as friendships? Or are only some of these relationships genuine friendships while the others are ‘friendships’ only in some derivative way?

For all of their disagreements, philosophers of friendship seem to agree that our friends are people to whom we are attached by love or some relevantly similar attitude and whom we know better than we know those who are strangers or mere acquaintances. These are claims about friendship that non-philosophers will generally also take for granted. But trying to determine what knowledge of another is required for friendship is not an easy matter. We might agree, for example, that I don’t need to know whether Max brushes his teeth before or after his morning cup of tea in order for Max to be my friend. We might think that that is because I can love Max without knowing such trivial matters about him. But, then, there may be ‘important’ facts about a person that are particularly relevant to our loving him—so maybe we *do* need to know *certain* central facts about someone’s character and/or values in order to have that person as a friend. For example, if it turns out that Max has deep moral flaws of which I was unaware, then maybe I never loved Max and we never were friends even though we mistakenly believed that we were.

I am going to argue, however, that no particular knowledge is essential for love or for friendship. Two people can love and be friends with each other even if they have false beliefs about each other, and not just false beliefs about small, trivial things: love and, thus, friendship can exist even in the light of false beliefs about core values or key character traits. Importantly, I have used ‘can’ in the statement of my thesis, because I am going to argue that love, and therefore friendship, do not require, as a *conceptual matter*, knowledge of character or values. As a matter of empirical psychological fact, they might, and such matters can vary from individual to individual, so that what knowledge of one’s friend is required is determined to a large extent by the nature of the person and the nature of her friendship.

In Section I, I will discuss three elements that have been placed at the core of friendship by most, if not all, philosophers of friendship: love or some relevantly similar emotional attitude, interaction exemplifying concern, and special knowledge. In Section II, I will consider how our beliefs about another person play a role in our initiation of a friendship, while it is also the case that friendships must be formed in the absence of some knowledge and may be formed with false beliefs about the other person. In Section III, I will argue for my thesis that friendship can exist even in the presence of radically false beliefs about someone's character and/or values.

I The Best of Friends

Because of the way that 'friend' is used in ordinary discourse, it is very difficult to engage in conceptual analysis of the concept 'friend.'¹ However, we do often say of someone that he is a friend, but not a good friend, meaning that he is not a close friend. So even if it is in some sense appropriate to describe a wide range of people as friends, we can position such people along a spectrum, where our close or 'really good' friends are at one of the extremes. My focus is on what makes two people close friends.

Attitudes and Feelings: One feature that certainly seems relevant to whether we place someone in the category of close or really good friend is the nature and strength of our feelings for that person. Since Aristotle many philosophers of friendship have claimed that it is a necessary condition of genuine friendship that each party to the relationship cares about the other for that other's own sake, i.e., not merely as a means to some other end.² Thus, if Hillary cares about Bill only as a means to furtherance of her own political career, then it seems that Bill and Hillary are not genuine friends, even if Bill cares about Hillary for her own sake—the appropriate sort of concern must be mutual.

Having concern for someone, however, is a complex matter, involving both affective states and dispositions to behave in certain ways. The sorts of emotional states or attitudes commonly attributed to friends range from affection and fondness to love. Whatever analysis one offers of love, it seems that one must accommodate the idea that love is or involves deep and strong emotional attachment. Fondness and affection, however, when they occur in the absence of love, can, it seems, vary in their depth and strength. Because I am focusing on close friendship, I am going to understand friendship as involving love: close or good friends have deep and strong emotional attitudes and attachments to each other. Thus, close friendships involve what I will call 'loving concern,' i.e., a concern for another partly constituted by the emotional attitude of love.

It is important to see here that not any positive attitude toward another person will be relevant to establishing the presence of the friendship relation even in the case of a friendship that is not close and so may not involve love. Admiration and respect are positive attitudes that we can have toward other people, but we can certainly admire or respect someone without loving or even liking her. It is also possible to love or be fond of someone whom one does not admire or respect—I would think that this is true of parents with respect to new-born infants. Aristotle would deny this claim, because, for Aristotle, genuine friendship requires that both parties be virtuous and that each recognize the other's virtue. Virtuous people obviously understand virtue as inherently admirable, and so will admire their genuine friends, as opposed to friends for pleasure or utility. The core of truth in Aristotle's claim is that it may often be difficult to sustain love or even fondness in light of a total absence of respect, but it seems to be the case that it is the love or fondness that is central to friendship, not any attitudes that may be prerequisites or results of that love or fondness.

Interaction: Regardless of the importance of love for friendship, it is quite clear that mutual attitudes of love can exist between two people without its being the case that they are friends.

Friends have a relationship in which they interact with each other. While philosophers have generally agreed that friends must care about each other for the other's own sake, they have differed quite widely about the nature of the interaction that is requisite to the friendship relation.

On the Aristotelian view of friendship according to which genuine friendship is necessarily a relationship between two virtuous people, the interaction between friends is a result of their commitment to virtuous ends, both for themselves and for each other. As David K. O'Connor has put it, Aristotle views "friendships as partnerships ... in the pursuit of some common ... goals" (O'Connor 1990: 112). Of course, through such interaction friends will express their mutual concern insofar as they aim to support, mirror, and emulate each other.

To most contemporary philosophers, Aristotle's requirement that friends be virtuous people engaged in joint virtuous activities has not seemed to capture the vast majority of relationships which we confidently consider close or good friendships. Thus, they have turned their attention to that notion of friends being close to each other, and have offered competing accounts of what such closeness amounts to.

One kind of interaction or joint activity that many friends engage in is mutual self-disclosure. In fact, Laurence Thomas has made this kind of mutual 'self-disclosure' the central element of good friendships, claiming that "[t]here is an enormous bond of mutual trust between such friends ... which is cemented by equal self-disclosure, and, for that very reason, is a sign of the very special regard which each has for one another" (Thomas 1987: 217). Friends reveal themselves to each other, sometimes in conversation, telling each other about, for example, crushes they have, guilty pleasures, inappropriate behavior of which they are ashamed, or hopes and dreams which they fear would appear ridiculous to anyone other than a friend. But they also reveal themselves in behavior: crying during corny movies, laughing at jokes that might appear inappropriate or stupid to strangers, being silly.

There is undoubtedly an element of truth in Thomas's account: friends reveal themselves to each other in unique ways. But, as Thomas himself says, such self-disclosure "is a sign of the very special regard which each has for one another" (Thomas 1987: 217). So is it the revealing of the self that is distinctive of friendship or is it the special regard and its expression in the interaction between the parties to the friendship? While some kind of special knowledge of our friends seems crucial to the relationship, it is not clear that concerned interaction needs to take the form of self-disclosure.

Cocking and Kennett offer an alternative account of the sort of interaction that marks two people out as friends: "as a close friend of another, one is characteristically and distinctively receptive to be directed and interpreted and so in these ways drawn by the other" (Cocking and Kennett 1998: 503). What Cocking and Kennett mean is that friends are open to each other's interests in such a way that their own interests become responsive to and developed in light of the other's interests and concerns as understood by the other. Further, friends possess unique insight into each other—perhaps via the self-disclosure emphasized by Thomas—and share their understandings of each other, so that, over time, each friend's conception of herself changes in light of how the other perceives her. Thus, friendship is characterized, for Cocking and Kennett, by friends having their interests and self-understandings shaped by each other: each friend is shaped by the friendship in a way that she would otherwise not have been.

As with Thomas's view, there is certainly something right about what Cocking and Kennett are saying about friendship: when we love someone, we regard their interests, passions, and ambitions in a different light than we would if that person were not a beloved friend. This doesn't mean that my friend will always come to share my interests and passions, even if she is my closest friend. However, it does seem that she will try to see why I like horror movies, and

why I donate so much money to the ASPCA. That is not to say that my friend won't tease me about my passions or that she will always come to share them, but, in loving me, she will want to try to understand what it is that I care about and why I care about it. In part, this is because in loving me, she will want to understand me and to help me to pursue my ends, as long as she does not view those ends as harmful or immoral (and even then she will exert more effort to understand or to forgive). But, again, this way of regarding and responding to a friend's interests, like self-disclosure, seems to be a way in which friends express their loving concern for each other. So, at bottom, it seems plausible to say that what is crucial to friendship is that friends not only love each other for their own sakes, but that they have and continue to express loving concern in their interactions with one another. After all, even Aristotle's conception of virtuous friends engaging in virtuous projects together is a way of conceiving of people as expressing their love for each other.

Thus far, then, we can conclude that friendship is characterized by mutual attitudes of loving concern that are expressed in a history of interaction between the parties to the friendship. Unlike Aristotle, Thomas, or Cocking and Kennett, I would argue that the ways in which friends express their love for each other in their interactions will vary between friendships, and are determined by the characters and personalities of the friends, the circumstances under which they became friends and in which their friendship develops, and the unique history of their interactions. Thus, it is not always transparent to any one besides the friends themselves that their relationship is in fact a friendship, because it may look very different from the friendships familiar to an observer.

Knowledge: It is natural for us to think of our friends as knowing us better than other people know us, and, of course, such knowing seems reciprocal. For Aristotle, this knowledge will take the form of grasping the friend's virtuous character and the way in which the virtues fit together in her character in particular. For Cocking and Kennett, in order for friends to be 'drawn' by one another, they must have knowledge of each other's interests and character. And for Thomas, self-disclosure on the part of friends, self-disclosure that goes beyond that which one displays with just anyone and is or is likely to produce the friends' knowledge and understanding of each other, is definitive of friendship.

It certainly seems right that friendship involves knowledge of the other that goes beyond that had by strangers or casual acquaintances. But some qualifications are in order. First, such 'special' knowledge is not a matter of quantity. The mere amassing of information about someone is not what characterizes friendship. Rather, friendships gain their unique characters from the kinds of special knowledge that the parties have about each other, and how that knowledge has been and continues to be acquired. People do not share all of the same things about themselves with all of their close friends. For example, Lucy may share her sexual fantasies with Ethel but not with Mary, knowing that such matters make Mary uncomfortable. But Lucy may share some of her less-than-admirable snide judgments with Mary but not with Ethel, because she worries that Ethel will not approve of such venting of negative attitudes, whereas Mary, like Lucy, understands the need for it.

Some such as Thomas might claim that this differential sharing of oneself is indicative of a lack of trust and thus of something less than close or good friendship. But trust of another need not be an across-the-board trust with every facet of our characters and personalities. While Aristotle was right to say that we cannot sustain more than quite a small number of genuine friendships, given time and emotional constraints, it is also the case that most of us appreciate and need more than one close friend in order to share different aspects of ourselves. Individual persons are just too complicated and unique to make it reasonable to think that we could have a complete 'meeting of the minds' with another person.³

The second qualification is that the ways in which friends acquire knowledge about each other will also vary from one friendship to another. Some friends have as a primary form of interaction just sitting with a cup of tea and talking about events in their lives, plans and hopes for the future, and their feelings. Other friends never or rarely have these sorts of conversation, only allowing bits of information to drop during a game of golf or a shopping trip to the mall. Most friends, however, learn about each other through their interactions with and observations of the other. We come to be able to interpret friends' body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice better than of others, and, with our friends, we often learn most from what they are *not* saying in a particular situation. Sometimes the special knowledge we have is knowledge that cannot be put into words: it is knowledge of how being with the other feels, how it is to laugh or be silly with that person, to have her comfort one in difficult times, etc.

So mutual loving concern expressed in interaction and some kind of special knowledge—subject to these two qualifications—are common to various accounts of friendship. The final qualification for which I will argue is that the special knowledge involved in friendship does not preclude friends having radically false beliefs about even such important matters as their friends' characters or values.

II False Belief and Love

Consider the following case: Evelyn 'befriends' her neighbor Helga. Evelyn's ancestors were from Germany, and Helga emigrated from Germany to the US, so they bond over an interest in Germany and German culture. Helga teaches Evelyn how to bake some traditional German pastries, and Evelyn helps Helga navigate American culture. Now suppose that Evelyn learns that Helga worked as a guard at a concentration camp during World War II and still harbors some anti-Semitic sentiments. How should Evelyn view her relationship with Helga? Should she decide that she and Helga never really were friends? Evelyn will certainly say something like "I thought that I knew her," but also, "I thought that we were friends," suggesting that she is inclined to doubt whether she and Helga ever really were friends, given her ignorance of Helga's past and her racial views.

Let us suppose that when we love people we love them in virtue of who and what they are (where this may involve our history with them in some way).⁴ Now, however, the problem should be clear: how can Evelyn love Helga for who and what she is if Evelyn is deceived about who and what Helga is? Evelyn has a certain conception of her 'friend' which turns out to be way off the mark. Attitudes are directed; they have objects. If we love a person under a false description, do we really love that person? I argue that we may in fact love the person, even though we may regret having come to do so or try to extricate ourselves from that love.

Think about a case involving a desire for some object other than a person. Suppose that I say that I want to take a trip to New Jersey, because I want to visit George Washington's plantation, Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon, of course, is not in New Jersey—it is in Virginia. Is it New Jersey that I want to visit, or is it Virginia? Well, it might be said that what I fundamentally want is to visit Mount Vernon, and, due to the false belief that Mount Vernon is in New Jersey, I form the desire to visit New Jersey. The latter desire is entirely parasitic on the former, and will dissipate as soon as I realize my empirical error.

Can we say something similar about Evelyn's love for Helga? Evelyn, we might say, loves certain characteristics, believes that Helga has those characteristics, and thus comes to love Helga. It is now Helga that Evelyn loves, just as in my previous example it was New Jersey that I wanted to visit, but Evelyn has false beliefs about the nature of the person whom she loves. It is the Helga-bundle-of-properties that is the object of her love, in spite of the fact that she is

deceived about the constituents of that bundle; in fact, radically mistaken about important elements of that bundle. If I went to New Jersey, I would be highly disappointed, saying, "I would never have come here if I knew that Mount Vernon was in Virginia—in fact, I would never have wanted to come here in the first place." Similarly, Evelyn might say, "I would never have loved Helga if I knew more about her, but I didn't know and so here I am loving her." Whereas prior knowledge of Helga's past and of her prejudices may have made, for example, her warmth and charm appear sinister rather than appealing, once Evelyn has come to love Helga, there may be no going back even after her past is revealed.

Further, by the point that knowledge is acquired, there is a history of interaction. Such interaction can create fondness for a person's quirks and foibles that, without that history, may have been more likely to cause annoyance or even repulsion. We can become acutely aware of another's vulnerabilities and needs, vulnerabilities and needs that may be fairly common, but are somehow more real and more affecting when put in the context of a familiar deprecating laugh, a tolerant and affectionate smile directed toward oneself, or a simple memory of that shared drunken escapade in graduate school. Our love for another is not always *in spite of* that other's flaws, but even sometimes *because of* those very flaws. Flaws in a friend are often seen only in the context of everything that we know or believe about the person and of our history with that person, thereby taking on a different cast than they would when considered in isolation or in some other context. All of these considerations are relevant to explaining the fact that we usually have a very difficult time saying precisely why we love someone—whatever good or attractive qualities we point to are also exemplified, perhaps even to a greater degree, by other individuals for whom we have no affection, let alone love. Whatever qualities may draw us to someone, the love characteristic of friendship is often grounded on what, without the friendship, would seem to be superficial, irrelevant, or downright annoying features of the other.

So I think that Evelyn's ignorance of Helga's true nature does not necessarily undermine the claim that Evelyn loves Helga. This fact points up something quite fascinating, I think, about love and affection for another person: somehow it can latch onto another in spite of ignorance about central and important elements of the bundle-of-properties that is the person. Just as I liked Diet Coke before some of its detrimental health effects were revealed and before I knew anything about artificial sweeteners (and perhaps I even came to like it as a result of believing that it was a healthy drink, given its lack of calories), so I may love another person—not just their company or their smile, but the person—while remaining deluded about what I am really loving.

But I need to add a caveat here. Consider the case of my liking of Diet Coke—it is crucial that I had at least one true belief about Diet Coke, i.e., that it is the beverage such that, when I drink it, I am caused to have this particular pleasing gustatory sensation. Suppose that all along, whenever I thought that I was drinking Diet Coke, I was really being served Diet Dr. Pepper. Now it may be that all of my beliefs about Diet Coke are false, or, at the least, the one most significant to my liking of Diet Coke—its being the cause of *that* pleasing gustatory sensation—and, in this case, it is not at all plausible to suppose that I ever did like Diet Coke. What I liked is Diet Dr. Pepper. But I did really like the beverage I had been drinking, in spite of my false beliefs about it. I like *that* soft drink.

Now suppose that every single belief that Evelyn has about Helga is false—certainly then it would seem that Evelyn never loved Helga. But it is difficult to see how this could be the case in friendship, because Evelyn must have causally interacted with Helga in some way, and so she must have at least some true beliefs about the nature of their interactions. Of course, if the person that Evelyn knows as 'Helga Mann' is such that her real name is 'Barbara Heimer', and the person whose name is really 'Helga Mann' is some elderly retired mail carrier living in Des

Moines, IA, then Evelyn never loved Helga—she loved Barbara. But she still did love *this woman* who makes a wicked apple strudel and has supported her through, say, the death of her husband, in spite of the radically false beliefs about her character. And she loved her for who and what she is—a charming, smart, witty companion with whom she has had such-and-such interactions.

Of course, she did not know that that charming woman is a bigoted ex-Nazi camp guard. I do not want to deny that that ignorance *could* undermine any claim that Evelyn loved Helga. People differ psychologically with respect to what they will respond to with love. In most cases, my love of some other is over-determined: I love playing cards with my mother, and I cherish our playfully competitive card games. But I would still certainly have come to love my mother even if she did not like games, and I would continue to love her if she ceased to want to play cards with me. On the other hand, it may be correct to say that I never loved my friend about whom I always believed that he supported my career if it turns out that he has been undermining my career all along. His charm and wit may not have been sufficient to support my love in light of his perfidy and two-facedness. Or it might have been so. This is where it becomes a matter of individual empirical psychology as to whether love was ever present.

There is another interesting result of ignorance as well. There might be character traits such that, if we know that another has them, we are unable to develop an intimate relationship with them. For example, my father was a very stingy person, and, as a result, I am immediately turned off by a lack of generosity on the part of others. But consider a case in which I have a false belief about Ilene, i.e., I believe that she is far more generous than she really is—perhaps she has lied about the nature of her charitable donations or about the ways in which she has financially helped her friends in the past. My false beliefs about Ilene could allow me to be open to her in ways that I could not be if I knew about her lack of generosity. I might be someone who is simply incapable of loving someone who is not generous, or I might be such that, through being open to Ilene's other qualities and being willing to interact with her, I am able to love her in spite of her lack of generosity. So sometimes ignorance is important to allowing love to get a foothold beyond our preconceptions.

So let us reconsider the case of Evelyn and Helga. Evelyn may believe, and believe correctly, that if she had known from the beginning that Helga was a racist ex-Nazi, she would never have been able to come to love and to befriend her. However, given that she *has* befriended Helga, she may have come to care for her in such a way that her love survives the revelation. On the other hand, even if she has come to love Helga, the revelation may make it psychologically impossible for her to continue loving Helga. But there is yet a third possibility: maybe Evelyn never did come to love Helga, because, given Evelyn's psychology, her love never did manage to latch onto *Helga*—Helga's features simply were not enough to support Evelyn's love when they were combined with Helga's past and continuing racist attitudes. In such a case, Helga was not the object of Evelyn's love because Evelyn could never love a racist under any circumstances.

It is, however, surprising how our love, forged in ignorance, can survive acquisition of unpleasant knowledge. In the film *The Third Man* Harry's lover Anna continues to love Harry, barely registering the new information that she receives to the effect that Harry has been engaged in very cruel scams—it is not that she refuses to believe that Harry was involved in nefarious schemes, but, rather, it just does not matter with respect to her feelings and attitudes with respect to Harry. We could understand Anna's remark—"People don't change because you learn more about them"—in various ways. Perhaps Anna is saying that she loved Harry—*Harry*, whatever bundle-of-qualities he was, not some Harry constructed from her beliefs about his qualities. So why should her feelings change in light of her acquisition of knowledge—she now just knows precisely what she was loving all along.⁵ Or she might be saying that features of Harry

that drew her to him in the first place—his charm, *joie de vivre*, ability to make his intimates feel special, wit and intelligence, the fact that, as Anna says at one point, “Harry could always make me smile”—are still there, and the new revelations, in the context of what attracted her before, are simply not enough to defeat love or in fact have a different cast in the context of his other features and her history with him. That acute sense of Harry’s human needs and vulnerabilities does not dissipate merely because he is shown as morally flawed—in fact, that sense of his humanity may just become that much more acute.

I have been arguing that whatever knowledge is necessary for the love that partially constitutes friendship, this knowledge need not include true beliefs about central elements of character, values, or activities. Within friendship, as a result of intimate interaction, we gain knowledge that would be extremely difficult if not impossible to put into words: knowledge of what it is like to be in the other’s company with a sense of relaxed companionship, what it is like to be comforted by the other, what it is like to find oneself laughing at the other’s jokes, what it is like to have the other draw a smile from one, as Harry could always do with Anna. There are also *abilities* derived from interaction—the ability to know when the other is uncomfortable or anxious, the ability to infer that the other thinks that a third party in conversation is a complete idiot, the ability to be able to make the other laugh in spite of her sadness or stress. These types of knowledge and abilities are crucial to our sense of being ‘close’ to someone, and this sense can persist even in the light of shocking revelations about the other. We have a kind of knowledge with accompanying abilities that no listing of propositions about the other could ever convey,⁶ and this is often more important to the grounding of our love than are certain facts about character and/or values.

III The Opacity of Persons and the Risks of Friendship

I have argued that we can be close friends with people even when we are ignorant of important features of their character. Such cases can, however, generate difficult epistemic problems, because even if a revelation changes our attitudes toward the other, it may be difficult for us to determine whether our previous attitudes were ones of love: was it the case that our love was overdetermined in such a way that the revealed faults or wrongs were not sufficient to have undermined the love? This can be the case even if our coming to realize that our friend has these faults or done these wrongs, at this point in the game, destroys whatever love did exist. And if we previously loved the other, we may very well have been friends with her, and, thus, may have some obligations to her in virtue of that relationship. But I don’t think that we should find the persistence of such obligations problematic or troubling. It is important to keep in mind that in any situation, we are bound to have competing reasons or obligations. Revelations about friends that devastate us will certainly alter our desires and may alter our moral reasons as well. Thus, there will be cases in which what we are, all-things-considered, required to do is to betray a friend: loyalty to intimates is not a supreme value that will always trump more impartial concerns. This is true even in cases where we have not had to confront devastating new information about the other party to the intimate relationship.

While many will probably think that my hypothetical Evelyn ought to end her relationship with Helga, I think that it is important to see what can be said in favor of her not doing so: we need to consider how important loyalty is to friendship and how difficult it is to understand its proper limits. Intimacy makes us acutely and sometimes painfully aware of another person’s needs, vulnerabilities, flaws, and foibles. In seeing their faults in context, we are able to be more understanding, more sympathetic, than we would be if we had only a partial view. Just being able to think about failings in conjunction with, say, a familiar pained or insecure expression in

the eyes can allow us to understand and sympathize in ways that would not otherwise be possible. This is part of both the value and the danger of friendship. We often think that acting on our impartial duties is well served by empathetic engagement and concern; for example, we think that a greater identification with other persons will aid us in promoting general welfare. But such identification and engagement can also make it, psychologically, nearly impossible to do what we ought, all-things-considered, to do. Friendship demands a unique focus on another person, foregrounding that other's needs in the way that intimacy makes possible. Once that intimacy is established, we have obligations to protect and care for that other, who is now uniquely vulnerable to our actions and responses. If loyalty was not an expectation that we had of our friends, none of this openness and unique responsiveness would be possible. We all have flaws, and most of us have at least one pretty serious moral failing, and so one of our basic needs is to be able to have someone understand those flaws in context and perhaps even like us *because of* our flaws and of how they fit into the entire picture of our characters. Put quite simply, we need to know that our friends are there for us in times of trouble even when the trouble is of our own making, or is the result of an element of our character that we never revealed to our friend.

Friendship, then, is a risky proposition, given that it can come to exist in spite of ignorance of significant facts about the other party to the relationship. But we cannot wait for full disclosure before we enter into friendship, because certain revelations can only occur in the secure environment of friendship or can only be read off of behavior by someone already close to us in various ways. None of this should be surprising, since human persons are imperfect and opaque characters, and our ethics of friendship needs to acknowledge this.

Notes

- 1 I have argued elsewhere that we should understand friendship as having neither necessary nor sufficient conditions. See Jeske 2008.
- 2 For discussion of loving friends for their own sakes, see Badhwar 1987. Aristotle, of course, offered the first discussion of this requirement of friendship in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Pakaluk 1991 provides excerpts from important works on friendship in the history of philosophy, while Badhwar 1993 offers a good selection of more recent articles on the topic.
- 3 However, popular culture still leads us to expect this with our romantic partners, which may explain why so many romantic attachments dissolve.
- 4 I am adopting a view according to which love is a response to a person's qualities. Advocates of such a view include Keller 2000 and Kolodny 2003. Famously, Frankfurt 2004 rejects the qualities view in favor of what is known as the 'no reasons' view. For a nuanced discussion of the merits of both views, see Jollimore 2011, chapter 1.
- 5 It is not clear, then, what Anna is loving, given, as I said above, that we seem to love people in virtue of who and what they are. Perhaps erotic love is different—perhaps, when we are sexually attracted to someone, there is some sense in which, at least initially, we love whatever person inhabits *that* body. I am not sure, however, that this is ultimately intelligible.
- 6 This is not to say that we are loving the person independently of her qualities. Rather, it is just to say that the qualities to which we are responding may be ones that are only understood via interaction and experience and that it may not be possible to convey in words how these qualities combine in a way that causes love.

References

- Aristotle (1999) *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by Terence Irwin, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing.
- Badhwar, N. K. (1987) "Friends as Ends in Themselves," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 48: 1–23.
- Badhwar, N. K. (ed.) (1993) *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Cocking, D. and Kennett, J. (1998) "Friendship and the Self," *Ethics* 108: 502–27.
- Frankfurt, H. (2004) *The Reasons of Love*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jeske, D. (2008) *Rationality and Moral Theory: How Intimacy Generates Reasons*, New York: Routledge.
- Jollimore, T. (2011) *Love's Vision*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Keller, S. (2000) "How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Properties," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 37: 163–73.
- Kolodny, N. (2003) "Love as Valuing a Relationship," *The Philosophical Review* 112: 135–89.
- O'Connor, D. (1990) "Two Ideals of Friendship," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 7: 109–22.
- Pakuluk, M. (ed.) (1991) *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship*, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing.
- Thomas, L. (1987) "Friendship," *Synthese* 72: 217–36.

2

EARLY RELATIONSHIPS, PATHOLOGIES OF ATTACHMENT, AND THE CAPACITY TO LOVE¹

Monique Wonderly

In both everyday discourse and the relevant psychological literature, one often finds references to an infant's *love* for her primary caregiver. Yet most philosophical accounts of love suggest against the possibility of genuine infant love. Such accounts characterize love as a sophisticated attitude, requiring mental capacities that are beyond the infant's ken. While I agree that infants are incapable of love, I will argue that the infant–primary caregiver bond can nonetheless inform philosophical accounts of love. By examining our earliest attachments, we can better understand how romantic love often improves us and contributes to our agential identities. Also, our earliest attachments provide insight into how we both acquire the capacity to love in youth and continue to develop it via later attachments in adulthood.

First, I explore several important similarities and differences between infant attachment and romantic love. I then employ an expanded conception of security, along with literature on pathologies of attachment, to show how infant attachment can play an instructive role in elucidating love.

Attachment in Infancy and Adult Romantic Partnerships

Twentieth-century American poet, Margaret Fishback, opens “Love Affair” with the following verse: “Someday he’ll think me rather silly/But now he loves me willy-nilly” (1945). Fishback refers here not to romantic love, but to an infant’s love for his mother. Such locutions are not unfamiliar in everyday discourse. We often find it remarkable just how much infants seem to unconditionally adore or *love* their primary caregivers in the manner that Fishback’s poem suggests. Psychological literature on the infant–primary caregiver bond lends support to such conceptions of infant love. Sigmund Freud, for example, claimed that the mother serves as the infant’s “first and strongest love-object and as the prototype of all later love relations” (1949: 70). Harry Harlow posited that the “initial love responses of the human being are those made by the infant to the mother” (1958: 673). Finally, according to John Bowlby, “for babies to love mothers ... is taken for granted as intrinsic to human nature” (1969: 242). Bowlby’s research, in particular, played a vital role in establishing a connection between infant–primary caregiver attachments and love relationships in adulthood.

Bowlby and his colleague, Mary Ainsworth, pioneered the development of “attachment theory.”² According to attachment theory, at between six and twenty-four months of age,

infants develop a special attachment to their primary caregivers. The attachment consists in an interrelated pattern of behaviors that serve to provide the infant with a sense of security. The relevant behaviors include: proximity maintenance, secure base, safe haven, and separation protest (Bowlby 1969/1982). The infant will attempt to remain in close proximity to her primary caregiver, treat her as a secure base from which to explore unfamiliar surroundings, use her as a safe haven for protection when threatened or hurt, and protest separation from her via various distress responses (e.g., crying).

Bowlby posited that the infant–primary caregiver attachment plays important roles in facilitating the infant’s healthy psychological development and influencing her future relationships. He suggested that the primary caregiver serves to regulate the infant’s affective states and that infants learn to become adept at regulating their own affects in the context of attachment relationships (Bowlby 1969/1982; Schore 1994/2016). On his view, through interactions with her principal attachment figure, the infant develops internal working models of the self and others. Secure attachments facilitate working models of the self as worthy of care and self-reliant and working models of the attachment figure as accessible, caring, and responsive (Bowlby 1973; Ainsworth et al. 1978; Mikulincer and Shaver 2016). These models are thought to shape the development of the child’s self-conception and various modes of viewing and interacting with others. Infant attachment security has been “linked with later self-esteem, social competence, prosocial behavior, ego resiliency, and overall adjustment” (Sroufe et al. 2000: 82). Insecure attachments often lead to working models that contribute to psychopathology and dysfunctional attachment patterns later in life (Mikulincer and Shaver 2016: ch. 13).

While Bowlby and Ainsworth focused on infant attachment, they suggested that attachments occur in adulthood as well, particularly in the case of romantic pair bonds. In the late 1980s, the field of adult attachment emerged, and since then, a great deal of research has been devoted to investigating attachment bonds between romantic partners (Hazan and Shaver 1987).³

Adult attachment theorists have recognized strong similarities between infant–primary caregiver engagement and romantic adult interaction. In communicating with one another, romantic partners often “coo, sing, talk baby talk” and “use soft maternal tones” (Shaver et al. 1988: 75). Mikulincer and Shaver note, “Love in both infancy and adulthood includes eye contact, holding, touching, caressing, smiling, crying, clinging” (2016: 18). Romantic partners also often display the interrelated pattern of attachment behaviors that typify infant–primary caregiver relationships. Familiarly, adults seek proximity to their romantic partners and protest extended separation from them. According to adult attachment theorists, our romantic partners also serve as secure bases and safe havens for us. When our romantic partners are nearby, we experience greater confidence (and competence) in navigating new environments and taking on challenges. And when distressed or threatened, we tend to turn specifically to our romantic partners for comfort and support (Collins et al. 2006; Mikulincer and Shaver 2016).

Infant–primary caregiver bonds and romantic partnerships share other commonalities as well. Interactions with our romantic partners often help regulate our emotions and continue to shape our internal working models of the self in relation to others. Studies suggest that the mere presence of one’s romantic partner can increase positive affect and assuage distress, as indicated by the attached party’s reduced blood pressure, heart rate, and galvanic skin responses in stressful situations (Mikulincer and Shaver 2016: 58–59). Our adult attachment figures offer external support via soothing contact, empathy, and other comforting behaviors, and they also enhance our abilities to *self-soothe* (Mikulincer and Shaver 2016; Sroufe et al. 2000). Healthy interactions with adult attachment figures impact our abilities to self-soothe, in part, by facilitating positive internal working models that represent the self as worthy, competent, and lovable and others as

caring and dependable. Activating mental representations of supportive romantic attachments can also help one cope with threats (Mikulincer and Shaver 2012: 12, 36).

In sum, the parallels between the infant–primary caregiver bond and long-term romantic attachments are striking, and it is perhaps unsurprising that many have identified both relations as “love.” Both involve similar patterns of communication, behavior, and attitudes toward one’s attachment figure, where positive interactions with the relevant person help to regulate our emotions, shape our conceptions of ourselves and others, and imbue us with an overall increased sense of security. Despite these parallels, however, philosophical accounts of love generally suggest against construing infant attachments as genuine love—a topic to which I now turn.

Attachment and Love: Important Differences

While there exist many similarities between infant attachment and romantic love, there are also many significant differences. A chief difference is that romantic love—and indeed, love of all kinds—is commonly thought to involve caring about or valuing one’s beloved in a way that is not possible for infants.⁴ Also, while romantic partnerships share some common features with infant–primary caregiver attachments, those features are not obviously central to love.

Let’s begin with a few obvious differences between the attachment orientations of infants toward their primary caregivers and those of adults toward their romantic partners. First, while we seek proximity to our romantic partners and protest extended separation from them, mature adults are typically more tolerant of longer separations and less likely to demand attention by crying, throwing tantrums, etc. Also, unlike the infant’s interaction with her primary caregiver, attachment behaviors in adult romantic partnerships are usually reciprocated. In other words, each partner is typically both attached *to* the other and serves as an attachment figure *for* the other.

Psychologists acknowledge that romantic love, in addition to attachment, also involves sex and caregiving (Mikulincer 2006). Philosophers of love have attended to both of these features in their accounts. Union views of love, on which love involves a merger of selves or identities (or at least a desire for merger), are well equipped to capture the sexual element that typifies romantic love (Nozick 1989; Solomon 2001). And while philosophers tend to emphasize the *attitudes* that underlie caregiving behaviors toward one’s beloved, as opposed to the behaviors themselves, they generally attribute caring or valuing a central role in love.

Philosophers generally agree that love involves valuing and/or caring about one’s beloved for the beloved’s own sake. For example, Harry Frankfurt characterizes love as a “mode of caring” that is marked by, among other things, disinterested concern for one’s beloved (1999a, 2004). J. David Velleman suggests that love is a kind of “awe” that emerges upon the recognition of a value inhering in the object (1999: 360–361). Richard White claims that love “involves a very deep appreciation for the absolute value of the other person” (2001: 5). According to Niko Kolodny, love consists in non-instrumentally valuing one’s relationship with the beloved (and the beloved herself) (2003: 150). On Bennett Helm’s view, love is a particular kind of caring that involves an identificatory commitment to the object in which the lover shares the beloved’s values for her sake (2009: 52, 2010: ch. 5). These theorists represent only a sample of those who posit that to love is, among other things, to care about or value the beloved object.⁵

Some theorists regard caring and valuing as the same phenomenon.⁶ On most accounts, caring involves certain desires to promote the cared-for object’s flourishing and an emotional vulnerability to how that object is faring (Shoemaker 2003; Jaworska 2007a/b; Seidman 2009). If an agent cares about an object, she typically wants that object to flourish. She will also, for example, tend to feel joy when it is thriving, sadness when it is faltering, fear when it is in

danger, and so forth. These features, along with others, have also been identified as central elements of valuing.⁷ Theorists typically posit that caring requires cognitive capacities that infants lack. Examples include the capacities to grasp the concept of importance, to form higher-order desires, and to see others as reasons for action and emotion.⁸

The preceding discussion suggests that while infants may be attached to their primary caregivers, they cannot care about, or value, them in the sense that love requires. Love, it is commonly supposed, is a complex orientation toward its object that requires cognitively rich ways of seeing, understanding, and engaging with its object. Infant attachment, then, appears to be missing key ingredients for genuine love.

Not only is the infant incapable of love, but it is not immediately clear how attachment in adults contributes to love. One might concede that most adults are attached to their long-term romantic partners, while denying that attachment plays an integral role in romantic love. Consider, for example, Frankfurt's claim that "lovers often enjoy the company of their beloveds, cherish various types of intimate connection with them, and yearn for reciprocity. These enthusiasms are not essential to it" (2004: 42). Similarly, there may be reason to suspect that attachment, while perhaps a natural concomitant of romantic love, is in no way central to it.

One might deny attachment a central role in love because the felt need internal to it is undergirded by the attachment figure's impact on the attached person's *sense of security*. Such a feature might strike some as ill-suited to contribute to love in any significant sense. First, the relevant need seems to be focused on the lover's own comfort and safety, while love is typically thought to be other-regarding, and on some accounts, selfless.⁹ Second, it may be difficult to see how needing another for comfort and safety is a good thing, let alone one that makes a positive contribution to love. Well-functioning, mature, and autonomous agents, one might think, should not have security-based needs for their beloveds, and where they do, such orientations are not obviously related to love. Love, after all, is distinctive for its rich value and depth, and the primitive need for safety seems peripheral to these essential features.

In sum, while infant–primary caregiver bonds and romantic loving relationships tend to feature somewhat similar attachment orientations, the relevant attachments do not suffice for love. Infants lack the cognitive capacities to care about or value others in the way that love requires, so their attachments cannot constitute love. Furthermore, for all that has been said so far, while romantic partners who love each other are typically also attached to one another, the latter relation may well be orthogonal to the couple's love. Thus, we are left with the question: Can the infant–primary caregiver attachment tell us anything interesting about love? In the remaining two sections, I offer an affirmative answer to this question.

Security and Agency: A Role for Attachment in Love

While infants do not (strictly speaking) love others, the attachment relations in which they stand to their primary caregivers can inform philosophical conceptions of love. Contra the view discussed in the previous section, here I will argue that the type of felt need internal to attachment partly constitutes and enhances some kinds of love. Examining the relevant need can inform extant views of how love impacts our identities and contributes value to our lives.

Let's begin by revisiting the type of need internal to attachment. In the preceding section, I suggested that security's role in undergirding attachment relationships might engender doubt that attachment could be an important aspect of love. I will now endeavor to assuage such doubts by articulating an expanded conception of security that can illuminate defining features of love, revealing how a security-based need can contribute to love's value.

While Bowlby and Ainsworth sometimes associate “security” with “feeling safe,” they also sometimes gesture at a richer notion of the concept. For example, Ainsworth, drawing on Bowlby’s work, offers a conception of security as “an ‘all is well’ kind of appraisal of sensory input,” or “an ‘Okay, go ahead’ feeling” (1988: 1). In other work, I have described the type of security at issue in attachment as a kind of confidence in one’s well-being and agential competence. In colloquial terms, without our attachment objects, we tend to feel off-kilter, out of sorts, no longer “all of a piece,” and so forth. Conversely, engaging with our attachment objects helps us to feel empowered, better equipped to take on challenges, etc. (Wonderly 2016: 231).¹⁰

Our attachment figures don’t merely help us feel safe; they can also help hold us together during difficult times and improve us more generally. Experiencing another as a felt need in this sense suggests that the other plays a very meaningful role in how one views oneself and is able to get along in the world. To be sure, needing another in this way seems to focus on one’s own welfare as opposed to that of the beloved, and it does not *suffice* for love. One must care about, or value, the other in her own right in order to truly love her. But in some cases, the type of need internal to attachment might—like concern for the other’s welfare—play an important, and indeed *constitutive*, role in love.¹¹

To see this, imagine that an individual has the opportunity to do something that will be to her overall benefit but will necessitate being separated from, and unreachable by, her (long-term) romantic partner for many years. Imagine further that upon receiving the news, her partner—being selflessly invested in her welfare—responds only with joy, celebrating her good fortune and excitedly offering to help her pack. The departing partner might well be disappointed at such a response, preferring that her beloved not only be motivated by the desire for her flourishing but also by a deeply felt need for her.¹² I suspect that this is not merely an unimportant preference, but that some kinds of love would be impoverished absent some felt need of this kind.

Of course, one might accept that a felt need of another can be partly constitutive of love, while objecting to the relevant need being tied to the lover’s security. Experiencing another as a security-based felt need might strike some as puerile or selfish. Doubtless, few have ever been smitten by a lover who imparted, “Baby, you make me feel so *secure*.” Imagine, though, that the lover instead imparts: “Without you, my life would be less meaningful, less fulfilled. I would not be able to get by as well as I normally can, but for a time at least, I would feel adrift and no longer all of a piece.” These sentiments capture the sense of security at issue here, and rather than being childish or unduly self-centered, they seem to reflect a way of relating to another that can be a worthy (and deeply important) aspect of one’s love.

The expanded notion of security that I describe above can also help to illuminate the relationship between attachment and love’s contributions to one’s agency and identity. Philosophical treatments of love often emphasize various ways in which love improves our lives. Love (typically) is a source of joy and imbues life with meaning and purpose (Frankfurt 1999b; Badhwar 2003; White 2001). But attachment affords us an under-explored, yet instructive framework for understanding how love can improve us.

Frequent engagement with an attachment figure tends to increase confidence in one’s well-being and one’s ability to competently navigate the world. In infancy, this feature manifests in the infant’s ability to venture increasingly farther away from her primary caregiver without worry and to interact more comfortably with new environments. In adulthood, positive interactions with our attachment figures often imbue us with a confidence that serves to inspire us, to raise the bar for complacency, and to attenuate our tendencies toward risk aversion (Feeney 2008; Collins et al. 2006; Mikulincer and Shaver 2016). Consequently, our attachments can

increase our capabilities and help us to achieve in ways that we would otherwise be unable to do. They not only lift us when we are low, but in providing a secure and supportive ground, they can enable us to soar.

We often recognize such qualities in love. Consider, for example, how love's benefits are often portrayed in popular music. "My love, whenever I was insecure, you built me up and made me sure."¹³ "You gave me wings, you made me fly."¹⁴ "My loving arms around you, I can stand up and face the world. Your love keeps lifting me higher and higher."¹⁵ These lyrics support a picture of love on which one's romantic partner is not only a source of joy and purpose, but also a source of *empowerment*. Where attachment exists in loving relationships, it may provide an important vehicle through which love can enhance our agency in these ways.

Relatedly, attending to attachment can also aid our understanding of how love can impact one's identity. On many accounts, love is marked by a kind of depth that is thought to tie the attitude to the agent's identity. How and what (or whom) we love seems to be intimately connected to who we are. Theorists have framed this relation in terms of integrating the beloved into one's identity, identifying one's own interests with those of one's beloved, or a kind of volitional endorsement of one's attitudes toward one's beloved.¹⁶ Attachment offers us still another lens through which to view love's impact on one's identity.

Our interactions with our attachment figures can play an important role in shaping one's agential identity.¹⁷ Recall from the first section that in both infancy and adulthood, interactions with our attachment figures continue to influence our "internal working models" of the self. They play crucial roles in how we understand ourselves and our abilities to act competently within the world. Since our specific attachment figures are uniquely positioned to impact our felt security in the ways that they do, they can have especially powerful effects on our self-conceptions, how we relate to others, and how we function more generally as agents.

Of course, infant attachment, which serves as the context for the attached individual's development into a full-fledged agent, seems to be the best illustration of how attachment bonds can help to shape one's agential identity. Via engagement with her attachment figure, the infant learns to navigate the realm of affects and cognitions that will enable the formation of identity-constituting values and perspectives. The infant's understanding of herself and others grows out of the internal working models that she develops through such interactions, serving as the ground for how she will tend to view and to function within future relationships. In this way, though infant attachment is not synonymous with love, it does shape the infant's future capacity to love. This point is worth exploring in greater detail, as it can tell us something interesting about how attachment, in both infancy and adulthood, can help us learn to love well.

Attachment and the Capacity to Love

Research suggests that early attachment experiences tend to exert considerable influence over how one loves in adulthood. Much of this research concerns certain "pathologies of attachment."¹⁸ Bowlby, for example, suggested a causal relationship between early attachment disruption and "affectionless psychopathy" in later years (Bowlby 1973). More recent research has indicated that severe disruption in early attachment can, but does not always, contribute to the development of psychopathic characteristics, depression, social phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder, addiction, anxiety disorders, and a host of personality disorders (Karen 1998; Flores 2004; Mikulincer and Shaver 2016).¹⁹ Yet, what is most relevant for the present discussion is not merely *that* early attachment disruption has been associated with later psychological disorder, but rather *how* such disruption is thought to hinder various capacities necessary for valuing.

Recall that (as I have argued) while attachment plays an important role in some kinds of love, it does not suffice for love. This is because one can be attached without valuing, or caring about, one's attachment object in the way that love requires. Importantly, though, attachment is not silent on the matter of valuing. Attachment relationships (typically) serve to develop and hone one's ability to value, thereby helping to shape one's capacity to love. Research on attachment and psychopathology provides a useful lens through which to view this phenomenon.

Neuroscientists have suggested that early disruption or dysfunction in attachment can interfere with the development of brain structures that facilitate empathy, socio-emotional learning, and affect regulation. Theorists have proposed that the proper development and function of such structures is "experience-dependent," and in particular, dependent upon healthy attachment interactions between the infant and her primary caregiver (Schoore 1994/2016). Early attachment difficulties can leave the infant with impaired abilities to adequately attend to her own emotions and to the emotions and interests of others, rendering her vulnerable to mental disorder and future relationship dysfunction (Schoore 1994/2016; Sroufe et al. 2000).

To see more clearly how attachment can impact one's capacity to love, it will be useful to briefly explore two particular attachment-related forms of psychopathology: psychopathy and addiction. Not only have early attachment problems been suggested as causal contributors to psychopathic personalities and addiction, but these pathologies are also marked by occurrent attachment difficulties.²⁰ Psychopaths have impaired capacities for forming attachments to other persons (Cleckley 1988; Hare 1993; Blair et al. 2005). And some addictions can be viewed as, among other things, disordered attachment orientations toward their objects (Flores 2004). More importantly for our purposes, both psychopaths and addicted agents appear to have difficulties caring about, or valuing, others in the way that loving—or at least loving *well*—requires.

Let's start with psychopaths. Psychopathy is a personality disorder that involves a tendency toward antisocial behaviors (e.g., threatening behavior such as verbal abuse or violence, repeated criminal conduct) and certain emotional-interpersonal deficits (e.g., shallow affect, lack of empathy, inability to feel guilt).²¹ Typically, philosophers have been interested in the psychopath's *moral* deficits, which, some have argued, might exempt her from moral responsibility.²² Psychopaths seem to lack the abilities to become emotionally invested in others and to recognize their interests as intrinsically reason-giving (Jaworska 2007a; Watson 2011). These capacities, of course, are relevant not only to moral agency, but also to love.

Recall that love, as a mode of valuing or caring, involves an emotional vulnerability to how one's beloved is faring and certain desires to promote the beloved's flourishing.²³ The psychological literature on attachment has the resources to explain how early attachment difficulties can contribute to psychopathic personality traits. The child first learns how to recognize and engage with the interests of others through attachment with her primary caregiver. If the infant's attachment figure is unresponsive or abusive, the infant may grow to feel uncomfortable with her vulnerability and reliance on others. Consequently, she may resist allowing herself to be vulnerable enough to care about others in the future.²⁴ In addition, her poor internal working models of others, combined with her lack of learned facility with emotions, may preclude any desire for—or competence with—promoting another's flourishing.

Theorists have suggested that some addictions represent "attachments" to their objects, albeit disordered ones.²⁵ Philosophers have been concerned to investigate the impact of addiction on human agency. The addicted agent's strongly felt need for the object tends to consume her attention, "crowding out" other potential interests, values, and cares, and narrowing (what she sees as) her field of available actions (Elster 1999: 69; Watson 1999). Focused on the addiction object, she may lack the attentional resources to engage non-instrumentally with her beloved's

interests. An addicted agent, then, may lack the ability to adequately recognize and respond to her beloved's concerns in a way necessary for properly valuing her and thus loving her well.

Attachment research can serve to illuminate this phenomenon. Disruptions or dysfunction in early attachment can engender painful working models of the self and others, along with lasting inability to properly self-regulate one's affects. As a result, the agent turns to the addiction object for help coping with distress (Flores 2004; Mikulincer and Shaver 2016). Insofar as the addiction object helps to restore—however temporarily or superficially—the agent's sense of security, she will feel especially compelled to partake of it. Psychologists have long held that felt security has a kind of priority over other motives. Unless one feels sufficiently secure, one will typically be unable to competently engage in other-directed activities like caregiving, affiliative pursuits, and sex (Mikulincer and Shaver 2016: 15). Since the addicted agent may be rigidly focused on her *own* security-based attachment needs, she may be unable to adequately recognize or respond to the interests of her beloved.²⁶

Healthy early attachments, then, help shape our capacities to love in multiple ways. First, early attachments initiate the formation of our abilities to self-regulate our affects and to empathically recognize and attend to the emotional needs of others. In addition, healthy attachments facilitate conceptions of the self and others that conduce to comfort with one's own vulnerability and positive dispositions toward the interests of others. Our early attachment experiences serve as our first opportunities to engage with our own vulnerability and to observe models of caring provided by our attachment figures. In well-functioning attachments, one can comfortably inhabit one's own vulnerability because others will be there if needed. Experiencing one's own vulnerability in this way, combined with one's empathic abilities and positive conception of others, disposes us to recognize and respond compassionately toward vulnerabilities in others. Finally, by grounding a general sense of security, healthy early attachments afford us the emotional resources to appropriately recognize others' value and to promote their interests.

What's more, these qualities are present not only in infant attachment, but in adult attachment as well. Our deeply felt needs of our attachment figures make us keenly aware of our own vulnerability, underscoring their import for us and facilitating our empathic recognition of their vulnerability (and that of others). As our adult attachment figures continue both to aid the regulation of our affects and to support positive internal working models of ourselves and others, they equip us with greater resources and motivation to properly value and care for others. Thus, early attachment helps us to *develop* our capacities to love, and attachments later in life continue to enhance our abilities to love well.

Infant attachment, then, while not synonymous with love, can nonetheless inform philosophical conceptions of romantic love. In romantic love, the adult analog of infant security plays an important role in explaining how love can empower us to achieve in ways that we otherwise would be unable to do. Similarly, the beloved's ability to impact one's sense of security offers an under-explored insight into how love can affect our identities. One's beloved plays an important role in one's self-conception and her ability to competently navigate the world, features that are central to one's agential identity. Finally, examining certain pathologies of attachment brings to the fore crucial respects in which attachment, in both infancy and adulthood, shapes our capacity to love by enhancing our abilities to value and care for others.

Notes

- 1 Many thanks to Adrienne Martin, Agnieszka Jaworska, and Coleen Macnamara for helpful discussion of the ideas presented here.

- 2 For more on the development of attachment theory, see Ainsworth et al. (1978) and Bowlby (1969/1982, 1973, 1980).
- 3 For more on adult attachment, see Shaver et al. (1988); Rholes and Simpson (2004); Hazan, Campa, and Gur-Yaish (2006); Mikulincer and Goodman (2006), Feeney (2008), and Mikulincer and Shaver (2016).
- 4 While I suspect that attachment can inform other varieties of love as well, for the sake of simplicity, I focus here on romantic love.
- 5 See also Brown (1987: 24); Badhwar (2003: 56); Jollimore (2011: 26); and Brentlinger (1989: 139).
- 6 See for example Seidman (2009).
- 7 Jaworska emphasizes that valuing involves the valuer thinking herself “correct in wanting what she wants” (1999: 155). Bratman (2000) describes valuing as a special type of self-governing policy. Finally, theorists such as Scanlon (1998), Kolodny (2003), Seidman (2009), and Scheffler (2011) emphasize the relationship between valuing and reasons for action and/or emotion.
- 8 Frankfurt makes volition rather than emotion central to his view of caring, affording higher-order desires a crucial role in the attitude. In particular, he describes caring about an object in terms of having and identifying with a higher-order desire that her first-order desire for the object “not be extinguished or abandoned” (Frankfurt 1999a: 161). Jaworska posits that one must have “the concept of importance” in order to care (2007b: 561). Seidman suggests that one must be able to see the object of care as a source of reasons (2009: 12). On Helm’s view, the particular sort of caring involved in love necessitates the capacity to experience certain cognitively sophisticated, “person-focused” emotions such as pride and guilt (2010: 227).
- 9 See, for example, Frankfurt (1999a) and (1999b). See also Helm’s discussion of robust concern views of love (2010: 16–18).
- 10 For other views that support this notion of felt security, consider the following: Abraham Maslow characterized security as a “syndrome of feelings,” that includes, *inter alia*, feelings of “being at home in the world,” “emotional stability,” “self-esteem,” “self-acceptance,” and “courage” (1942: 334–335). William Blatz, in developing his “security theory,” identified security as “the state of mind which accompanies the willingness to accept the consequences of one’s acts” (1966: 13). According to Ainsworth, Blatz, who had been her dissertation advisor, “seemed to equate feeling secure with feeling competent or effective” (1988: 1).
- 11 Note that I am not arguing for the stronger claim that attachment is essential for all love.
- 12 I discuss such a case at greater length in Wonderly (2017).
- 13 These lyrics are from “You Make Me Feel Brand New,” by The Stylistics (1974).
- 14 These lyrics are from Celine Dion’s 1996 single, “Because You Loved Me.”
- 15 The lyrics are from Jackie Wilson’s 1967 single, “(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher.”
- 16 Nozick (1989), Frankfurt (1999a, 1999b, 2004), Solomon (2001), White (2001), and Helm (2010) are among the many theorists who have posited a relationship between identity and love.
- 17 By “agential identity,” I do not mean to imply anything mysterious here. I take it that how a person views herself and experiences her agency constitutes an important aspect of her identity as the particular agent she is.
- 18 The term “pathologies of attachment” can refer either to mental disorders for which attachment difficulties are presumed to play a significant causal role and/or psychologically disordered forms of attachment formation or maintenance. Note that the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* does not list attachment disorders as its own category. Reactive attachment disorder, the central feature of which is “absent or grossly underdeveloped attachment between the child and putative caregiving adults,” is characterized as a “Trauma/Stressor Disorder” (APA 2013: 266). There are, however, several disorders that explicitly include attachment difficulties, including (but not limited to): Separation Anxiety Disorder, Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder, and Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- 19 Psychologists have also linked disruption or dysfunction in early attachment relationships to “insecure attachment styles” that tend to follow infants through their later years and contribute to mental disorder. The system by which insecure attachment styles are classified grew largely out of Ainsworth et al.’s empirical study of infant–primary caregiver interaction (1978). Ainsworth et al. identified two patterns of insecure infant attachment: avoidant and anxious. In infants, these patterns track certain atypical infant responses to separation and reunion with their primary caregivers. Securely attached infants tend to show some distress upon separation from their primary caregivers, but recover quickly upon reunion, exhibiting joy and a desire to return to exploration and play. Avoidant infants tend to show little distress upon separation from their primary caregivers and to avoid them when they return. Anxious infants are

- highly distressed during separation from their primary givers and display conflicting behaviors upon the caregiver's return—e.g., alternating patterns of clinging and pulling away (Mikulincer and Shaver 2016: 23–24). In adulthood, an avoidant attachment style indicates “discomfort with closeness and dependence” and a strong “preference for emotional distance and self-reliance” (Mikulincer and Shaver 2016: 25). An anxious attachment style indicates a very strong desire for closeness and intense worries about being abandoned or under-valued by one's partner (ibid.). Though insecure attachment styles themselves are not psychological disorders, they are sometimes labeled “pathogenic,” as they can, when combined with other risk factors, lead to psychopathology (Mikulincer and Shaver 2012; Karen 1998; Sroufe et al. 2000). For more on attachment styles, see Berit Brogaard's entry in this volume.
- 20 To be sure, not all cases of psychopathic personalities and addiction can be traced to earlier attachment problems. It is also worth noting that some reserve the term “psychopathy” for a pre-existing brain disorder, and use “sociopathy” where similar traits arise as a result of environmental factors (see, for example, Hare 1993: 23–24). The *DSM-V* has no entry dedicated to psychopathy, but references it, along with sociopathy, in the entry on antisocial personality disorder (2013: 659).
 - 21 See for example Cleckley (1998: 338–339); Hare (1993: 34); and Blair et al. (2005: 7).
 - 22 See for example Darwall (2006); Shoemaker (2007); and Watson (2011).
 - 23 For a discussion of how love differs from mere caring, see Jaworska and Wonderly (forthcoming).
 - 24 For more on how one's experience of, and attitude toward, one's own vulnerability can impact one's abilities to engage in caring and prosocial behaviors, see Miller (2012) and Gilson (2014).
 - 25 See for example Flores (2004: 4–10).
 - 26 Note that this picture is meant to supplement and deepen, rather than replace, typical “disordered neural reward signal” models of addiction that pervade much of the scientific and philosophical literature on addiction.

References

- Ainsworth, M. (1988) “On Security,” from the Proceedings of the State University of New York, Stony Brook Conference on Attachment.
- Ainsworth, M. D. S., M. Blehar, E. Waters, and S. Wall (1978) *Patterns of Attachment*, Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- American Psychiatric Association (APA) (2013) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fifth edition: DSM-V, Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association.
- Badhwar, N. (2003) “Love,” in H. LaFollette (ed.) *Practical Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 42–69.
- Blair, J., D. Mitchell, and K. Blair (2005) *The Psychopath: Emotion and the Brain*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Blatz, W. (1966) *Human Security: Some Reflections*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Bowlby, J. (1969/1982) *Attachment and Loss, Vol. 1: Attachment*, New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1973) *Attachment and Loss, Vol. 2: Separation*, New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1980) *Attachment and Loss, Vol. 3: Loss, Sadness, and Depression*, New York: Basic Books.
- Bratman, M. E. (2000) “Valuing and the Will,” *Noûs* 34 (s14): 249–265.
- Brentlinger, J. (1989) “The Nature of Love,” in A. Soble (ed.) *Eros, Agape, and Philia: Readings in the Philosophy of Love*, New York: Paragon House, 136–148.
- Brown, R. (1987) *Analyzing Love*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cassidy, J., and P. R. Shaver (2008) *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications* (2nd ed.), New York: Guilford Press.
- Cleckley, H. M. (1988) *The Mask of Sanity: An Attempt to Clarify Some Issues About the So Called Psychopathic Personality*, 5th edition, Augusta, GA: Emily S. Cleckley.
- Collins, N., A. Guichard, M. Ford, and B. Feeney (2006) “Responding to Need in Intimate Relationships: Normative Processes and Individual Differences,” in M. Mikulincer and G. S. Goodman (eds.) *Dynamics of Romantic Love: Attachment, Caregiving, and Sex*, New York: Guilford Press, 149–189.
- Darwall, S. (2006) *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Egeland, B., and B. Carlson (2004) “Attachment and Psychopathology,” in L. Atkins and S. Goldberg (eds.), *Attachment Issues in Psychopathology and Intervention*, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 27–48.
- Elster, J. (1999) *Strong Feelings: Emotion, Addiction, and Human Behavior*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Feeney, J. (2008) "Adult Romantic Attachment: Developments in the Study of Couple Relationships," in J. Cassidy and P. Shaver (eds.), *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications* (2nd ed.), New York: Guilford Press, 456–482.
- Fishback, M. (1945) *Look Who's a Mother!*, New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Flores, P. J. (2004) *Addiction as an Attachment Disorder*, Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson.
- Frankfurt, H. (1999a) "Autonomy, Necessity, and Love," in his *Necessity, Volition, and Love*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 129–141.
- Frankfurt, H. (1999b) "On Caring," in his *Necessity, Volition, and Love*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 155–180.
- Frankfurt, H. (2004) *Reasons of Love*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Freud, S. (1949) *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (trans., ed. James Strachey), New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Gilson, E. (2014) *The Ethics of Vulnerability: A Feminist Analysis of Social Life and Practice*, New York: Routledge.
- Harcourt, E. (Forthcoming) "Attachment, Autonomy, and the Evaluative Variety of Love," in E. Kroeker and K. Schaubroeck (eds.), *The Reasons of Love*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hare, R. D. (1993) *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths among Us*, New York: Guilford Press.
- Harlow, H. (1958) "The Nature of Love," *American Psychologist* 13(12): 673–685.
- Hazan, C., and P. Shaver (1987) "Romantic Love Conceptualized as an Attachment Process," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 52(3): 511–524.
- Hazan, C., M. Campa, and N. Gur-Yaish (2006) "What Is Adult Attachment?" in M. Mikulincer and G. S. Goodman (eds.) *Dynamics of Romantic Love: Attachment, Caregiving, and Sex*, New York: Guilford Press, 47–70.
- Helm, B. W. (2009) "Love, Identification, and the Emotions," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 46: 39–59.
- Helm, B. W. (2010) *Love, Friendship, and the Self: Intimacy, Identification, and the Social Nature of Persons*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jaworska, A. (2007a) "Caring and Full Moral Standing," *Ethics* 117(3): 460–497.
- Jaworska, A. (2007b) "Caring and Internality," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 74(3): 529–568.
- Jaworska, A., and J. Tannenbaum (2015) "Who Has the Capacity to Participate as a Reeree in a Person-Rearing Relationship?" *Ethics* 125: 1096–1113.
- Jaworska, A., and M. Wonderly (Forthcoming) "Love and Caring," in C. Grau and A. Smuts (eds.) *Oxford Handbook of the Philosophy of Love*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jollimore, T. (2011) *Love's Vision*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Karen, R. (1998) *Becoming Attached: First Relationships and How They Shape Our Capacity to Love*, reprint edition, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kolodny, N. (2003) "Love as Valuing a Relationship," *The Philosophical Review* 112: 135–189.
- Maslow, A. H. (1942) "The Dynamics of Psychological Security-Insecurity," *Journal of Personality* 10(4): 331–344.
- Mikulincer, M. (2006) "Attachment, Caregiving, and Sex within Romantic Relationships: A Behavioral Systems Perspective," in M. Mikulincer and G. S. Goodman (eds.) *Dynamics of Romantic Love: Attachment, Caregiving, and Sex*, New York: Guilford Press, 23–46.
- Mikulincer, M., and G. Goodman (2006) *Dynamics of Romantic Love: Attachment, Caregiving, and Sex*, New York: Guilford Press.
- Mikulincer, M., and P. Shaver (2012) "An Attachment Perspective on Psychopathology," *World Psychiatry* 11: 11–15.
- Mikulincer, M., and P. Shaver (2016) *Attachment in Adulthood: Structure, Dynamics, and Change* (2nd ed.), New York: Guilford Press.
- Miller, S. C. (2012) *The Ethics of Need: Agency, Dignity, and Obligation*, New York: Routledge.
- Nozick, R. (1989) "Love's Bond," in his *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 68–86.
- Rholes, S., and J. Simpson. (2004) *Adult Attachment: Theory, Research, and Clinical Implications*, New York: Guilford Press.
- Scanlon, T. M. (1998) *What We Owe to Each Other*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Scheffler, S. (2011) "Valuing," in R. Jay Wallace, R. Kumar, and S. Freeman (eds.) *Reasons and Recognition: Essays on the Philosophy of T.M. Scanlon*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 23–42.
- Schore, A. N. (2016/1994) *Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self*. New York: Routledge.

- Seidman, J. (2009) "Valuing and Caring," *Theoria* 75(4): 272–303.
- Shaver, P. R., C. Hazan, and D. Bradshaw (1988) "Love as Attachment: The Integration of Three Behavioral Systems," in R. J. Sternberg and M. Barnes (eds.) *The Psychology of Love*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 68–99.
- Shoemaker, D. (2003) "Caring, Identification, and Agency," *Ethics* 114: 88–118.
- Shoemaker, D. (2007) "Moral Address, Moral Responsibility, and the Boundaries of the Moral Community," *Ethics* 118: 70–108.
- Solomon, R. (2001) *About Love*, Ontario: Madison Books.
- Sroufe, L. A., S. Duggal, N. Weinfield, and C. Carlson (2000) "Relationships, Development and Psychopathology," in A. J. Sameroff, M. Lewis, and S. Miller (eds.) *Handbook of Developmental Psychology* (2nd ed.), New York: Springer, 75–92.
- Velleman, J. D. (1999) "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109: 338–374.
- Watson, G. (1999) "Disordered Appetites: Addiction, Compulsion and Dependence," in Jon Elster (ed.) *Addiction: Entries and Exits*, New York: Russell Sage Publications, 3–28.
- Watson, G. (2011) "The Trouble with Psychopaths," in R. Jay Wallace, R. Kumar, and S. Freeman (eds.) *Reasons and Recognition: Essays on the Philosophy of T. M. Scanlon*, New York: Oxford University Press, 307–331.
- White, R. J. (2001) *Love's Philosophy*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Wonderly, M. (2016) "On Being Attached," *Philosophical Studies* 173(1): 223–242.
- Wonderly, M. (2017) "Love and Attachment," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 54(3): 232–250.

3

“MAMA, DO YOU LOVE ME?”

A Defense of Unloving Parents

Sara Protasi

Mama, Do You Love Me? is the title of a poignant children’s book, in which an Inuit mother reassures her daughter that she will always love her (Joosse 1991). Mother and child are portrayed in increasingly more challenging and surreal circumstances: the child drops eggs, or goes to live with a pack of wolves, or transmutes into a bear that chases the mother. But her mother, even if angry, sad, or scared, keeps loving her and tells the daughter that she will love her “forever and for always”. The comforting moral for young readers is that no matter how naughtily they behave, or how hard they push the boundaries, their mommy will always love them. The book is charming for various aesthetic reasons: gorgeous illustrations, poetic language, magical plot, not to mention the fascinating depiction of Inuit customs (although I worry about cultural appropriation). It also teaches children that their mother’s negative emotional responses should not be confused with lack of love. But when I read the book the first time I reacted with anguish and anxiety. For I was not sure that I could become such a mother, and I resented not having felt like such a daughter.

The book is exemplary of a fundamental, maybe even foundational, contemporary Western ideal: unconditional maternal love. Entire libraries could be filled with the stories, songs and lullabies that instill this ideal into our minds.

Like with any cultural narrative, there are counternarratives or complications: for every fairy tale’s ending of happy children reuniting with their angelic (birth)mother, there is a dark fable’s beginning of miserable children abused by their evil (step)mother; for every Dr. Sears promoting the joys of motherhood, there is a Dr. Freud inquiring into the troubles and pains hiding underneath. For every Cornelia, a Medea. And yet, the predominant portrait of parental love in analytic philosophy often seems oblivious of these complexities, and does not challenge the notion of a parental, especially maternal, love as absolute, unconditional, self-effacing, and eternal: “forever and for always”.

Not only can parental love sometimes be partial, conditional, or selfish; sometimes it fails to arise at all. This chapter is an embryonic exploration of how and why parents fail to meet the ideal illustrated in *Mama, Do You Love Me?* While what I say applies to parents of all genders, I will focus on mothers, since my aim is not only to defend a philosophical thesis, but also provide support for a change in the psychology and sociology of motherhood.

In the first section, I draw some preliminary distinctions and clarify the scope and limitations of my inquiry. In the second section, I argue that unloving mothers exist, and are not psychologically

abnormal. In the third section, I go further and suggest that lack of maternal love can be fitting and even morally permissible. In the fourth section, I sketch some implications that lack of maternal love and unrequited filial love have for the debate on reasons for love. I conclude with avenues for future research.

The Many Faces of Love

That love comes in different forms is something we experience on an everyday basis. We talk about loving our partners, children, parents, siblings, friends, co-workers, fellow human beings, animals, God(s), and objects—both concrete (this painting) and abstract (art). Some languages, like ancient Greek, have different terms to refer to these wildly different forms of “love”. English is one of the languages with fewer such distinctions. Therefore, philosophers of love writing in English sometimes use Greek terms such as *eros* (passionate love); *philia* (companionate, friendly, and familial love); *agape* (love for humanity).¹

There are two forms of love that are experienced in the parent–child relationship—filial and parental—and they are analogous in many ways: they stem from the same relation and each is a response to the other; the beloved is not a peer, unlike most other forms of personal love; they are directed toward an unchosen object of love,² unlike friendship and (in most contemporary cultures) romantic love; they are generally sustained over a lifetime and are central to self-identity and flourishing.

There are, however, significant differences between parental and filial love. One such difference is the obvious disparity of autonomy and power between parents and children, which is bound to affect the way they love each other. Such a difference steadily decreases as the children grow older, and for most of the children’s life this difference is absent or tenuous. Another difference originates from social expectations and duties: for instance, one could say that parental love is more unconditional and altruistic, and requires a self-abnegation that is not paralleled in filial love. Such a characterization, however, is culturally dependent: in some traditions, as for instance in the Confucian one, it is filial piety that is expected to be unconditional and self-abnegating.³ Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between the social duties that come with the parent–child bond, and love itself.⁴ The two can and do come apart: parents can fulfill their duties toward their children, but not love them, and vice versa.⁵ This difference is not just fairly commonsensical, but ratified by the law: parents, even loving ones, who neglect their duties are charged with abuse, but unloving parents who do not neglect their duties are not.

But there is a crucial and persisting difference between parental and filial love, one which is not culturally relative: if and how parents love their children has a central role in the healthy development of the children. It has been shown conclusively that children need to be loved by their caregivers in order to thrive not only psychologically, but also physically.⁶ Additionally, how much and how well a child is loved by their parent has a large impact on how much and how well a child will love their parents, and any other person later in life. This is another respect in which filial love and parental love are cross-culturally asymmetrical. It is a feature of the normal development of many animals that their attachment to their parents is strongly dependent on how the parents interact with them.

Such preeminence of parental love may in part explain why we have the cultural ideal that I described in the introduction: we realize how crucial it is, for our development as functional human beings, to be loved and nurtured by our parents, and therefore uphold the belief that anything short of unconditional parental love is psychologically abnormal and morally impermissible.

In what follows, I paint a more complicated picture of parental love, and argue that lack of parental love is not only psychologically possible and not symptomatic of a pathology, but may also be fitting and even morally permissible. I will discuss the psychological possibility in the next section.

Unloving Parents Are Not Psychologically Abnormal

The existence of unloving parents is a phenomenon well known to psychologists, psychoanalysts, and counselors. Psychological case studies thus provide evidence for the relatively uncontroversial claim that lack of parental love is metaphysically *possible*. However, a psychological approach perpetuates the idea that lack of parental love is necessarily *pathological*: parents fail to love their children in virtue of being abnormal in some way or other, for instance because they are mentally ill, or have been abused by their own parents. The latter explanation does persuasively account for many cases of parental abuse. But abuse, while often compatible with, or caused by, lack of love, should not be conflated with it.

I am going to present a case of lack of love that involves neither abuse nor psychological abnormality. But, first, a word on the methodology. I will sketch vignettes that aim to induce certain cognitive and emotional responses in the reader. There is a fertile debate on the limitations and benefits of this methodology that cannot be rehashed here. I considered using literary examples, such as Anna Karenina (*War and Peace*) and Becky Sharp (*Vanity Fair*), since they allow for greater complexity than philosophical vignettes. However, such a complexity comes at a cost: either one has to describe the examples in detail, or one needs to rely on a shared knowledge that cannot, and should not, be counted on. Furthermore, artistic works will undoubtedly engender multiple interpretations: does Anna Karenina stop loving her children when she leaves them? Is Becky’s lack of love caused by an abnormal upbringing? Thought experiments have the advantage of being created precisely for the purpose of analyzing responses to only one salient feature.

So here it goes:

Unloving Father

Al is quite upset: he has found out that his girlfriend has decided to go ahead with the pregnancy, even though he has always been clear that he did not want to have a child, and even though he has always done his best to prevent a pregnancy. He breaks up with her, and reiterates that he does not want children. His former girlfriend hopes he will change his mind, but in fact he doesn’t. As years go by, he provides financial support, but he never even meets his son and never develops any relationship with him. Al does not love his son, even though he acknowledges the biological connection and fulfills the consequent duties of material support.

Unloving father is not a far-fetched case. Of course, many men do not even financially support their biological offspring, but I want to distinguish between love and fulfilling legally recognized parental duties.

While many would think poorly of Al from an ethical point of view (couldn’t he *try* to have a relationship with his son?), nobody would think that there is anything psychologically abnormal with him; nor would they think that he is secretly harboring repressed love that he cannot manifest, as they might think if he were a woman.

In fact, many fathers are absent from their children’s lives and seem to not love them, even when they recognize them legally as their children. Again, even if we might judge them negatively from a moral perspective, we find this entirely believable. This different assessment of

women and men is mostly due to sexist expectations and stereotypes, but there could also be reasons having to do with biological parenthood. For some women, bearing the fetus helps them to develop a bond with their future child, and this connection is not available to biological fathers and adoptive parents.⁷ Of course, as we will see, carrying the fetus is far from guaranteeing a love bond, and many women, anecdotally, report being disappointed that they did not experience such a connection.

At any rate, in order to simplify the discussion and facilitate comparisons between cases, I will from now on use only vignettes featuring mothers—the analogous fatherly cases should be persuasive *a fortiori*. I refer to male children to keep pronouns straight.

The equivalent case to UNLOVING FATHER is easy to conjure:

Unloving Mother 1

Ali finds herself pregnant against her will, and cannot get an abortion. She wants to give the baby up for adoption, but her family prevents her from doing so. They reassure her she will love her child at first sight. At the moment, she hates her state and does not feel any connection with the fetus, which she thinks of as an alien, invasive creature. She hopes this will change when the baby is born. However, after birth the baby looks ugly to her, and she has a hard time breastfeeding him. She lacks adequate medical and familial support, and is left alone dealing with this still-alien-looking creature who cries all the time and who does not seem to like her at all. Ali is exhausted and resentful, dreaming of the life she could have had without him. After a few weeks, she leaves him outside an ER, well covered, wearing bright colors, and in plain sight. She cuts ties with her previous life, and never comes to regret her deed.

Ali does not love her child and feels alienated from him to the point of abandoning him. We could appeal to various explanations as to why she does not love him, but the point here is that she is not psychologically abnormal, just like Unloving Father.

Note that I do not take abandonment to be a *symptom* of lack of love: there are many mothers who abandon or give up their children for adoption while still loving their children. But I construed my story so as to exclude such a possibility: Ali does not love her child and *thus* abandons him.

As in the previous case, a natural reaction would be to concede that the parent does not love her child, but to find it normatively wrong. This response might be quite resilient even if we change the example so as to exclude abandonment. Imagine the following variation:

Unloving Mother 2

Bo's story starts like Ali's. However, her conscience does not allow her to give up her baby, so she continues to raise him, but she is filled with resentment toward him. For her baby, she had to give up a fulfilling career, and now she is struggling financially. She also finds herself estranged from her religious community because the child was conceived out of wedlock, and from her friends, who are leading a different lifestyle. Bo keeps fulfilling her basic duties, but she is full of resentment and finds herself unable to love her child.

This case, too, is meant to illustrate that an unloving mother is psychologically normal. Bo shows no signs of mental illness, and is neurotypical. She simply cannot love her child. Notice that I am not claiming that Bo's outcome is unavoidable or even statistically typical: it might be the case that the majority of women who do not desire a child but end up having one nonetheless do love their children. Whether that is the case should be investigated empirically (albeit it might be quite hard to do so, as I discuss below).

At this point one could argue that neither Ali nor Bo, nor the many biological fathers who reject their role as fathers, are "real" parents: to count as an unloving *parent*, one needs to occupy

a certain social or moral role.⁸ After all, even with all the biases in favor of biological motherhood, many of us do not find it difficult to imagine that a surrogate mother does not love the fetus she carries, precisely because she has set up herself not to.

However, I submit that even when a woman occupies the relevant social or moral role, she might find it hard to love her child, as in the following case:

Unloving Mother 3

Catherine is looking forward to becoming a mother. She dreams of blissful family scenes like the ones she has seen in movies. She caresses her pregnant belly, and talks to the baby inside her. However, when the baby is born, things are much different from what she expected. She thought she would be filled with instant love for her baby, but she only feels the desire to love him, not love itself. Even though she does not dare to say it, she does not think the baby is as cute as everybody else claims, with his bulging eyes, cone-shaped head, and thick dark hair that covers his whole body. She is ashamed to find him boring and uninteresting. A few weeks after he is born, the baby dies of AIDS. She is devastated, but for reasons that she won't confess: she has never got a chance to love her baby. Regret, guilt, and shame are all that she can feel.

Catherine wants to be a mother and wants to love her baby, but she does not have the time to. Loving is often a gradual process, even though most mothers expect to fall in love with their babies at first sight (and some of them do).

One way to think of what happens to Catherine is that the mere existence of the parental commitment does not suffice to bring about her love. That is, the causal process that usually takes place when a mother gives birth or receives her adoptive child goes awry, even though Catherine wants to love her baby and has *reasons* to love him.

There are many ways in which parents may find themselves incapable of developing a loving attitude toward their children, even though they want to. Other emotions might come in the way, as it might happen to a stepparent in the grip of intense jealousy for the former partner of their spouse who is the biological parent of their children.

This section was aimed to persuade the reader that lack of parental love is not only *possible*, but also psychologically *normal*; that is, it need not be the outcome of previous neglect or abuse, or stem from some kind of psychological pathology.

But the very notion of psychological normality is a thorny one. On the one hand, it heavily relies on statistical typicality: how normal a behavior is depends at least partially on how widespread it is. However, it is extremely difficult to empirically study how frequently mothers lack love. Think of the stigma against women who confess to either not want children, or to regret having had children, *even when they claim they love their children*.⁹ Furthermore, women who fail to love their children also face internalized guilt and shame that are likely to inhibit truthfulness even to themselves. Emotional suppression and self-deception make studying this phenomenon extremely difficult.

On the other hand, what counts as normal, psychologically or otherwise, is also always enmeshed with values. Feminist epistemology has long demonstrated that the myth of scientific neutrality is just that (Anderson 2017). Normative considerations are particularly important when it comes to empirically investigating parental love, which is a crucial component of our value system, as the strength and resilience of stereotypical understanding of motherhood demonstrates.

My separation into psychological and normative considerations is thus somewhat artificial. While I build my scenarios as having increasing normative strength, in a sort of foundational crescendo, my argument might be best interpreted in a coherentist light, where intuitions brought about later might reinforce verdicts defended earlier on. At the same time, a natural

response of some readers is to accept that unloving mothers do exist, but reject that their lack of love is ever fitting or morally permissible. The next section aims to push back against this ingrained way of thinking.

Unloving Parents Are Not Always Moral Monsters

Here is a vignette aimed to show that lack of parental love may be fitting:

Unloving Mother 4

*Diana's son Kevin has always been very selfish. She has always loved him anyway, and hoped that by showering him with care and by modeling an empathetic behavior, she could change him. But Kevin kept being focused only on his own interests. Diana could feel her love getting increasingly strained by witnessing his cruel behavior toward his partners and his manipulative attitude towards others in general. One day, watching the news, she discovers that Kevin, now CEO of a big pharmaceutical company, has obtained the manufacturing license for a drug that is crucial for the treatment of parasites in children in developing countries, and has raised its price by a factor of 56. Suddenly, Diana is filled with rage and hatred. The last remnants of love she felt in her heart seem to melt, and she refuses to have any relationship with him.*¹⁰

Diana's story may be uncommon: even when a child acts in a way that manifests deep moral flaws, parents may not stop loving their children, either because they themselves do not have a moral compass, or because they find ways of excusing their child against all evidence, or because they condemn their acts while still loving them.¹¹

Nevertheless, Diana's reaction seems *fitting*. While we admire a mother who is capable of loving her son and at the same time condemning his actions, we do not think that ceasing to love a moral monster is inappropriate.

Such a propriety judgment may be easier to defend when the immoral actions are directed *against* the parents themselves: even though it is less talked about than child abuse, children abuse their parents too. Consider the novel *Father Goriot*, by Honoré de Balzac, where the eponymous character is portrayed as endlessly providing for his ungrateful and unloving daughters. It seems to me that we should think of children abusing parents as analogous to parents abusing children, at least when it comes to the question of whether parents should emotionally detach themselves from their abusers.

But children need not be abusive to cause their parents to stop loving them. C. S. Lewis has an intriguing discussion of unrequited familial love in general. He laments "those treacly tunes and saccharine poems in which popular art expresses Affection. They are odious because of their falsity. They represent as a ready-made recipe for bliss (and even for goodness) what is in fact only an opportunity" (Lewis 1960: 62).

Lewis talks of unrequited familial love as a widespread phenomenon that "happens every day" (63), and which is caused by the fact that sometimes we are, simply, "intolerable" (64). Of course, being intolerable is a subjective judgment: how often do we see parents and children (or siblings, or other relatives, for that matter) who cannot stand each other even though, to an external observer, they are both perfectly nice and acceptable people who just cannot get along? The unchosen nature of family associations makes it unavoidable that some of them be dysfunctional, and sometimes the suffering involved suffocates the love. This is particularly likely to happen when the parties are forced to live together because of external circumstances.

However, even when their children are perfectly tolerable and even likeable and worthy of love, parents may stop loving them. Consider this case:

Unloving Mother 5

Eva is deeply unhappy. She has a young child, Malik, whom she loves, but her relationship with the father of the child, Tom, is very dysfunctional and they fight constantly. Her constant unhappiness makes her a bad mother: she treats Malik poorly and feels deeply guilty about that. To escape her current unhappiness, she starts having affairs until she falls in love with a woman, Laneka. She believes her happiness depends on her ability to live with Laneka, but knows that she would never be able to get custody of her son given that her country's laws prohibit homosexual relations. She also thinks he will be better off with Tom, who is an affectionate father, and who will be able to give him a much more comfortable life. Eva leaves, and after a while Tom remarries. Eva knows from third parties that her son is much happier. Tom does not allow for any interaction with him, but Eva thinks that's best for all. She moves to another country and adopts a little girl with Laneka. She goes back to college and finds a fulfilling career path. After decades, she sometimes thinks of her son, but both her grief and love gradually fade until they are extinguished. Malik never attempts to reestablish a bond with his birth mother and considers his stepmother his "real" mother.

The topic of conflicts between reasons provided by love and other kinds of reasons for action (such as moral and prudential reasons) has been explored at length by philosophers.¹² However, the focus has generally been on conflicts between love's reasons and moral reasons, rather than on internal conflicts within reasons of love themselves.

It seems to me that what Eva does may be considered morally permissible. More importantly, even those who disagree should acknowledge that Eva is not a moral monster. Women who escape unhappy marriages and lives and leave their children behind are crucified by popular press and fictional representations alike, but their decision may be the right one, even morally speaking, if their unhappiness prevented them from loving their children as children ought to be loved.

Furthermore, a conflict between different loving relationships is not the only source of pressure on parental love: others are professional obligations, artistic pursuits, or religious ideals, to mention the most obvious. Think of the fictional Gauguin that Williams imagines in his *Moral Luck*: a man who reneges on his familial obligations in order to pursue his worthy artistic aspiration (Williams 1981). Or imagine a spiritual or political leader who needs to forgo family obligations in order to advance a cause perceived as more important. Again, using examples of fathers is helpful in that even when we criticize them morally, we do not think of them as monsters, but as conflicted men who may have taken the wrong decision.

The extent to which these other normative sources undermine not just love's duties but its constitutive feelings, expressions, and behaviors may depend on one's conception of love, but it is reasonable to suppose that at least in some cases love is lost altogether.

I want to conclude this section by briefly analyzing three possible responses to Eva's case. One is to suggest that Eva's action is not morally impermissible, but is bad nonetheless, an instance of the *suberogatory* (Driver 1992).¹³ I am sympathetic to this line of thought, and to the particularistic or pluralistic approach to the deontic that goes along with it, but I cannot develop its implications here.

A second one is to insist that Eva's behavior is immoral because it harmed Malik. But I stipulated that that is not the case. While it might be rare that children are not damaged by lack of maternal love, in large part that harm depends on the very ideal I am suggesting we should dismantle: if Eva were a man, we would readily admit Malik is better off without him. Why is it any different with a mother?

The final, related, response is to deny that the story is psychologically plausible: how can Eva stop loving her son? But, again, why do we find it so hard to believe that a mother could stop loving a grown child? We stop loving friends, romantic partners, siblings, and parents. Why are

children any different? In the absence of decisive countervailing empirical evidence, the burden of proof seems to rest with my opponent.

As I stated earlier, my aim in this essay is double: to put pressure on a philosophical framework, on the one hand, and to support a sociological change, on the other. I am not under the illusion of having *conclusively* proven that lack of parental love may be fitting or morally permissible. In fact, I myself oscillate when thinking about Eva. How could she not love her son?! But then I remind myself how different I am from her or the other unloving mothers I described. My children have been deeply desired; they are young and adorable, and I cannot fathom them committing any heinous crime; I am in a happy relationship with my partner; I have the education and financial means that allow me to look for childcare, counseling, and other forms of support; I live in an extremely privileged context that provides me with multiple opportunities for thriving. It is easy for me, and many of us philosophically dissecting love, to look down upon those who fail to love their children, to think of them as defective, either psychologically or morally. But thought experiments are not just about testing affect-free intuitions: they are, or should be, also about counterfactual emotional engagement: a form of imaginative projection that may require significant adjustment to our individual moral psychology and our collective sociological understanding of motherhood. That much I hope to have invited the reader to do.

Reasons for Loving or Not Loving One's Children

In the philosophy of love there are three, partially overlapping, debates: a metaphysical discussion on the nature of love; a debate on normative reasons that stem *from* love; and a debate on whether there are normative reasons *for* love.¹⁴ Thinking about lack of parental love can be fruitful for all three of them.

For instance, I have suggested earlier that whether a certain case counts as one of an unloving parent may depend on one's conception of love. The opposite holds too: whether or not a theory accounts for this phenomenon may be a desideratum of the theory itself. Furthermore, thinking of parents who stop loving their children in virtue of normative reasons could provide original insights for the second debate, where it is often still taken for granted that parents who do not love their children are "ethically flawed" and even "irrational" (Setiya 2014: 259). In this section, however, I will focus on the implications for the topic of reasons *for* love.

Excellent reviews of the debate are already provided in this volume and elsewhere, so I will just reiterate the fundamental notions. The logical space is usually divided as follows: there are those who believe that love has no justificatory reasons and those who believe it does. The most famous proponent of the first kind of view is Harry Frankfurt, who argues that love is a volitional commitment that bestows value, but is not responsive to it.

People find this theory either very intuitive or very puzzling, depending on which features or experiences of love are most salient and important to them. Those who find it puzzling think of love as responsive to reason. Philosophers in this Rationalist camp think of love as involving an appraisal of the beloved. This idea is often spelled out in terms of characteristics, qualities, or properties of the beloved, which range from prosaic intrinsic traits such as being beautiful and smart, to moral qualities, to relational and historical properties such as "being the person I proposed to in Paris", to much more abstract ones such as rationality or simple humanity.¹⁵

Appraisal views share the advantage, to differing degrees, of accounting for commonsensical intuitions and ways of speaking about our beloveds, especially in romantic and friendly contexts, and for our need to be appreciated by our lovers for our qualities. However, many of these views are vulnerable to various objections: what happens if the beloved changes, or loses their

qualities, or someone else with the same or better qualities comes along? Proponents of these views have answers for these questions, but such answers tend to be more persuasive for non-familial love. In familial contexts, it seems that our love for our children makes us aware of their value, rather than vice versa.

A popular alternative to views that think of love as a response to the value of an individual is to think of love as a response to the value of a *relationship* (Kolodny 2003). My reason to love my daughter is precisely that she is my daughter, my reason to love my spouse is that she is my spouse, and so forth for all types of loving relationships. This approach has many advantages. It retains the talk of reasons, while avoiding traditional objections, and it presents a unified picture of different kinds of personal love.

The Relationship View and the No Reasons View superficially resemble each other. When asked: "why do you love me?" the lover in both cases responds "because you are my daughter". In one case, however, "because" refers to a normative reason, while in another it refers simply to a causal explanation: like anything else, the psychological state that we call love is caused by something, but that need not involve a reason. I am hungry because I skipped lunch—but my skipping lunch is not a normative reason that justifies my hunger, or renders it a fitting response.

Finally, in more recent years, hybrid views have emerged. Such views tend to approach the problem in a more pluralistic spirit: because love comprises both normative and non-normative elements, it may or may not be responsive to reasons. This idea is cashed out in different ways depending on the author (Martin 2015; Hurka 2017).

But why are unloving parents relevant to this debate? First, it seems to me that reflecting on this phenomenon brings us to lean in favor of a Rationalist approach. In almost all of the cases discussed above a live and important question is whether the unloving parent has adequate normative reasons for not loving their child. The response that an advocate of a No Reasons View must give—that this question presupposes some kind of category mistake—is not persuasive.

Moreover, when Frankfurt talks about the groundlessness of love, parental love is his paradigmatic example, but he never considers the possibility of unloving parents. For instance, in *The Reasons of Love* he writes:

If my children turn out to be ferociously wicked, or if it should become apparent that loving them somehow threatened my hope of leading a decent life, I might perhaps recognize that my love for them was regrettable. But I suspect that after coming finally to acknowledge this, I would continue to love them anyhow.

(Frankfurt 2004: 39–40)

This might well be a truthful statement about Harry Frankfurt's love for his children, and it might be true for most parents, but we have no evidence that it is a universal truth, and we have some evidence that it is not. Once we consider the possibility of non-pathological unloving parents, the No Reasons View appears less compelling even for parental love.

Among the Rationalist views, the existence of unloving parents (and their counterpart, not discussed here, of unloving children) bears the most worrisome implications for the Relationship View. While the view faces significant objections within the context of romantic love,¹⁶ it seems much more plausible in the case of familial love, and especially with love for small children. If asked: "what is the reason you love your baby?", my immediate natural response is: "because she is my baby". And I see that as a good, justificatory, fitting reason.

The Relationship View *essentially* relies on the fact that love proper is always reciprocated: the lover's love is grounded normatively in the existence of a loving relationship with the

beloved. Thus, unrequited romantic love is explained away as not worthy of consideration because not proper love, but “futile pining” (Kolodny 2003: 171), while the possibility of lack of reciprocation within familial bonds is not even considered. But we can think of most of the cases above as cases of *unrequited filial love*: as far as we know, children of unloving parents love their parents. This is precisely what makes the cases heartbreaking, what makes us prone to indignation and anger toward those mothers: how can they not love their innocent children, how can they deprive them of this immense good that maternal love is?

But then, if mama does not love me, and yet I do love her, what grounds my love? We do *not* have a loving relationship in place. And even if mama used to love me, but I become an evil pharma bro who harms people out of greed, what justifies her ceasing to love me? The loving relationship clearly cannot.

A possible response on Kolodny’s behalf is that these are views of reasons for loving, not for *not* loving. In other words, one could deny that falling in and out of love, so to speak, are symmetrical. Perhaps, in the spirit of the hybrid views mentioned above, one could think that we stop loving because our beloved loses or never acquires certain lovable properties, but we begin to love our small children for no reason, and continue loving them in virtue of the established relationship we have with them, until finally qualities become normatively relevant (and thus love can end). David Wong has defended a similar pluralistic approach (Wong 2014).

Thinking about unrequited love and lack of parental love, together with other realistic portraits of love, thus enriches the discussion of all forms of love and encourages the development of more sophisticated approaches.

Conclusion: On Loving Less or Badly

There are some important issues that I have to leave for future inquiry. I have throughout talked as if parents either love their children or they don’t. But when we think about lack of love in romantic relationships, for instance, it is often the case that one is loved *less* or *differently* than the other, or *inadequately* or *inappropriately*. Similarly, parents may love their children a little, but not enough, or love them a lot but in a selfish way, or love one child of theirs more than their siblings, and so forth.

Many of the cases discussed here could be usefully reformulated and analyzed with this caveat in mind. That love comes in degrees of intensity and with all sorts of deficiencies is important when thinking about parental love precisely because of the overtly idealized or even saccharine picture that is often used.

One context in which loving less may come up often is a discussion of parental love and sibling rivalry. Parents often reassure their children that they are loved the same. At most, they will admit (in private) of *liking* one more than the other, or, less crudely, to get along with one more than the other. But third-party observers beg to disagree, and frankly it would be surprising if no parent ever loved some of their children a little more than others (correspondingly, I suspect some children do love their parents in different measures and ways).

Of course, without specifying a definition of love, it is hard to discuss rigorously what counts as loving less, or less well. But it seems to me that, again, such a discussion is worth having, even though it might be an uncomfortable one.

However, I want to end on a positive and reassuring note. Thinking about the flaws of parental love is not only compatible with acknowledging its primary role in our lives, but can provide further reasons to celebrate its many successful wholesome and virtuous instances. Love between a parent and a child is really like no other, especially when it starts blossoming—when we realize for the first time how much we love our child, and when our child loves us back. It

is comparatively unconditional; that is, most impervious to faults, flaws, and betrayals and least dependent on attractiveness and reciprocation. It is most enduring—that is, least accepting of substitutions and upgrades—even if sometimes people estranged from their children or parents do need to adopt, officially or not, someone else who can fill the void left. Finally, it is the most altruistic; that is, most concerned with the beloved’s interests and most self-effacing and prone to sacrifice (this is especially true in the love for small children, no doubt as evolution selected it).

Even when imperfect (that is, always), familial love may be, to quote C. S. Lewis again, “Love Himself, working in our hearts”, and, when your mama tells you that she loves you, that will be the most special moment of all.¹⁷

Notes

- 1 For a review, see Helm 2013.
- 2 With the exception of adoptions where parents choose a specific individual.
- 3 Cf. Wong 2014, whose title I borrow here.
- 4 Thanks to Simon Keller for bringing my attention to this distinction.
- 5 While the two come apart conceptually, one could argue that amongst parental duties is the duty to love one’s children, as defended by Matthew Liao in Liao 2015.
- 6 See Liao 2015: ch. 3 for a review of such evidence. See also the chapters by Monique Wonderly and by Berit Brogaard in this volume.
- 7 For a defense of the view that the intimate bond between gestational mother and baby usually develops during pregnancy, see Gheaus 2012.
- 8 Thanks to Anca Gheaus and Adrienne Martin for raising this worry.
- 9 See for instance: www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/may/09/love-regret-mothers-wish-never-had-children-motherhood. I thank Katrien Schaubroeck for this reference.
- 10 This vignette is inspired by the notorious “pharma bro” story and by *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (Shriver 2003).
- 11 As in Susan Wolf’s case of the mother who hides her child from the police (Wolf 2015: ch. 10).
- 12 See chapter by Katrien Schaubroeck in this volume.
- 13 I am grateful to Trip Glazer for this suggestion.
- 14 See the section on “Reasons and Rationality” of this volume.
- 15 Cf. Keller 2000, Delaney 1996, Velleman 1999, Setiya 2014.
- 16 Many of these objections are discussed by Esther Engels Kroeker in this volume. I object to the view from the perspective of unrequited love in Protasi 2016.
- 17 Thank you to Anca Gheaus, Trip Glazer, Simon Keller, Adrienne Martin, Katrien Schaubroeck, and Sam Shpall for detailed and insightful feedback.

References

- Anderson, E. (2017) “Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science”, in E. N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/feminism-epistemology>.
- Delaney, N. (1996) “Romantic Love and Loving Commitment: Articulating a Modern Ideal”, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 33: 339–356.
- Driver, J. (1992) “The Suberogatory”, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 70 (3): 286–295.
- Frankfurt, H. (2004) *Reasons of Love*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gheaus, A. (2012) “The Right to Parent One’s Biological Baby”, *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 20 (4): 432–455.
- Helm, B. (2013) “Love”, in E. N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition). <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/love>.
- Hurka, T. (2017) “Love and Reasons, The Many Relationships”, in Esther Engels Kroeker and Katrien Schaubroeck (eds.) *Love, Reason and Morality*, London: Routledge: 163–180.
- Joose, B. M. (1991) *Mama, Do You Love Me?*, San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books.

- Kolodny, N. (2003) "Love as Valuing a Relationship", *The Philosophical Review*, 112: 135–189.
- Lewis, C. S. (1960) *The Four Loves*, New York: Harcourt International.
- Liao, M. (2015) *The Right to Be Loved*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Martin, A. (2015) "Love, Incorporated", *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 18 (4): 691–702.
- Protasi, S. (2016) "Loving People for Who They Are (Even When They Don't Love You Back)", *European Journal of Philosophy*, 24 (1): 214–234.
- Setiya, K. (2014) "Love and the Value of a Life", *Philosophical Review*, 123 (3): 251–280.
- Shriver, L. (2003) *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, London: Serpent's Tail.
- Velleman, D. (1999) "Love as a Moral Emotion", *Ethics*, 109: 338–374.
- Williams, B. (1981) "Moral Luck", in *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 20–39.
- Wolf, S. (2015) *The Variety of Values: Essays on Morality, Meaning and Love*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wong, D. (2014) "The Different Faces of Love in a Good Life", in C. Li and P. Ni (eds.) *Moral Cultivation and Confucian Character: Engaging Joel J. Kupperman*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 97–125.

4

LOVING AND (OR?) CHOOSING OUR CHILDREN

Disability, Unconditional Parental Love, and Prenatal Selection

Joseph A. Stramondo

Introduction

While the principle of beneficence has been and continues to be an almost universal consideration for bioethics and the ethics of care is even sometimes deployed in the literature, it is exceedingly rare for secular bioethical arguments to draw upon the concept of love. However, an explicit appeal to love does appear in the literature focusing on the ethics of prenatal selection¹ against disability²—henceforth referred to as *prenatal selection*.

There is a kind of argument that deploys a certain view of how parents ought to appropriately love their children as a key step in the case for why parents should not use the technologies of prenatal selection to avoid having a disabled child. These sorts of arguments all rely on the concept of parental love for some of their normative force. Roughly, they take the position that prenatal selection is morally troubling because parental love ought to be unconditionally bestowed upon any child and not just those that have certain qualifying properties; and prenatal selection is inevitably somehow in tension with this moral commitment. I will refer to this as the *unconditional love argument*.

For the purposes of this essay, I will remain agnostic about the details of what parental love is or morally requires, generally speaking. Instead, I will proceed by summarizing some of the most prominent versions of the unconditional love argument against prenatal selection, placing them into a sort of taxonomy. While there are probably several plausible ways to parse these arguments into categories, I will be distinguishing between the kinds of unconditional love arguments based on the identity of the beloved. For each of these arguments, their place in my taxonomy will be determined by the answer to the question: who, exactly, is the parent failing to love unconditionally? That is, each category will be distinguished from the others based on the object of the unconditional love that has been brought into question.

Prenatal Selection as a Failure to Love the Embryo

While Helen Watt makes some controversial claims in her article “Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis: Choosing the ‘Good Enough’ Child,” she hopes her proposed arguments rest on an uncontroversial view of “what it means to be a good parent,” arguing that unconditional love is required (Watt 2004: 51). While she uses the specific language of unconditional *acceptance*

rather than unconditional *love*, parental love clearly plays a defining role in how she characterizes good parenting:

Central to the notion of good parenthood which many of us share is *unconditional acceptance*. Parents who make their love and care conditional on their child displaying certain features are seen as unparental in the way they behave. Parents should, we think, accept their children—warts and all—as full members of the family.

(52)

She justifies this claim with a Kantian appeal to respect for persons, such that putting conditions on parental love treats the child as a “mere means to an end” (52). This is because, while it is morally permissible to ask a child to help advance the collective good of the family—as is often the case when they are put to work on a family farm or other business enterprise—it would be wrong to discard that child if they were no longer able to advance that end: “If the child became disabled, and could no longer help the family out in this way, the parents would still love the child, and respect and promote his or her interests” (53). In turn, Watt is here framing prenatal selection as a process in which unwanted, often disabled embryos are treated as a mere means when they are discarded because they lack the qualifying properties to achieve the end of the parents, “whether this end is economic, or concerned with other benefits—medical or social—for the family” (52).

Of course, whether prenatal selection against disability ought to be viewed as regarding a child as a mere means largely hinges on the moral personhood status of the embryo. If the “child” you are referring to is the infant born after the process unfolds, then it makes little sense to say that they have been treated as a mere means—after all, she never would have existed had she not been selected. In contrast, if the discarded embryos or fetuses are granted full personhood status, then this opens up the possibility that they are being treated as a mere means when they are discarded for not having the properties that would achieve the family planning goals of their parents.

Watt recognizes this and takes the position that fetuses and embryos ought not be regarded as mere means because “the human organism is, I am claiming, coextensive with the human subject of interests and rights” (53). For Watt, from conception to old age, a human being is the same organism with the same numerical identity and, so, such a being can have an interest and corresponding right at Time A that they will not actually exercise until later at Time B. Since they are the same being at Time A, though, they have that latent interest that needs to be preserved with a right even before it can be exercised.³ She makes this argument by analogy with a human infant,

the human being as an infant has interests in benefits, such as education, which he or she does not understand, and cannot enjoy for many years. The same is true, I want to argue, of the embryo, who is simply the human individual at an earlier stage.

(54)

So, her argument goes, if the human person has a right to be treated as an end that is intrinsically valuable rather than a mere means, and the human embryo is numerically identical to this person, then it also shares this right. Thus, by granting embryos a full complement of human rights as persons because they are numerically identical to persons, Watt can make her case that prenatal selection violates this embryo’s right to be treated as an intrinsically valuable end and not a mere means.

However, the implications of Watt's view and the premises she has based it on seem to be much more far reaching in reproductive ethics than merely challenging prenatal selection. If parents have a duty to love and accept their embryos from the moment of conception when they are numerically identical to a rights-bearing person, then it would follow that a full range of other reproductive decisions would also be morally forbidden. In fact, one could not terminate a pregnancy for nearly any reason because such a termination would be a case of treating the terminated embryo or fetus as a mere means toward the end of the motivating reason, whatever that might be.

The one exception to this would be cases in which the pregnancy was terminated for the sake of the embryo or fetus itself. However, as Derek Parfit famously argued with his non-identity problem, in cases where we can avoid harming someone only by preventing their existence, it cannot be said that we are actually preventing harm to that person, unless their existence itself is a harm (Parfit 1984). In other words, Parfit maintains that, so long as a person's life is not of such poor quality that they would be better off not living at all, they cannot claim that *they* are harmed by being brought into existence because the only way such harm could have been avoided would have also precluded their existence.

The non-identity problem means that, if we adopt Watt's view of embryos as rights-bearing persons, the one exception to an otherwise blanket duty to always allow the birth of any embryo under any conditions would be if its birth should be prevented for its own sake because its life would itself constitute a harm. These cases would be very rare indeed and a great deal of reproductive medicine would need to be abandoned as immoral because it allegedly treats all embryos who would have a life worth living as mere means. This seems like it would be quite a hard bullet for the unconditional love argument to bite.

In fact, Watt's reliance on Kantian deontology seems to show that she may not really be making an unconditional love argument at all. That is, if it is a Kantian duty to respect persons as ends and not mere means that would demand parents "accept their children—warts and all—as full members of the family," then there doesn't seem to be much of anything special about parenthood or parental love per se that is doing any of the philosophical heavy lifting. To be sure, Kantian duty is not grounded in love, parental or otherwise, but makes demands that all persons owe each other as rational beings. So, the moral judgment that "parents who make their love and care conditional on their child displaying certain features are seen as unparental in the way they behave" may be entirely superfluous to her argument. Ultimately, if embryos are persons that ought to be respected as such, parents owe them this regardless of whether they are in any sort of loving relationship with them. In the end, love has nothing to do with it.

There are, however, other versions of the unconditional love argument that do actually rely on conceptions of parental love and are not premised on a parent's moral duty to respect the intrinsic value of her embryos as persons. Next, I will examine a version of the unconditional love argument against prenatal selection that argues it is a practice that fails to unconditionally love the resulting, born child.

Prenatal Selection as a Failure to Love the Born Child

In their 2004 report *Reproduction and Responsibility: The Regulation of New Biotechnology*, the President's Council on Bioethics—henceforth "the PCOB"—again does not actually deploy the language of love, but they do discuss how prenatal selection may distort a parental attitude of unconditional acceptance toward their children. Specifically, they contend:

The introduction of rigorous genetic screening into childbearing might set a new standard for what counts as an acceptable birth. The attitude of parents toward their

child may be subtly shifted from unconditional acceptance toward critical scrutiny: the very first act of parenting could become not the unreserved welcoming of an arriving child, but the judging of his or her fitness, while still an embryo, to become one's child.

(President's Council 2004: 98)

This passage may suggest that, like Watt, the PCOB understands the use of prenatal selection as a failure of a parent to unconditionally love their embryo.

However, other portions of their analysis indicate that it is not parental attitudes toward embryos that they are concerned with *per se*, but how they orient themselves toward the children that are born as a result of selection processes like PGD (pre-implantation genetic diagnosis),

Because the prospective child is deliberately selected on qualitative, genetic grounds out of a pool of possible embryonic siblings, PGD risks normalizing ... the idea that entrance into the world depends on meeting certain genetic criteria.... The new technologies, even when used only to screen out and eliminate the sick or "deficient," may change parents' attitudes toward their children, increasing both the desire to control and the tacit expectation of certain qualities.

(95–96)

Thus, we can interpret the PCOB as arguing that the problem with PGD, a form of prenatal selection, is that it normalizes a flawed, conditional view of parental love that only bestows it upon children with qualifying properties, thus harming the existing children that were selected via prenatal technology by pressuring them to conform to parental expectation and exhibit these properties in order to maintain their qualifications for receiving parental love. The PCOB goes on to argue that this is already a risk when selecting against disabling traits, but using these technologies to select children on grounds other than health could exacerbate this sort of conditional parental acceptance—and, perhaps, conditional love, because "Children who are selected on non-medical grounds—such as elective sex selection or trait selection—may experience increased pressures to meet parental expectations" (96).

A variation on this argument is also offered by Adrienne Asch, who contends that prenatal selection is premised on a conditional view of parental love that is likely to carry over from the embryo to the born child if it is encouraged by the provision of these technologies. Prenatal selection is discriminatory, she argues, because it exaggerates the significance of disability in predicting both the life prospects of the possible child and the challenge of raising that child. Asch argues that parents who choose their children based on the presence of a single trait via prenatal selection make the "decision never to learn the rest of who that embryo or fetus could become after its birth" (Asch 2000: 235). For Asch, there is something deeply troubling about an attitude toward parenting that regards one known characteristic of a possible child as so impactful that a potential parent would conclude that they could not "love, enjoy, welcome, and raise such a child" (248). She worries that this attitude that exaggerates the significance of disability is pervasive and the source of much of the oppression of disabled people. She argues that it is most troubling when it is the basis of parenting decisions and asks, "where do we first learn justice, sharing, and cooperation, but in the family?" (251). Ultimately, Asch plainly states, "I do agree with people who worry that making acceptance of parenthood contingent on a child's characteristics will fundamentally change what is precious and unique in the love of parent for child" (253–254). In Asch's view, prenatal selection is clearly at odds with a particular feature of parental love: its lack of conditionality based on particular characteristics of the child.

Further, Asch argues that it cannot simply be assumed that such an orientation toward parental love will only apply to embryos and fetuses as reproductive decisions are made. She argues this wrongly

assumes that the attitude toward avoiding a detectable disability in a once-wanted child will not carry over into the attitude of rejecting or not appreciating the child who acquires a disability at two or twelve, the partner at twenty, the friend at forty, and parents when they are in their eighties.

(Asch 2000: 251)

That is, the attitude that motivates a potential parent to reject entering into the unconditionally loving parental role with a possible child at the time that they are an embryo because of the presence of a disability is a flawed attitude because it would also motivate them to abandon that role for an existing child if she became disabled, and that is no way to parent. For Asch, allowing or encouraging the attitude that disability justifies withholding or withdrawing parental love in the first case also allows or encourages that same attitude in the second case. So it is not that prenatal selection is an action that somehow harms, disrespects, or abandons embryos, but that it is premised on a troubling conception of parental love that could hurt existing children when it is exercised in other contexts. She worries this conditional view of parental love will “carry over” and place conditions on the—non-disabled—properties an existing child must maintain in order to meet their parents’ expectations and receive love and welcome as part of the family.

Yet, this seems like an unnecessarily pessimistic view of parental motivations for avoiding disability. Unless we follow Watt in regarding embryos as full persons who are deserving of our respect, it may be argued that a parent can act in good faith to avoid having a child with a disability, in much the same way they may take steps to prevent an existing child from acquiring a disability.⁴ Indeed, the attitude a parent holds when they vaccinate a child for polio to prevent them from losing the use of their limbs need not imply that they would reject a child from the family should they lose the use of their limbs through accident and injury. A vaccination need not indicate that a parent would love a quadriplegic child any less and so there may not be any distorted view of parental love present in the first place to “carry over.”

Anca Gheaus refines this kind of argument further by making the case that it isn’t even necessary for parents who engage in some kinds of prenatal selection to *actually* regard their children with conditional love for the resulting child to be harmed,

but, rather, that children who know their parents decided to enhance them *are likely to feel*, for this reason, burdened with unfair parental expectations ... love is not always perfectly transparent. It is possible for a parent to feel love for her child and, while acting on it, make the child feel unduly burdened by parental expectations, and, for these reasons, experience parental love less securely and fairly.

(Gheaus 2014: 154)

Gheaus seems to be deploying a kind of consequentialist argument that a child’s interest in being unconditionally loved can be damaged even if the parent loves them unconditionally, just so long as the child *experiences* that love as conditional.

Her account of the unconditional love argument is also important because she specifies what she means by unconditional love and the particular kind of harm done to a child that does not experience this kind of love from a parent. Gheaus’ account of parental love

requires parents to value their children independently from the children's non-moral characteristics. Adequate parents, on this account, are accepting, can enjoy their children spontaneously and refrain from putting burdens of expectations, beyond very minimal ones, on their children. This *desiderata* is often expressed in everyday moral reasoning in the thought that parental love should be unconditional.

(152)

Children who experience the love of parents as conditional are harmed in as far as this love is not "free from illegitimate psychological burdens" (155). These psychological burdens arise for a child who knows he has been prenatally selected for one or more of his genetic characteristics because such a selection signals that he is loved with conditions and the unconditional nature of parental love is what allows for the fulfillment of "one of the fundamental interests of children ... of forming a secure, personalized and fair attachment to their parents" (155).

Gheaus pointedly departs from the other versions of the unconditional love argument that we have evaluated thus far in that she explicitly frames her case as one against prenatal selection for *enhancement* purposes and regards prenatal selection against disability as not posing the same risk of psychological burden to the resulting children. This is because, while she recognizes that the enhancement versus therapy distinction is complex and much of the harm of disease and disability is socially constructed,

any particular parent who lives in a society she cannot change, has weighty reasons to try and protect her future children from disease and disability.... Because there are weighty reasons to prevent harm, it is unlikely that children will perceive their parents' genetic therapy as unloving in any way.

(154)

Gheaus is here arguing that selection done to avoid disability is beneficial enough to a child that it will be inevitably perceived as an action that is motivated by parental love and not interfere with the formation of the "secure, personalized and fair attachment" that selection for enhanced traits threatens with the perception of unfair parental expectations.

Gheaus' restriction of her version of the unconditional love argument to cases of enhancement seems plausible, but maybe not for the specific reason she has offered. In particular, it is not clear why it is only the avoidance of disability that would be perceived as enough of a benefit to a child that they would be grateful to their parents rather than feel burdened. For example, it may be the case that a child was selected who would not have achondroplastic dwarfism and, indeed, they may be grateful to have avoided the harms of having that sort of body, socially constructed or otherwise. However, couldn't we predict the same might be true of someone who was selected on the grounds that they would be taller than the other available possible children, even though these others didn't have a diagnosable form of dwarfism? That is, if being shorter than average will be perceived as a harm to be avoided in the case of a disability like dwarfism, why wouldn't it also be perceived as such by a future person who avoided shortness caused by some other, non-pathologized alleles? Despite this complexity, Gheaus' forecast that non-disabled children would not feel psychological pressure to remain non-disabled is likely accurate, since it is quite rare for non-disabled people in general to consider the notion that they may someday acquire a disability.

While, in most situations, we don't think about how our relationships with others would change if we were to become disabled, the argument has been made that prenatal selection is itself a distinctive sort of context that would cause certain specific people to, indeed, consider whether they would be loved if their properties changed and they acquired the disabling trait

that was selected against: the siblings of the child who was prenatally selected. The next section will consider this kind of unconditional love argument.

Prenatal Selection as a Failure to Love Other Children

One of the most succinct statements of the unconditional love argument against prenatal selection that identifies the prenatally selected child's sibling as the one who has not been adequately loved is found in "On the Expressivity and Ethics of Selective Abortion for Disability: Conversations with My Son." Here, Eva Kittay and her son, Leo, discuss the possible messages parents may send to their existing children by using the technologies of prenatal selection to choose their future children. This discussion happens in the context of Eva also having a daughter, Leo's sister, with multiple disabilities: Sesha.

Leo argues that the non-disabled, potential sibling of a fetus or embryo that was selected against because of a disabling trait receives the message from this action that,

My parents wouldn't just love any child they might have, they love me because I possess the desirable properties or characteristics that make me who I am ... the family starts to seem more like a club. In a club, the members are selected based on one characteristic or another. This leads one to believe that if, for some reason, that characteristic is no longer attributable to the individual, or if anyone in the club comes to believe that this characteristic never applied, the membership in the group and the "love" that results can vanish.... He will not view his family's love for him as unconditional love.

(Kittay et al. 2000: 169–170)

Leo Kittay's words highlight how the unconditional love argument is, sometimes, a variation on what is often referred to as the expressivist argument against prenatal selection. While the details vary of exactly what is being expressed to whom, expressivist arguments hinge on the notion that, even if the embryos or fetuses that are being selected against are not harmed by selection because they are merely possible and not actual persons, the action of selection somehow communicates a message that does harm actual existing persons in some way.⁵

In Leo Kittay's case, he was focused on the harm done to the existing children of parents who select future children based on certain properties or characteristics. That is, in this version of the unconditional love argument, it seems that part of the wrongness of prenatal selection has to do with how it causes parents to communicate to their existing children—the siblings of the child who was prenatally selected—that they are only loved conditionally, rather than unconditionally. Presumably, this knowledge that they are loved conditionally produces anxiety or some other sort of psychological harm in a child. In a sense, Leo Kittay is offering a kind of consequentialist explanation for why prenatal selection is incompatible with the ideal of unconditional parental love: it will bring harm to existing children (siblings) by causing them to believe they are only loved conditionally.

This bears a striking resemblance, of course, to Gheaus' argument, except that it focuses on selecting against disabling traits rather than for enhancements and the harm described is not done to the actual child that has been selected for, but to the siblings of the merely possible child who was selected against. The kind of harm done seems quite similar, though, in that, for Leo Kittay, the risk is that the knowledge of the selection itself puts an unfair psychological burden on the existing sibling who may regard the love expressed by his parents as conditional and, thus, his attachment to them as not very durable. He argues that the act of selection could plausibly be

interpreted as the expression of a parental expectation that the non-disabled sibling continue to exhibit the trait that their disabled would-be sibling lacked in order to continue on with the “secure, personalized and fair attachment” they have thus far enjoyed with their parents, thereby diminishing just how secure, personalized, and fair that attachment actually is.

David Wasserman has crafted a version of the unconditional love argument that is similar to Adrienne Asch’s and Leo Kittay’s in some notable ways. Wasserman tends not to actually use the term “love” in his discussion of prenatal selection, but instead eschews it for “unconditional welcome.” He argues that unconditional welcome is a part of the moral ideal of the family, such that, “Both the attempt to prevent and the attempt to cause the existence of future children with impairments, or almost any other characteristic, are at odds with this ideal” (Wasserman 2009: 325). He then justifies his position that the ideal of unconditional welcome should be maintained within a family because failing to do so would make a family exclusive and such exclusivity could have negative consequences for the chosen child who loses the important trait they had been selected for:

The more that families were formed on the basis of perceived similarities, the more they would resemble, and compete for, their members’ loyalty with other “affinity groups.” Those chosen for pre-existing affinities might be able to find associations in which they had even greater affinities. Moreover, their commitment to each other would be strained, morally if not psychologically, by their loss of their affinities that were the basis for their selection. Even if members who lost the traits that were the basis for their initial selection were retained, their sense of full and equal membership would be severely compromised.

(326)

Wasserman goes on to offer a thought experiment that invites us to think about unconditional welcome from the perspective of the siblings of the individual who has been selected, highlighting how this selection process strains the moral commitment of the family by making those siblings feel as though their family membership is precarious. Unlike previous hypotheticals I have examined, this one doesn’t even require the sibling to lose any desirable characteristic to be marginalized. Instead, we are to imagine a situation in which parents have a series of children over a period of time in which selection technology is rapidly progressing, such that

each of the older siblings has genetic conditions that would have precluded the implantation of his successors.... Each older child ... could reasonably see his membership in the family as less well-grounded than theirs ... he is only a family member because, at the time of his conception, the technology had not improved enough to screen him out.

(327)

Wasserman seems to be arguing that the risk posed to the ideal of unconditional welcome by prenatal selection is not that children must actually become disabled to feel pushed to the margins of the family, but that, as Leo Kittay has also pointed out, as you make a family more exclusive with selection, you make each member suspect that their membership in it is deeply precarious, especially the siblings as they consider their own characteristics that may or may not be desirable.

Wasserman doesn’t fully explicate his view of the relationship between the concepts of unconditional love and unconditional welcome. He frames unconditional welcome as part of

the moral ideal of the family, which I think we can suppose he views as multidimensional such that it includes other parts, as well, in addition to this standard of inclusion. He does, at one point, also use the term “unconditional love” in this same text, but it is clear he doesn’t take the terms to be synonymous as he deploys them. As he describes the thought experiment regarding quickly improving selection technology outlined above, he states:

He knows that he is loved as unconditionally as his younger siblings; they, in turn, are loved as unconditionally as those who will be added under even more refined screening techniques.... There is a tension between the unconditional love shown the present child and the conditions imposed on the selection of his siblings.... The parents’ claim, however truthful, that because of their love for their impaired child they actually have they have no regrets that they did not screen for that impairment, is cold comfort when they are now employing that screening to select his future siblings.

(327)

Although it is not entirely clear how Wasserman sees the relation between unconditional love and unconditional welcome, it appears that he thinks whatever unconditional love might persist in the absence of unconditional welcome is insufficient to mitigate the risk of introducing exclusivity into the family. More importantly, my above description of Wasserman’s argument shows how it fits in to this taxonomy of unconditional love arguments against prenatal selection. His contention that there is a deep tension between prenatal selection and the unconditional welcome included in the moral ideal of the family can and should be regarded as a species of what I am calling the unconditional love argument against prenatal selection.

While it seems possible that the already existing siblings of merely possible children that are selected against might get the message that their status as a loved family member is precarious in the way that Leo Kittay and David Wasserman describe, it hardly seems inevitable. There will be many cases in which parents can explain their reasons for selection to their existing children and reassure them that these reasons do not apply to them and they are and will remain loved under any circumstances. They might even explicitly explain that selecting an embryo for a given trait does not indicate they will emotionally abandon their existing children who depend on them for love and support, should they lose this trait, any more than vaccinating a child for an infectious disease indicates they would emotionally abandon that child’s unvaccinated sibling if they acquired it.

Such a simple explanation for how we might deal with the messages sent to the siblings of genetically selected children may, in fact, be too simple. We can also imagine a situation in which the existing sibling does not fear *losing* the desirable trait that has been selected for in their future sibling, but *never had it*. For instance, there are cases where parents are carriers for a genetic disability, but might not know about their potential to bestow this trait on their offspring until they have a child that actually has the trait. We can imagine, for one reason or another, these parents choosing not to have any additional children with that trait.⁶ The worry may be that the existing child who has the trait may receive the message that their parents would prefer not only that their future children not have the trait, but their existing children not have been born with it.

If this trait that has been selected against has played a major role in the formation of the child’s narrative identity, the worry is even deeper. The reason is that the child may not be able to imagine themselves as even existing as themselves without that trait. If the trait is central to their self-identity in this way, then they may think something along the lines of “when my parents say that they don’t want their future child to have trait X, it implies they wish I existed without trait X and this means that they wish they had a different child other than me, because without

trait X, I am not me.” So, if they come to believe that their parents would have preferred them not to have a particular trait because their parents select against it in their future siblings and that trait is central to who they conceive themselves to be, then they may come to believe that their parents would have preferred that they themselves never came into existence.

This may be especially likely if the trait in question is highly stigmatized. Of course, being gay is very different than being disabled, but both are highly stigmatized, often identity-defining personal characteristics and so a comparison may help illustrate my point. Imagine, if you will, that a discovery is made of a gene that makes it likely a child is gay. Now, imagine the parent of a gay child selects against any future children that carry that gene for being gay. It seems plausible that the existing gay child may take that to mean that their heteronormative parents wish that they did not exist, but that they had birthed some other, heterosexual child.

However, even if we want to frame the disadvantages of being either gay or disabled as all or mostly socially caused, there very well may be some contexts in which a parent chooses not to create any further gay or disabled children, not despite their love for their existing gay or disabled child, but because of it. For example, we could easily live in the sort of society where the stigma around being gay or disabled was even greater than it is in ours and the threat of experiencing extreme violence in childhood and beyond wasn’t just likely for gay or disabled people, but virtually guaranteed. Seeing the suffering of their existing child and loving them as parents do, they may plausibly choose not to have a future child that would face the same dismal future. To not send the wrong message with their choice, these parents could explain this harsh, but honest reality to their existing child. Namely, they could explain exactly why it is their particular desire to avoid having another child with this trait is not the same as wishing away their existing child in these particular contexts.

Additionally, in the case of disability, we can imagine a world very near to ours indeed in which parents did not get any support from the state at all as they raised their child. Perhaps all of the considerable medical expenses associated with some disabilities had to be paid exclusively by the family from their personal resources because the child was uninsurable with their pre-existing condition. Further, no state funding was available for care giving, either as respite for the child’s parents or as the primary source of long-term care as the child reaches adulthood and their parents age. With such lack of support, a parent might avoid having future children with that disability in order to maximize their resources that could be devoted to caring for their existing disabled child, out of love and concern for that child. Indeed, parents could explain to their existing child that they did not prefer to have a different, non-disabled child, but they needed to conserve their resources to be used for the benefit of their existing disabled child because they are loved and wanted.⁷ Ultimately, parents avoiding the birth of another disabled child *might* be the expression of a preference against the existence of her sibling—one’s current disabled child—but it need not always be and it is wrongheaded to assume that this is the case.

Conclusion

In sum, I have described a sort of taxonomy of what I have referred to as the unconditional love argument against prenatal selection. I distinguished between three kinds of unconditional love arguments based on the identity of the beloved or who, exactly, the parent fails to love unconditionally when they select one possible child over another. These arguments identified either (1) the discarded embryo, (2) the resulting existing child who has been selected, or (3) the sibling of the child who has been selected as the object of parental love who has somehow been loved wrongly by prenatally selecting parents. What all of these have in common is that they all somehow rely on the concept of parental love for some of their normative force. Roughly, they

all hold that parental love ought to be unconditionally bestowed upon any child and not just those that have certain qualifying properties and prenatal selection is inevitably in tension with this moral commitment.

For each of these three species of argument, I have offered critical analysis, calling them into question. Yet, I have not offered a principled line of reasoning against any possible unconditional love argument against prenatal selection. Indeed, while I have raised problems for every argument in the current literature that has been examined in this essay, I have not offered any reason to think that a more convincing unconditional love argument against prenatal selection couldn't be made as a matter of principle. Along these same lines, while I am skeptical about these specific arguments regarding prenatal selection, there are several other critiques of the practice that appear in the literature and this essay shouldn't be read as saying much of anything about the general conclusion that selection is morally problematic.

Finally, some believe that parental love should actually require the *opposite* moral orientation toward prenatal selection. They argue that parental love ought to entail a certain kind of cognitive, affective, or normative attention to a particular child's well-being such that the parent is wholly committed to ensuring that she has the best chance at the best life that can be offered and this would include a physiology free of disability.⁸ Make no mistake, though; my rejection of these unconditional love arguments against prenatal selection should not be interpreted as an endorsement of this view that parental love *requires* prenatal selection against disability. However, these are arguments best addressed in a separate essay.

Notes

- 1 In this essay, I am using the term "prenatal selection" quite broadly, to include any process by which a woman or couple can gain information about the features of and choose whether to give birth to an embryo or fetus. This can include ultrasound technology, prenatal genetic testing, or pre-implantation genetic diagnosis. It would not include any current or future technology that would *change* the features of an embryo or fetus, like CRISPR gene editing, for instance.
- 2 By "against disability," I mean using information about the features of an embryo or fetus to prevent its birth if those features include the presence of a disability.
- 3 For a more complete discussion of this kind of argument for children holding rights "in trust," see: Feinberg, Joel. 1980. "The Child's Right to an Open Future." In *Whose Child?* Ed. W. Aiken and H. LaFollette. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield. 124–153.
- 4 For a fully fleshed-out account of this argument, see: Steinbock, Bonnie. 2000. "Disability, Prenatal Testing, and Selective Abortion." In *Prenatal Testing and Disability Rights*. Ed. Erik Parens and Adrienne Asch. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 108–123.
- 5 For an overview of some of the most prominent of these expressivist arguments, see: Stramondo, Joseph. "Doing Ethics from Experience: Pragmatic Suggestions for a Feminist Disability Advocate's Response to Prenatal Diagnosis." *The International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* 4(2) (Fall 2011): 48–78.
- 6 This scenario is quite a bit closer to the thought experiment offered by Wasserman above.
- 7 This sort of argument is sometimes used on the societal rather than the familial scale to justify various kinds of state-sanctioned eugenics programs. Of course, finding arguments persuasive regarding parents conserving limited familial resources does not require any sort of endorsement of these other arguments about conserving societal resources.
- 8 For an example of this kind of argument, see: Davis, John. 2008. "Selecting Potential Children and Unconditional Love." *Bioethics* 22(5): 258–268.

References

- Asch, Adrienne. 2000. "Why I Haven't Changed My Mind about Prenatal Diagnosis: Reflections and Refinements." In *Prenatal Testing and Disability Rights*. Ed. Erik Parens and Adrienne Asch. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 234–258.

- Gheaus, Anca. 2014. "The Parental Love Argument Against 'Designing' Babies: The Harm in Knowing that One Has Been Selected or Enhanced." In *The Right to Know and the Right Not to Know: Genetic Privacy and Responsibility (Second Edition)*. Ed. Ruth Chadwick, Mairi Levitt, and Darren Shickle. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. 151–164.
- Kittay, Eva Feder with Leo Kittay. 2000. "On the Expressivity and Ethics of Selective Abortion for Disability: Conversations with My Son." In *Prenatal Testing and Disability Rights*. Ed. Erik Parens and Adrienne Asch. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 165–195.
- Parfit, Derek. 1984. *Reasons and Persons*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- President's Council on Bioethics. 2004. *Reproduction and Responsibility: The Regulation of New Biotechnologies*. Washington, D.C. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10822/559381>.
- Wasserman, David. 2009. "Ethical Constraints on Allowing or Causing the Existence of People with Disabilities." In *Disability and Disadvantage*. Ed. Kimberley Brownlee and Adam Cureton. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. 319–351.
- Watt, Helen. March 2004. "Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis: Choosing the 'Good Enough' Child." *Health Care Analysis* 12(1): 51, 52, 59.

PART II

Romance and Sex



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

5

LOVE, ROMANCE, AND SEX

Troy Jollimore

Love and Sex: What's the Connection?

One of the few uncontroversial things that can be said about romantic love is that a great many people are interested in it. Romantic love is widely seen as a source or locus for significant value—a kind of value, perhaps, that cannot be obtained in other ways. Successful romantic love relationships are placed among the greatest of goods worth striving for, and viewed as providing not only happiness but meaning, as well as an arena in which certain higher capabilities and potentialities of human beings can be developed and expressed. Marriage to a person whom one loves romantically is frequently seen as an essential element if not the cornerstone of a happy, fulfilled, and successful life. Finally, being loved romantically is thought to provide a unique and uniquely important kind of affirmation.¹ Given the prevalence of such beliefs, it is not surprising how much contemporary culture, particularly popular culture, concerns the quest for romantic passion and the difficulties of finding, establishing, and keeping it.

The significance of romantic love in Western society is reinforced by the foundational role it plays in the personal relationships on which a great many of our social arrangements are constructed. As Carrie Jenkins writes, “Love’s social role is to take adult attraction and affection and output something resembling a stable nuclear family unit.”² Modern societies tend to be built on the basis of nuclear families, typically—though this is increasingly variable—pairs of parents who share a domestic living space and raise children together. Romantic passion, typically, draws the parents together and keeps them together. Of course, this picture has its problems. While romantic love’s intensity may make it suitable as a firm bond for short-term attachments, other elements of its passionate nature—its tendency to range widely, to alter over time, and to spur people to seek out potential new attachments—may impede its ability to serve this particular social role. In order to serve as a social cement, romantic love may have to evolve from infatuation to a more stable and committed affection. As we will see, some have claimed that the typical life cycle of romantic love moves precisely in this direction.

Still, at least in the early stages of a romantic relationship, sexual attraction and desire tend to play a significant role. Just what sort of role this is is an actively debated question. Nearly everyone would say that it is possible to have sex, or to want to have sex, without feeling any sort of love. “[T]here is nothing about the nature of sexual desire that makes any necessary references to love,” Raja Halwani writes.³ Edward Johnson agrees, pointing out that “[a]thletic and

impersonal sex might be satisfying, which reminds us that sex need not express love, need not be connected to inner personal qualities.”⁴ One might still insist that if you love someone *and* desire them sexually, then your feelings are at least partly romantic. Could we imagine two friends who want to have sex with each other and who love each other, but only as friends? On the one hand, the fact that such a state of affairs could easily cross the line into the territory of romantic love does not necessarily show that the line has already been crossed, or that there is no line in such cases. On the other hand, it is a bit unclear what we are asserting when we insist that, in such cases, the love is “only” friendship love and not romantic love. Just what criterion of romantic love is being unmet here?

Some might say that exclusivity is the key: if A and B are friends and want to have sex only with each other, then their love must be romantic. But this view faces problems. That A sexually desires no one but B is in part a fact about A, but it may also be a fact about the overall situation: perhaps there simply aren’t many attractive people around. So that fact does not seem to tell us enough to determine the nature of A’s love. (Perhaps certain counterfactual facts—whether A would sexually desire people other than B if there were other attractive people around—would tell us more; they still might not tell us enough.) So exclusivity is not sufficient. It is probably not necessary, either: while our culture tends to associate romantic love with exclusivity, it is not obvious that this association is mandatory. Some, after all, have claimed, not obviously incoherently, to be simultaneously in love with more than one person.⁵ (Thus, while I will in this chapter generally speak in terms of romantic “couples,” etc., this is merely for convenience; I do not mean to rule out the possibility of nonmonogamous romantic relationships. I will return to this issue at the end of the chapter.)

What about the other direction: does romantic love *require* sexual desire? Some have argued that romantic love without sexual desire is a contradiction in terms.⁶ Others would agree with Natasha McKeever that “we should not consider the relationship between love and sex to be a necessary one—sex and love can be decoupled.”⁷ Just what does “decoupling” mean? Some think that sexual desire typically if not inevitably decreases over the course of an enduring romantic relationship, and many will allow that two people whose sexual desire for each other has waned might nonetheless still feel romantic love for each other, so long as their love manifests itself in other ways. It is perhaps less plausible that two people who have *never* sexually desired each other, but who share various other forms of intimacy, might be romantic lovers. McKeever herself seems to think that a certain level of physical involvement (though perhaps not sex) must obtain: “[i]f a couple never engaged in *any* kind of physical intimacy, despite being physically and psychologically able to, we would question whether the relationship was romantic by nature.”⁸

Some have come close to doubting whether any connection between romantic love and sex exists at all. From a certain point of view—one that regards the sexual act as animalistic, brutal, even repulsive—the idea that such an act is deeply linked to love seems implausible. Richard Taylor writes that “One could not aptly describe a pair of copulating grasshoppers, or mice, or dogs, as making love; they are simply copulating. The expression is no less inept when applied to people.”⁹ Similarly, Russell Vannoy confronts us with a rhetorical question: “Just how does a penis that is vigorously thrusting up and down in a vagina express anything at all?”¹⁰ Such doubts, though, seem unpersuasive. They are partly the result of over-romanticizing romantic love, of being misled by a naïve and excessively innocent view of what love ought to be like, derived, perhaps, from Disney movies and Valentine’s Day greeting cards. Moreover, the idea that anything can express *anything* can come to seem mysterious when one thinks about it in a detached way. Why does a loud voice express anger? How can sounds produced by vibrating strings express melancholy or suspense? Such connections feel natural until questioned; a full

explanation would have to delve very deeply into complex cultural and biological factors. Similarly, that the question of why the sexual act is a particularly effective means of expressing love is very difficult shows not that it has no answer, but that finding the answer will be a very large project—one to which philosophers, biologists, and others will have much to contribute.¹¹

Romantic Commitments and Lovers' Anxieties

Nonetheless, it is quite common to feel there is a tension of some sort between love and sex. For sexual desire, it is commonly thought, is by its very nature objectifying, whereas love ought not to encourage or even permit objectification. But why think that sexual desire must be objectifying? Raj Halwani connects this thought with the claim that sexual love is by nature deeply selfish, based only on the desirer's desire for pleasure. "[S]exual desire," Halwani writes, "like the desire for food and drink, is self-interested; it is fulfilled with the attainment of pleasure, and it is the possessor of this desire that feels the pleasure."¹² But a desire can be *partly* self-interested without being *entirely* self-interested, and sexual desire typically seems to include a desire for the other's pleasure as well as one's own. (A lover is often not fully satisfied unless her partner has also enjoyed themselves.) And while the claim that sexual desire is at least largely self-interested may seem plausible, it also seems fairly innocuous. After all, desires for food and drink, which are explicitly compared with sexual desire by Halwani, are also self-interested in nature, and yet do not seem, in and of themselves, deeply problematic.¹³

Still, the concern that the self-interested elements of sexual desire render it morally problematic, and perhaps objectifying, will seem to many to get *something* right. Perhaps this is simply the result of knowing how easily and often lustful feelings can and do slip into the territory of objectification and exploitation. And while we should question Halwani's claim that sexual desire is by its nature more likely than desires for food and drink to lead people to commit immoral actions,¹⁴ it is nonetheless true that human beings are likely to experience these sorts of desires very differently. This is so for the simple reason that experiencing oneself as the object of other people's gustatory desires is extremely uncommon, while it is not at all uncommon to feel that one is being appraised from a sexual point of view. Indeed, our perceptions of other people's sexual desires toward us constitute a significant and at times uncomfortable aspect of our felt environment. Moreover, social structures and practices that reflect and express such desires have often served to constrain, and at times to oppress, various groups of people. So, while it seems to be false that sexual desire *must* be objectifying or otherwise objectionable, it is nevertheless understandable that such desires would be a frequent source of discomfort and concern, and that some people might well have come to habitually regard such desires with suspicion.

Perhaps, though, the real issue at the heart of Halwani's argument is not about sexual desire *per se*. After all, sex is not the only thing we desire of our lovers. Moreover, that a desire is in part or even wholly self-interested does not in itself make that desire problematic; whether a self-interested desire does turn out to be problematic for any given agent depends on the overall structure of that agent's desires, deliberations, and actions. We will do better, then, to put aside sexual desire specifically, and think in broader terms about the kinds of things that draw us to our lovers—the kinds of things, that is, on which romantic love, particularly in its early stages, is based.

Here, I think, there is a tension. For while we typically want to be loved for qualities that render us attractive, we also typically want to be loved in a way that is stable and will not fluctuate or fade even as the conditions of our lives change. Indeed, we generally want to be assured that our lovers will continue to love us even as both they and we undergo the kinds of significant changes all human beings inevitably undergo.

One fear is that the very things that drew our lovers to us in the beginning might later on draw them toward someone else—someone who is younger and fresher, or who simply represents the possibility of new, unfamiliar experiences. Another is that our lovers will change, and come to want new things. People's qualities change over time, and both the lover and her beloved will change in various ways, some quite significant, over the course of a long-term relationship. I don't enjoy the same books or music I liked when I was twelve, so what are the odds I will love and desire the same kind of woman when I am fifty as I did when I was twenty? If my lover's love for me rests on my attractive qualities, and I stand to lose those properties—and most of us do, eventually, lose many of these qualities: our looks, our hair, our youthfulness, our charming innocence, and eventually our health—then it may seem to stand to reason that, sooner or later, my lover will stop loving me.

Another worry is that if our lovers remain committed, they may do so for the wrong reasons, out of a sense of obligation or guilt. Normally, we want romantic love to offer us more than mere security; we want affirmation, a reason to believe that we are worthy of being loved. We would in fact be dismayed rather than cheered by a lover who paid no attention to what we were like, a lover who said, in essence, "I don't stay with you, and for that matter don't love you, because you are brilliant, witty, charming, and beautiful; all those are irrelevant qualities, and indeed I would love you just as much if you were stupid, boring, repulsive, and ugly." Love is supposed to make us feel good about ourselves, but how could such a love accomplish that? "While on the one hand you seem to want to be loved unconditionally," Neil Delany writes, "at the same time you want your lover to be discerning.... [W]hile you seem to want it to be the case that, were you to become a shmuck, your lover would continue to love you, as would be the case if love really was unconditional, you also want it to be the case that your lover would never love a shmuck."¹⁵ Or, as Sartre put it some decades ago, "the lover demands a pledge, yet is irritated by a pledge. He wants to be loved by a freedom but demands that this freedom as freedom should no longer be free."¹⁶

It seems, then, that, as romantic lovers, we want incompatible things. We want our lovers to love and value us, not out of obligation but freely, *and* we want to be sure that they will continue to love us, come what may. But since the freer they are to love us, the freer they are *not* to love us, these two desires stand at odds with each other. Although our culture seems to place great emphasis on the idea that romantic love requires constancy, and that romantic love ought ideally to be unconditional, all of these ideas may seem deeply at odds with what is *romantic* about romantic love to begin with.

The tension Halwani identifies is, I suspect, a more specific version of this larger tension. Sexual desire can undermine love—particularly long-term, committed love—if what we desire are qualities our beloved is going to lose, skills that will be dulled with time, etc. And it is easy to see how being desired sexually, if that is the *only* way one is wanted, can both make us worry that our lover will not stick around for long, and make us feel that even in the present time we are not really *loved*—for what is valued, after all, is only a small subset of our attractive qualities, the ones relevant to what happens in the bedroom.¹⁷ Again, though, we should see this as a tension, not as a deep contradiction. There is no reason why a lover's appreciation for her beloved must be all about sex, and no reason why sexual desire cannot co-exist comfortably alongside many other forms of desire and appreciation, all of which together comprise genuine romantic love.

Perhaps, moreover, the problems posed by this tension are not as deep or insurmountable as they might at first appear. The fact that it is not only ourselves but also our lovers who are changing might at first seem to make the situation worse; but this depends on the nature of the changes. For it is possible for people to change together, in ways that help preserve and

strengthen, rather than undermine, the love that unites them: over the years I lose property B but gain property C, and my lover's interest in B diminishes even as she comes to appreciate C. This need not be a matter of pure luck, for people in love relationships are strongly influenced by each other: my very conception of what is worth desiring will, ordinarily, be shaped by my lovers. Nor need the correspondence be perfect. Assuming we have reasonable expectations, one's partner need only come near enough to satisfying one's ideal—near enough, that is, to be worth staying with.¹⁸

None of this, of course, gives us genuinely *unconditional* love, since we are still viewing romantic love at least in part as a matter of properties valued and desires satisfied; and the critic who believes that unconditional commitment is one of the things we want from such love will see this view as deeply inadequate. My own inclination, though, is to agree with Delaney that people who believe they want to be loved “no matter what” are, in fact, “usually mistaken,” and the actual desire is the desire that love be “plastic ... [i.e.,] flexible and responsive” to the sorts of changes that tend to occur over the course of a long-lived romantic relationship.¹⁹ People do want stable love, love that is resilient enough to persist through rough patches and endure the vagaries of life—what Delaney calls a “loving commitment.”²⁰ But few, I suspect, want a love that is so blind to who they are that it would survive absolutely any revelation or alteration that might occur, even if the positive side of such a “love” would be that one could count on it always to be there.

Although I have suggested that the tension that primarily interests us is not limited to sex, it is nonetheless true that many of the positive qualities we are most likely to lose as we age are those that contribute to our sexual attractiveness. And here, in fact, we commonly observe an example of just the phenomenon I described above, of lovers changing together in such a way that the changed features of each are largely compensated for by changes in the desires of the other. That is, while this is far from universal—biology is not *that* kind!—it is not uncommon for our partners to experience psychological changes that diminish the impact of such losses, making relationships considerably more likely to endure. As we age, sex becomes less important to many people, at least relative to other things. And people's ideas about what they find sexually attractive tend to evolve with age, becoming broader and more flexible.

The first phenomenon—the diminishing importance of sex—has been widely recognized. Many writers on romantic love have advanced what we might call the Two-Stage View, which sees an enduring romantic relationship as typically consisting of an initial infatuation stage, during which sexual attraction and excitement are prominent and prevalent, and a later commitment stage, in which infatuation fades and excitement becomes less important. As Natasha McKeever writes,

At the beginning of a relationship it might be more important to cement the romantic nature of your relationship and, as sex can be a particularly intense expression and constituent of these goods, it might be felt to be a very important aspect of the relationship at this stage. However, as the relationship progresses, the couple might be more interested in other aspects of the relationship, and so sex might become a less significant part of it.²¹

On Halwani's account, the second stage

is calmer and, generally speaking, settled. It occurs when the lovers survive the first stage and enter a new part of their love in which they still love each other quite deeply, but in which their love is fully infused with the humdrum, daily existence of their

lives. It is during this stage that, at some point, lovers typically lose their sexual excitement for each other.²²

Halwani offers no empirical support for this last claim, and I am somewhat skeptical about it; while it does seem fairly common for the degree of sexual excitement to be diminished (though there are significant exceptions), it is questionable that excitement typically extinguishes altogether. (McKeever's formulation, which sees the waning of sexual desire as a possibility rather than an inevitability, seems preferable.) Still, this does seem to happen for some people, and so we must ask: why stay together if sexual desire fades? There are many possible answers. Lovers might have had children, bought a house, or taken up hobbies together. They may have learned to appreciate each other's subtler qualities, virtues that are hard to take in in the absence of long experience. And of course familiarity and routine are appealing, at least to some.

Halwani not only thinks it is inevitable that sexual excitement will be extinguished and replaced by committed "humdrum" love, he seems to think that this is *desirable*. He writes that lovers who have survived infatuation

have finally come to see and know each other for who they are, without the fog of the early stages of love, and they have realized that, given this knowledge, they do want to be with each other. They love each other for who they are, and their concern for each other strikes us as genuine, as concern for the other for the other's own sake.²³

Halwani's position that sexual desire is incompatible with love makes it natural to consider the commitment stage superior to the infatuation stage. I myself do not share that position, and would rather say that the commitment stage is better in some ways but worse in others. (In particular, while the concern of longstanding lovers for each other may be *different*, it is not obvious that it need be any more "genuine" than that of besotted youngsters.) One of the virtues of Delaney's account is that it allows for the possibility, in cases of extreme change—cases, for instance, in which the beloved, as the result of advanced dementia or some similarly devastatingly transformative condition, has changed so radically that he no longer possesses any of the qualities that first drew his lover to him—that the residual attachment may not count as a romantic love at all; what remains is purely the "loving commitment," which includes certain elements of care, attachment, and concern, but which is neither romantic nor otherwise passionate in nature and which looks to the past rather than the present.

This seems right, at any rate, in extreme cases. It is more difficult to know what to say about less extreme cases: two lovers, say, who have been together for decades, who have *not* succumbed to dementia or any other comparable condition, but who have changed in the ways aging human beings typically age, and who, let's suppose, no longer feel any sexual desire whatsoever for each other, nor any other form of intense excitement. (Does it matter whether they are still capable of feeling desire for others?) Halwani would perhaps regard this as the ideal, true love uncontaminated by sexual desire and its nasty element of self-interest; while Delaney would likely say that, whether or not this ought to count as a continuation of romantic love, it is at any rate a diminished love, one that has largely though perhaps not in this case entirely been replaced by a loving commitment. My own inclinations are more sympathetic to the latter view, in line with the earlier passages from Delaney and Sartre I cited in first describing the tension we have been dealing with. Of course, a great deal may depend on the details of this couple's situation. Are they happy together? Do they truly *want* to remain together, or is it just the easiest, least challenging option? Do they secretly dream of leaving, or feel that they have settled for less than they might have had? Most of us, perhaps, would be open to the idea that, at least after a very

long time together, a couple who felt no sexual desire for each other might nonetheless genuinely desire each other in other ways, and thus still love each other romantically (whether or not they counted as being “in love”). Fewer of us, I suspect, would be likely to see genuine romantic love in a relationship between two people who did not desire each other in *any* respect, sexual or otherwise, and who remained together not because they liked or admired each other in any way, but purely for reasons of ease, convenience, or habit.

The Future of Love

In this chapter I have made several generalizations about romantic love, but have advanced no claims about what such love *must necessarily* be or involve. Indeed, where necessary claims have been the focus of my discussion, my intent has generally been to challenge or undermine them. I am, in general, reluctant to assert necessity claims, particularly with respect to a phenomenon as complex and varied as romantic love. When dealing with such a phenomenon it is important to remember both that different people may experience it in quite different ways, and that other people’s experiences of it may be more like our own than our immediate intuitions and perceptions—which are, to a large extent, conditioned by the prevailing ideologies of the social landscape we have grown up in—would lead us to assume. It was common until relatively recently to think it quite impossible that a white person could *really* love a black person, or vice versa; and it is still not all that difficult to find people who strongly believe that a man could not possibly feel genuine romantic love for another man, or a woman for another woman.

It is sometimes thought that biology can establish interesting necessary claims about romantic love. Perhaps this is possible, but the record to this point is not one of success: allegedly scientific arguments offered in defense of claims about whether humans are “naturally” monogamous, nonmonogamous, heterosexual, and so forth tend to trade on ambiguities about the meaning of “natural,” or else to rest on appeals to covert, often ideologically motivated assumptions.²⁴ Besides, even if studies of the human brain etc. can tell us something about love by giving us information about what kinds of attachments human beings tend to form and how these attachments tend to influence behavior, the further question of whether and when love counts as *romantic* is a conceptual matter. Indeed, many if not all of the most significant questions about romantic love are normative. Should non-human intelligent life be discovered elsewhere in the universe, the question of whether they experience romantic love will be answered not by examining the structures of their brains but by finding out about their social practices and about what they experience, what they feel, when they participate in these practices.

Our conception of romantic love, moreover, is anything but static, and alleged necessary truths in this domain frequently do little more than express currently dominant ideologies. The general trend in the past few decades has been toward greater inclusivity and a more flexible conception of what counts as romantic love, or as normal or good instances of such love. Such progress is generally slow, though it can at times be unexpectedly rapid, as with the changes in the perception of same-sex relationships that have taken place since the 1990s. But even in these cases progress rarely if ever occurs in a single direction and without complication. Indeed, the more rapid the progress, the more likely it is to give rise to resistance, and possibly some sort of backlash.

As Carrie Jenkins has pointed out, the general movement, in the modern Western world, toward accepting same-sex romantic relationships has not, as yet, been accompanied by a similar shift toward a greater acceptance of nonmonogamous or non-dyadic relationships. Many people look down on behaviors they take to be promiscuous—for some, indeed, any sexual behavior other than strict “one partner for life” monogamy is considered deviant and condemnable,

regardless of context—and the large majority of people continue to hold that *romantic* relationships, and in particular marriages, ought to require strict sexual exclusivity between two people. The assumption that romantic love involves an exclusive sexual commitment between two and only two people permeates our popular culture; a great many works of popular culture—films, television, pop songs—presuppose this view, and would not make sense to someone who was not aware of it.

The permeation of society by this paradigm puts immense pressure on individuals to adopt the pro-monogamy norm and obey its dictates. Yet the justification for the norm is rarely made explicit, and a great many who accept it would have difficulty explaining why. The question is not why people ought to be permitted to enter into exclusive romantic dyads if they want and freely choose to do so; surely respect for personal autonomy justifies this. What does need explanation is the widespread thought that this is something everyone ought to want, or that exclusivity is a requirement that may be imposed on all married people, and perhaps all romantically involved people, whatever their personal beliefs and desires about it. For if respect for personal autonomy protects the rights of those who desire sexual exclusivity with their partners to live and love as they wish (assuming they can find willing partners), why does it not also protect the rights of those who wish to pursue non-exclusive romantic or sexual relationships to do the same?

The most common strategy for justifying the pro-monogamy norm usually involves some appeal to jealousy.²⁵ It is claimed that jealousy, possessiveness, and the like are universal elements of human nature, and that romantic relationships, in order to succeed, must recognize this by incorporating prohibitions against sex with those outside the relationship. But claims about the universality of jealousy, and the harm jealousy can do, meet the same fate as do so many claims about what is necessary and universal with respect to romantic love: the available evidence seems to support that, while many people are vulnerable to certain forms of jealousy and, as a result, would likely be happiest in monogamous relationships, this does not seem to be true of everyone.²⁶ The number of exceptions is significant, and it is not clear why a practice that works for the majority must be imposed on minorities for whom it is less than ideal. As Elizabeth Brake has written,

These arguments for exclusivity in love and sex must confront the testimony of people for whom jealousy is not as strong, or who sustain polyamorous loving and sexual relationships or who prefer to endure some jealousy to obtain greater variety and interest. Overwhelming sexual jealousy and the need to be most important for one other person—as opposed to being important to a number of people, within a group or a constellation of overlapping relationships—are not universal.²⁷

Ironically, many of the tensions within romantic love that I have explored in this chapter are exacerbated by imposed requirements of sexual exclusivity. Worries about what future changes, in oneself and in one's lover, will do to a relationship are in large part worries that one will become less attractive over time and that one's lover will leave for someone else as a result. And such worries make a great deal of sense, given that in the current social landscape, if I am involved in a romantic relationship and find myself wanting sex with someone else, I am more or less required to break off ties with my current partner in order to pursue that possibility. In a social world in which a certain degree of nonmonogamy was permitted, on the other hand, people might have significantly less reason to fear abandonment.

Such a world may exhibit other virtues as well. The choice to have sex only with one person, if that is what both people want, is, as mentioned above, protected by respect for personal

autonomy. There are questions to be asked, however, about why anyone *would* want this and about whether it is a reasonable thing to ask of one's lover. As Natasha McKeever points out, it seems *prima facie* plausible to think that if loving someone includes wanting them to be happy, and sex tends to make people happy, then sex should be something I want for my partner; and this makes it mysterious why a lover would want to limit his partner's sexual opportunities.²⁸ It is true, of course, that all relationships involve some sacrifice; the worry, though, is that to ask your partner to sacrifice a large part of her sex life is to demand a sacrifice that is not only significant but unnecessary. (It isn't like asking her to move to Cleveland with you so that you can take the wonderful job you've been offered.)

As McKeever goes on to argue, there are fairly plausible things to be said in favor of the view that exclusivity, under the right circumstances (and for the right people), can enhance a relationship in ways that more than compensate for the sacrifice it entails. Thinking about the question in these terms, however, provides two useful reminders. The first is methodological: we should not assume, when considering these matters, that the burden of proof must fall on those arguing against the requirement of exclusivity. That this is a natural and indeed frequently unnoticed assumption is itself a testament to the influence of the prevailing pro-monogamy norm. But because that norm functions to constrain individuals' choices and to condemn certain relationships as inadequate or inauthentic (if not deplorable or sinful), it is important to try to be as clear-headed as possible about the benefits that allegedly justify it, and the costs it inflicts both on those who willingly accept it and on those who resist it.

The second point is that recognizing the immense unspoken power of this norm should remind us that people's reports of what they want, or their beliefs that they are making voluntary choices, can themselves be reflections of a dominant ideology that has been so internalized as to be largely invisible. Many women in the U.S. in the 1940s and '50s "voluntarily" accepted states of affairs in which their interests were treated as substantially less significant than their husbands', and in which they had to make do with less autonomy, less authority, and a far smaller share of the family's financial resources. In a social world in which a certain practice is taken as normal, and which is permeated by the view that that practice represents the default way of being, it is inevitable that people will regard that way of being as what they really want—if they even ask themselves the question. The dominance of the pro-monogamy norm, then, has very likely helped create a situation in which people who might well have enjoyed open marriages, poly-amorous relationships, or other non-exclusive arrangements will find themselves unable to explore such possibilities or even admit, to others or to themselves, that such possibilities might be worth exploring. Moreover, such a norm can train people to feel precisely the sorts of jealous and possessive emotions that are often appealed to in justifying the norm itself. What is at issue, then, is not only the question of whether those who consciously resist the pro-monogamy norm ought nonetheless to be pressured if not forced to abide by it; also at stake are the interests of those who, in a more permissive social environment, might discover that they have the capacity to find such counter-normative relationships fulfilling—more fulfilling, perhaps, than the exclusive romantic dyad.

No one can predict how society's ideas about romantic love are going to evolve. To the extent that we are able to inform and guide this evolution, we ought to strive for flexibility regarding what kinds of relationships we recognize as candidates for romantic love, and we ought to approach claims about biology, human nature, or alleged conceptual necessities—particularly those that would prompt us to exclude certain groups of people from the domain that concept covers—with skepticism. Claims about what love must be or about what lovers must do, like claims about what *good* love is or what love *ideally* is, are all too often nothing more than expressions of local preferences or contingent prejudices. We ought always to be wary of

such claims, but particularly so in a context in which loaded ideas masquerading as “common sense” or “what everyone knows” have so often been used to deny individuals crucially important forms of recognition, or to constrain their relationships, their rights, and their very lives as human beings.

Notes

- 1 It is important both to note that all of these beliefs can be challenged, and to be aware of the way in which widespread acceptance of such views can be constraining or uncomfortable for those who place less value on romantic love, or are more skeptical about its significance. I do not have the space to explore these issues here, but important discussions can be found in Elizabeth Brake, *Minimizing Marriage*, New York: Oxford University Press (2012), and Carrie Jenkins, *What Love Is—and What It Could Be*, New York: Basic Books (2017).
- 2 Jenkins, *What Love Is*, 118.
- 3 Raja Halwani, “Love and Sex,” in Christopher Grau and Aaron Smuts, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Love*, New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming (online publication date: February 2017), 6.
- 4 Johnson, “Loveexpressed,” in Alan Soble, ed., *Sex, Love, and Friendship*, Society for the Philosophy of Sex and Love (1997), 263. At least one philosopher, however, has argued that *persistent* sexual desire implies romantic love. Roger Taylor is quoted by Russell Vannoy as saying this: “Surely we would have no hesitation in affirming that the person who constantly sexually craves, and is sexually concerned with another, is in love with the other.” (Quoted in Soble, *Sex, Love and Friendship*, 248.) I myself certainly *would* hesitate to say this; while love and lust sometimes come together, and may encourage each other, it does not seem that either persistence or intensity of lust is enough in itself to guarantee that love is also present.
- 5 For discussion see C.S.I. Jenkins, “Modal Monogamy,” *Ergo* 2:8 (2015), 175–94.
- 6 “It seems incoherent to say that A feels romantic love for B, but doesn’t desire B sexually.” Dirk Baltzly and Jeannette Kennett, “Intimate Relations: Friends and Lovers,” in Kroeker and Shaubroeck, eds., *Love, Reason, and Morality*, New York: Routledge (2017), 114.
- 7 Natasha McKeever, “Love: What’s Sex Got to Do With It?,” *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 30:2 (Fall 2016), 201–18; 215.
- 8 McKeever, “Love,” 204–5.
- 9 Richard Taylor, “Eros, or the Love of the Sexes,” in Thomas Mappes and Jane Zembaty, eds., *Social Ethics*, 1st edition, New York: McGraw-Hill (1977), 202–5.
- 10 Russell Vannoy, *Sex Without Love: A Philosophical Exploration*, Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books (1980), 11.
- 11 Indeed, Natasha McKeever offers several reasons for regarding sex as a fitting and effective means of expressing romantic love in “Love: What’s Sex Got to Do With It?”
- 12 Halwani, “Love and Sex,” 15–16. The tradition of regarding sexual desire as objectifying and hence objectionable, and of comparing it with the desire for food, dates back, of course, to Kant. “[T]o allow one’s person for profit to be used by another for the satisfaction of sexual desire,” Kant wrote, “to make of oneself an Object of demand, is to dispose over oneself as over a thing and to make of oneself a thing on which another satisfies his appetite, just as he satisfies his hunger upon a steak,” adding that once a person’s sexual desire has been (momentarily) satisfied, the lover “is cast aside as one casts aside a lemon which has been sucked dry.” Immanuel Kant, “The Philosophy of Law,” trans. W. Hastie, in *Morality and Moral Controversies*, 3rd edition, ed. John Arthur, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall (1993), 254.
- 13 Halwani, “Love and Sex,” 16–17.
- 14 Halwani, “Love and Sex,” 16–17.
- 15 Neil Delaney, “Romantic Love and Loving Commitment: Articulating a Modern Ideal,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 33:4 (October 1996): 339–56, 347. Cf. Russell Vannoy: “lovers do not want to be loved out of sheer charity.... They want to ‘win’ the heart of their lover and not merely have love handed to them because they need it.” “Romantic Love: A Final Appraisal,” in Jan Narveson, *Moral Issues*, New York: Oxford University Press (1983), 302.
- 16 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes, New York: Routledge (1943, 2003), 389.

- 17 Or, if you're lucky, all over the house.
- 18 An additional consideration, which I argue for elsewhere, is that we should not assume that love can only be either provoked or justified by currently possessed features of the beloved; there is no reason why a person cannot be justifiably loved for qualities she used to possess as well. See my *Love's Vision*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (2011), 139–42.
- 19 “Romantic Love and Loving Commitment,” 348, 349. See also Derek Edyvane, “Against Unconditional Love,” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 20 (2003), 59–75, Christopher Cordner, “Unconditional Love?,” *Cogent Arts and Humanities* 3 (2016) online at www.cogentoa.com/article/10.1080/23311983.2016.1207918.pdf, and Brake, *Minimizing Marriage*, 49–56.
- 20 Delaney, “Romantic Love and Loving Commitment,” 350.
- 21 McKeever, “Love,” 202.
- 22 Halwani, “Love and Sex,” 2.
- 23 Halwani, “Love,” 18.
- 24 Chapter 4 of Jenkins’ *What Love Is* provides some instructive examples of how to spot fallacious biological arguments and how to criticize them.
- 25 See, as one among many examples, Roger Scruton, *Sexual Desire*, London: Phoenix Press (2001), 339.
- 26 For an example of a recent study suggesting that individuals have fundamentally different proclivities in terms of monogamy or promiscuity, see Rafael Wlodarski, John Manning, and R.I.M. Dunbar, “Stay or Stray? Evidence for Alternative Mating Strategy Phenotypes in Both Men and Women,” *Biology Letters* 11:2 (February 2015) 20140977, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2014.0977>.
- 27 Brake, *Minimizing Marriage*, 52. As Brake also points out, it is somewhat puzzling that, while romantic relationships do not constitute the only context in which jealousy can arise, they do constitute the only context in which restrictions of this sort, intended to protect us from the harms of jealousy, are imposed and rigidly enforced.
- 28 Natasha McKeever, “Is the Requirement of Sexual Exclusivity Consistent With Romantic Love?” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 34:3 (May 2017), 353–69, 353.

6

ALL HEARTS IN LOVE USE THEIR OWN TONGUES

Concepts, Verbal Disputes, and Disagreeing About Love¹

C.S.I. Jenkins

Introduction

For the sake of concreteness, this chapter investigates disputes of one specific form. I will be looking at disputes between two parties A and B, each of whom sincerely makes an utterance of the following kind:

A: X is a case of romantic love.

B: X is not a case of romantic love.

I will further stipulate that in the relevant disputes the very same situation X is being referred to by each speaker, and they both know this to be the case. Moreover, A and B take themselves to be disagreeing about the status of situation X. I will be exploring the possibility, and the significance, of diagnosing a *merely verbal dispute* in such a situation.

First, a quick terminological note: throughout this chapter, I will sometimes use ‘love’ as a convenient shorthand for ‘romantic love’. (Where other kinds of love are or may be at issue, I will make this explicit.)

Disputes of the target form can arise for many reasons. For example, X might be A’s relationship with their same-sex partner, and B might be a social conservative who does not consider any same-sex relationships to be genuine instances of romantic love. (In such a situation, B may classify A’s relationship as ‘just lust’, or ‘confused’.) Other disputes of the target form might occur between, say, a teenager A and their parent B, with the former claiming to be truly in love and the latter describing A’s situation as merely ‘a crush’ or ‘puppy love’. Yet others may involve two friends A and B discussing whether Mr. Darcy is really in love with Elizabeth Bennet at the moment when he first proposes to her in *Pride and Prejudice*, or whether their mutual friend C’s abusive relationship counts as a genuine case of love. And so on.

In addition to their pure intellectual interest, disputes of this form can be important. They are often laden with personal, emotional, practical, political, and/or ethical significance. The consequences at stake may include things that matter at an individual level (such as whether or not one’s relationship will be treated with respect by one’s family), and things that matter to society at large (such as whether or not to change the conditions for entering into a legal marriage). This is perhaps most obvious in instances where A is attempting to defend the status of

her relationship as genuine love against a disbelieving interlocutor B. But we should not overlook the importance of other instances; even a friendly debate about a fictional character, for example, can have significant impacts on one's own—and one's interlocutor's—future judgments and experiences. For such debates can be an important part of *attempting to figure out what love is*, and it hardly needs saying that what people think love is can have significant impacts both on individual lives and on broader social conditions.

In short, these disputes are a big deal. And they are a big deal because romantic love is itself a big deal. A key social fact in the background here is that a relationship's being accepted as a genuine case of romantic love is strongly correlated with that relationship receiving broad social acceptance and validation. One symptom of this correlation is that the kinds of alternative characterizations liable to be deployed by parties B in disputes of the target form are often dismissive or belittling: 'just lust', 'just a phase', 'just a crush', etc. If a relationship is classified as not one of genuine love (but 'just' something else), it is very likely to be *for that reason* perceived as less valuable, less respectable, less worthy of support, less likely to last, and so on. (This last, of course, can be a self-fulfilling prophecy: relationships that lack the benefits of social acceptance and validation are *ceteris paribus* harder to sustain.)

Recent movements toward respect and recognition for same-sex relationships have made effective use of this background social fact. The suasive success of such slogans as 'love is love' and 'same love' is premised on the pre-existing widespread agreement that once same-sex relationships are accepted as (potentially) cases of *real love*, they can no longer be permissibly treated as second-rate, or as ineligible for the benefits accorded to opposite-sex loving relationships (including, significantly, legal recognition through marriage).

These considerations point back to an even more basic social fact: romantic love is, on the whole, viewed very positively. (This is a generalization, of course, and not an exceptionless rule about every opinion anyone has ever held on the subject.) I leave open for the purposes of this chapter whether this positive valence is built into the semantics of the phrase 'romantic love' and/or the concept or concepts thereby expressed, or whether it is some other, weaker, kind of association (a connotation, an implicature, etc.).

Another social phenomenon that builds upon love's positive valence—but goes beyond it in various ways—is *amatontonormativity*. This is defined by Elizabeth Brake (2012, pp. 88–9) as the 'disproportionate focus on marital and amorous love relationships as special sites of value', manifesting as 'the assumptions that a central, exclusive, amorous relationship is normal for humans, in that it is a universally shared goal, and that such a relationship is normative, in that it *should* be aimed at in preference to other relationship types'. Brake argues that *amatontonormativity* is a form of discrimination which systematically devalues all forms of caring relationship except the normative romantic form. If you've ever been on the receiving end of pressure to 'couple up' and 'settle down', you've experienced *amatontonormativity* in action. If anyone's ever assumed that only a *romantic* partner will accompany you to an event (not a friend or a relative or anyone else), that's part of the same phenomenon. If you've experienced legal or financial benefits due to being married that aren't available to people in other relationships, that's it again.

Amatontonormativity is ubiquitous both in everyday life and in the work of academics, philosophers included. Bertrand Russell, for example, once wrote that if a person has not experienced mutual sexual love with another, then they 'cannot attain their full stature, and cannot feel towards the rest of the world that kind of generous warmth without which their social activities are pretty sure to be harmful'. He also says that 'the resulting disappointment inclines them towards envy, oppression and cruelty' (Russell 1929, p. 83). Russell's facility for clear expression results in a stark formulation, but the sentiment he is expressing is not an unusual

one. Amatonormativity may be morally alarming, but it is also a very important piece of the background against which we must understand current practices of classifying cases of ‘romantic love’.

In what follows, I will explore the hypothesis that many disputes of this chapter’s target form, even if they initially appear to be substantive factual disagreements as to whether a single specified thing is of a single specified kind, in fact turn out to be merely verbal disputes. I shall suggest that this is quite a plausible hypothesis. I shall then explore the further hypothesis that despite being merely verbal, such disputes are also *serious*: as important and non-trivial to resolve as are many non-verbal disputes about significant matters. Again, I shall conclude that this is quite plausible. For example, when parties A and B disagree about whether their friend’s abusive relationship is real ‘love’, they may be using the words to mean different things but this might be serious in a specific way: one of them could be expressing a concept that is *inaccurate*.

In the next section, I argue that many disputes about romantic love, of the target form, are diagnosable as examples of what I have called *serious verbal disputes* (see Jenkins 2014b). Such disputes are indeed *verbal*, because the disputants deploy different concepts of romantic love, but they are also *serious*, because at least one of these concepts is flawed, failing to accurately map reality and also possibly serving to create and sustain forms of injustice and oppression. In the final section, I draw out some points of contact, and some points of contrast, with Sally Haslanger’s recent work on conceptual analysis in areas of socio-political significance. I conclude by suggesting that analogous diagnoses may be useful in connection with structurally similar disputes about other topics, such as gender and race.

Disputing Love

Folk theories of *what romantic love is* tend to be extremely vague, fuzzy, disparate, or missing altogether. This is one upshot of what I have elsewhere² described as the ‘romantic mystique’ (named after Betty Friedan 1963’s analogous ‘feminine mystique’). The romantic mystique is a bundle of ideas which includes the following main themes: (1) love is incomprehensible, (2) love is special and valuable partly *because* it is incomprehensible, and (3) we should passively accept love as it is rather than trying to defy or change it, because (4) attempts to defy or change love will only make us miserable and are in any case doomed to failure.

The romantic mystique is among the factors that make it extremely difficult to pin down what—if anything—people are talking about when they use the phrase ‘romantic love’ (and related phrases such as ‘in love’, or simply ‘love’ with its romantic sense). This has many problematic consequences; miscommunication in relationships, obviously, is high on the list. bell hooks (2001) argues that the lack of any shared definition of ‘love’ puts us at significant risk, because the lack of clarity leaves us open to mistaking abusive relationships for loving ones. She contends that a commonly accepted definition of love would ‘make it much easier for us to learn how to love’ (p. 4). (She is here discussing love generally, not only romantic love, but romantic love is among her concerns.)

However, in a somewhat—though not entirely—analogous debate about how and whether to define ‘marriage’, John Corvino *resists* pressure to provide a single comprehensive definition, describing such pressure as a strategic move usually made with ‘the ulterior motive of proving that same-sex unions either can or cannot count as marriages’ (Corvino and Gallagher 2012, p. 42). He argues that this situation produces only question-begging definitions. Corvino points to a few necessary conditions and some typical features of marriage, but says ‘any pithy definition of marriage will be partial and imperfect’ (p. 43). Analogues of Corvino’s points might well

be raised in response to at least some efforts at defining ‘romantic love’, and pressure to provide a definition might be resisted on similar grounds.

I fall partway between the two polar positions on the question of whether it is wise to attempt a definition of ‘romantic love’. I take the Corvino line with regard to attempts at simultaneously ‘pithy’ and comprehensive definitions; that sort of thing is little more than an invitation to philosophers to wheel out their counterexample machines. And no doubt many attempts at defining love are motivated by pre-existing ideological commitments. Indeed, the involvement of ideology in shaping our concepts and definitions of romantic love will be a key issue in what follows.

But I take the hooks line on the dangers of unclarity. In addition to the tangible dangers hooks describes, I am concerned that the fuzzy-to-missing folk theory of romantic love acts as a protective forcefield against philosophical criticism: if we cannot even pin down what we *mean* by ‘romantic love’, we cannot critique it or even discuss it in any depth or with any kind of rigor. In my work (e.g., Jenkins 2015 and 2017) I am trying to develop a theory of romantic love that can give us enough of a grip on the phenomenon to have a serious philosophical conversation about it. But I do not attempt any aphoristic definition, or a checklist of necessary and sufficient conditions.

One consequence of the fuzzy-to-absent folk theory of romantic love is that it creates more or less ideal conditions for merely verbal disputes to flourish. It is easy to imagine situations in which one party uses ‘romantic love’ to refer to a bundle of exciting sensations while the other uses it to refer to a divine gift whose purpose is to unite two straight people for the sole purpose of engaging in the relatively sin-free production of biological offspring. Or situations where one party uses ‘romantic love’ to refer to an evolved neurochemical response while the other uses it to talk about a socially constructed set of expectations and traditions. Likewise for a rather bewildering array of dimensions of possible—and more importantly *plausible*—variations.

To be clear, I’m not suggesting that mere disagreement about the nature of the phenomenon necessarily results in merely verbal disputes. Two parties can disagree about whether cats have four or five claws on their hind paws and both be using ‘cats’ the same way. But notice two features that make the situation with respect to ‘romantic love’ rather unlike this. First, the divergences in current understandings of ‘romantic love’ map onto *huge* differences in ontological category: differences concerning even the fundamentals of what broad kind of thing is under discussion. Second, there is no kind of *arbiter* or *expert* to whom we, as a linguistic community, can successfully defer when it comes to romantic love. No single person, group, or institution ‘owns’ romantic love, or has the last word over what counts as such. Indeed, nothing even comes close to occupying that role.

Marriage, by contrast, is a legal status, and as such is ‘owned’ and regulated by states: they have the last word, the authority to stipulate what counts and what doesn’t. Even gender is something that states *attempt* to arbitrate and regulate, through (e.g.) issuing birth certificates and other forms of identification and documentation which specify the bearer’s sex and/or gender. (Their degree of success is debatable. I suspect, partly for this reason, that gender may be another arena in which serious verbal disputes are prevalent and in need of investigation.) But there is no kind of official documentation that specifies whether one is in love or not. A marriage certificate does not certify that the bearer is, or ever was, in love. There are no state guidelines on what counts as love and what doesn’t. Religious and spiritual leaders offer *opinions*, but wildly different ones. Likewise for therapists, relationship advice columnists, and other bearers of (putative) expertise.

The absence of any generally accepted theory of romantic love *or even a sketch of the fundamentals*, together with the absence of any group or institution generally accepted as authoritative

on the subject, makes it predictable that popular usage of the phrase ‘romantic love’ will be all over the place. Recall that this chapter is focusing on disputes of the form:

A: X is a case of romantic love.

B: X is not a case of romantic love.

Given the current situation, I contend, it is plausible that in many such disputes A and B use ‘romantic love’ to express *different concepts*, and do not in fact disagree about the applicability of either concept to situation X. However, one has to be a little careful about what this amounts to: it means the parties do not disagree about whether the applicability conditions for each concept are met. This does *not* require accepting that each concept is in good standing. Indeed, as I explain below, the parties could proceed to reject such claims.

For example, we can easily imagine teenager A using ‘romantic love’ to express a concept that refers to a confluence of intense emotions, and parent B using ‘romantic love’ to express a concept that refers to a trusting relationship that must be built up over years of intimacy, with neither party disagreeing that situation X (A’s current relationship) involves the relevant intense emotions and lacks the relevant long-established trust and intimacy. Or we might imagine A using ‘romantic love’ to express a concept that refers to a kind of committed relationship that can hold between persons of any gender, and B using ‘romantic love’ to express approximately the same concept as the old-fashioned phrase ‘love between a man and a woman’, with neither party disagreeing that situation X involves a committed relationship and is not a case of love between a man and a woman.

However, a key point that I want to make in this chapter is that diagnosing a merely verbal dispute in such a situation does *not* mean that the dispute in question is trivial, insignificant, or easy to resolve. The fact that two parties deploy different concepts, and don’t disagree about the applicability of either, doesn’t mean that everyone is right and can now go home in a spirit of irenic tolerance. For we must consider the possibility that some concepts are *flawed*.

A concept is flawed when it provides an inaccurate map of reality’s structure. I presuppose here a theory of concept grounding on which responsiveness to input received through the senses can—and, if things are going well, does—guide us toward the formation and/or retention of concepts that accurately map the mind-independent structure of the world. An empirically grounded conceptual scheme is neither an imposition of additional structure to the world, as a Carnapian would have it, nor a distortion of reality’s structure, as a Davidsonian would have it, but an accurate map thereof.³ Thus, a dispute about romantic love where the disputants express different concepts can be, although a merely verbal dispute, a deeply important one nonetheless. For the conceptual difference may be the locus of a deep disagreement about the structure of reality.⁴

In such a dispute, there are straightforward concerns about getting things right: it is a mistake to use concepts that inaccurately represent the structure of the world. A concept like *tonk*—the connective whose introduction and elimination rules collectively permit inference from any proposition to any other⁵—is a disastrously inaccurate concept. There is, in reality, no relation of entailment between *All cats are green* and *All fish like football*, so the fact that *tonk* allows us to infer as if there were one is symptomatic of how badly *tonk* misrepresents the world’s logical structure.

However, inaccurate concepts can also have more sinister consequences than simply getting reality wrong. Such concepts can also serve to create and sustain forms of injustice and oppression, operating at a deeper level than propositional belief. These forms of harm can be especially insidious, protected from detection and criticism by *appearing* to be the upshot of what is simply

analytic or true by definition. They can be lodged right in the core of how we think, classify, and understand.

One example of an inaccurate concept with unethical impact can be derived from the work of Michael Dummett. In a discussion of ‘linguistic change, of the kind we should characterize as involving the rejection or revision of concepts’, Dummett discusses the term ‘Boche’. On his account of the meaning of this term, it can be applied to anyone of German nationality, and its application implies that the subject is ‘barbarous and more prone to cruelty than other Europeans’ (Dummett 1973, p. 454).

In my 2008 work I suggested that the word ‘Boche’ so defined expresses an inaccurate concept. Like *tonk*, this *Boche* concept misrepresents the structure of reality: if we adopt and use the *Boche* concept, we thereby represent the world as a place where German nationality entails barbarism and cruelty. This is inaccurate.^{6,7} But it is not merely inaccurate: it is also harmful and unjust. The concept embeds a prejudice and should be rejected for ethical reasons *as well as* reasons of inaccuracy. (Other kinds of conceptual inaccuracy may be morally harmless; we would have only one kind of reason for rejecting such concepts.)

Returning to romantic love, consider the situation of a person who has no words or concepts to express his own romantic preference except ones that also build in a negative valence and/or additional negative content. A gay man, for example, who only knows of pejorative words and concepts to describe gay men, can find himself in such a situation. Among other harms—such as the psychological impacts of internalized homophobia—this is an instance of what Miranda Fricker (2007, ch. 7) has called *hermeneutical injustice*, where ‘someone has a significant area of their social experience obscured from understanding owing to prejudicial flaws in shared resources for social interpretation’.⁸

Among the areas of social experience that get obscured in a situation like this is the very possibility of same-sex romantic love. As mentioned above, ‘romantic love’ has strong positive associations, and the classification of a relationship as a loving one is a route to securing for it kinds of social validation and respect that are denied to relationships classified as ‘just’ something else (lust, a crush, etc.). For this reason, disputes of this chapter’s target form are often liable to be ideologically laden, and motivated (consciously or otherwise) by value judgments concerning *how the positive evaluations and social privileges associated with ‘romantic love’ should be apportioned*.

Now suppose we encounter a dispute of the target form where situation X is a same-sex relationship and party B disapproves of same-sex relationships. It is not difficult to see how B’s disapproval could be responsible for B’s assertion ‘X is not a case of romantic love’. B may be motivated (consciously or otherwise) by something like the following reasoning:

- 1 Romantic love is *good* (to be taken seriously, worthy of social privileges, etc.).
- 2 X is *bad* (not to be taken seriously, not worthy of social privileges, etc.).
- 3 Therefore relationship X is not a case of romantic love.

Now, let’s also suppose that A proceeds to criticize B on the grounds that B’s verdict is prejudiced. B might respond that her concept of *romantic love*—call it RL_B —makes it simply analytic⁹ that such love can only occur between a man and a woman. Moreover, let’s suppose it is in fact *true* that B is using such a concept,¹⁰ and A acknowledges that this is the case. Notice how this move by B effectively conceals any role for premise 2 in the above reasoning.

It is my contention that A should now be able to object that there is *something wrong with B’s concept*. And the notion of conceptual accuracy I outlined above provides A with the structural tools to press an objection of this kind. A might now contend that B is deploying a concept that is *inaccurate*: one that misrepresents the structure of reality.¹¹ There are various ways this kind of

point might be made. A could for example argue that B's concept serves to misrepresent reality by presenting opposite-sex attraction, relationships, marriages, and so on as *special*—i.e., as significantly morally and/or phenomenologically different from their same-sex counterparts—whereas in fact there is no such difference. A could point out that, just as Dummett's *Boche* enables erroneous inferences:

- i *X is German.*
- ii *X is Boche.*
- iii *X is cruel.*

so B's concept RL_B enables erroneous inferences:

- I *X is a same-sex relationship.*
- II *X is not a case of RL_B .*
- III *X is not worthy of social privileges.*

Earlier, I left open the question of whether the positive associations of 'romantic love' are built into the concept(s) expressed by that phrase. The same goes for the association with deserving special privileges not accorded to other relationships (a facet of amatonormativity).¹² If there is amatonormative content packed into the concept RL_B , then the analogy with *Boche* may be very close: something like the step from II to III could then be analytic of RL_B . That is to say, this concept may be packing enough of a normative punch to enable its user to conclude that same-sex relationships are not worthy of social privileges without further ado. Like *Boche*, in addition to being inaccurate, such a concept can be criticized on moral grounds for the role it plays in the systematic and discriminatory devaluation of same-sex relationships.

If the association between RL_B and amatonormativity is of some less intimate kind, then step II–III is not necessarily analytic. In that case, someone critical of the inference I–II–III might argue that the problem is not really with the concept RL_B but rather with some enthymeme deployed at the second step, such as *All and only romantic love relationships are worth of social privileges*. There certainly are significant moral objections to be raised against this kind of proposition. However, even in this kind of case, B's overall conceptual scheme may also be subject to scrutiny and criticism. If by 'romantic love' B expresses RL_B , which is approximately equivalent to *love between a man and a woman*, then what words and concepts will B use to describe, classify, properly evaluate, or even *think* about same-sex loving relationships of equal value and dignity? If B has no such words and concepts, then B's conceptual scheme is lacking the resources B needs to represent the social world accurately. It is in that sense *inadequate*. It is also (thereby) contributing to the kind of hermeneutical injustice that excludes same-sex love from being so much as considered or discussed (which is an effective way of evading debate about the distribution of social privilege among relationships).

It is not my contention that in raising concerns of these kinds A is likely to *persuade* B to change their mind (whether that amounts to changing their verdict on some proposition or changing their concepts). Rather, raising them brings to light where the relevant issues lie, preventing their concealment, and enabling the continuation of debates that need to be continued.

Once we appreciate that concepts can be inaccurate, a diagnosis of merely verbal dispute may be not the end of the discussion, but the first step toward an investigation of the merits of the divergent concepts in play. It is not good enough to treat concept choice as if 'anything goes', nor to approach it in a spirit of pure pragmatism. If we treat concepts as floating free from accuracy constraints, we risk being seriously wrong about how the world is, and causing moral harm

in the process. We risk concealing prejudices from detection by rendering them as unassailable ‘matters of definition’. ‘Matters of definition’ are *by no means* unassailable. On the contrary, we have to be prepared to roll up our sleeves and get to work at the conceptual level, scrutinizing and critiquing our interlocutors’ concepts. And, for that matter, our own.

Operative and Manifest Concepts; Conceptual and Ameliorative Analyses

Haslanger (2005, 2006, and elsewhere) has provided some valuable structure for understanding the place of concepts and conceptual analysis in social metaphysics. Two of her distinctions in particular can help contextualize my project in this chapter: that between *operative* and *manifest* concepts, and that between *conceptual* and *ameliorative* projects of conceptual analysis. I will discuss each of these distinctions, and its relevance to the project of this chapter, in turn.

An operative concept is (approximately) a concept that a person *uses* to classify or categorize. By contrast, a manifest concept is (approximately) a concept that a person *takes* herself to be using. This is tidily illustrated by one of Haslanger’s own examples (see Haslanger 2006). Asking someone to tell you his definition of ‘parent’ would be a way to investigate his manifest concept of *parent*. But to investigate his operative concept of *parent*, one would need to do things like look at whom he includes on a list of ‘parents’ when sending out a letter to the ‘parents’ of all the children in a school. Manifest and operative concepts can come apart: as Haslanger argues, even if one’s manifest concept of *parent* is roughly equivalent to *immediate biological ancestor*, one’s operative concept of *parent* may be something more like *primary caregiver*.

My sense is that there is currently a huge and diverse range of manifest concepts of *romantic love*, most of which are extremely fuzzy and ill-defined. (Try asking lots of different people for their definitions of ‘romantic love’, and you’ll get a sense of what I’m talking about.) In fact, many people may not even possess anything sufficiently determinate to *constitute* a manifest concept. This—like the closely related phenomenon of intense vagueness and variation in folk theories of romantic love—is an upshot of the romantic mystique.

The mystification process does not, however, necessarily impact *operative* concepts of romantic love in quite the same way. Operative concepts can function quite effectively in the absence of any well-defined folk theory or manifest concept, by means of an ‘I know it when I see it’ approach to classification and categorization. What the romantic mystique *does* do, however, is effectively ensure that our operative concepts are poorly understood and rarely brought to awareness. They are thus shielded from investigation and criticism.

Disputes of the kind under discussion in this chapter are important in part because they can be a significant source of clues as to where the contours of people’s operative concepts diverge. When B refuses to classify X as a case of romantic love (and is not making a straightforward mistake about the facts of the case, nor misapplying her own concept), A gets some evidence about the shape of the operative concept that B is deploying.

These interactions are significant in another way too: particularly in the realm of social metaphysics, operative concepts can be *contagious*. When one notices that others are classifying cases differently to oneself, that creates pressure to adjust the contours of one’s own operative concept to match (what seem to be) the socially accepted criteria. As social creatures who want to communicate, we—often without even noticing—try to align our conceptual schemes with those of the people around us, working to form a shared background structure within which we can then discuss things. Being more aware of what is going on in the kinds of disputes discussed in this chapter can give us more resources to *notice* and *resist* social pressure toward the adoption of bad (inaccurate and/or harmful) operative concepts.

Haslanger's second distinction, between conceptual and ameliorative projects of analysis, is approximately the difference between analyzing 'our' concept as it is (using intuitions and introspection), and figuring out what would be the *best* version of that concept given the (legitimate) purposes we have in possessing and deploying such a concept. Neither is precisely what my envisaged reaction to serious verbal disputes about love is up to, but there is an important connection to amelioration that is worth spelling out.

I've proposed that we understand concepts and conceptual schemes as answerable to the world for accuracy and adequacy. Haslangerian amelioration is not always the same thing as conceptual improvement along these dimensions; some forms of amelioration could in principle lead to a *decrease* in accuracy (at least if one's purposes do not include the accurate representation of reality, or if this goal is outweighed by others). However, many ways of improving one's concepts to better map the structure of reality can also be forms of Haslangerian amelioration. For example, in exposing the inaccuracy of a concept such as *Boche*, and ditching or revising the concept for that reason, we are thereby advancing the social aim of counteracting the oppressive prejudice built into this inaccurate concept. The change is ameliorative insofar as our legitimate aims in classifying by nationality are not well served by concepts that build in unfair prejudices against certain people.

In a similar vein, revising a heteronormative (operative) concept of *romantic love* so as to include same-sex love can lead to improvements in conceptual accuracy and/or adequacy, *and also* thereby advance the social aim of counteracting discrimination against same-sex relationships. This change is likewise ameliorative insofar as our legitimate aims in classifying cases of romantic love are not well served by concepts (or conceptual schemes) that build in unfair prejudices against certain relationships.

To finish up, let me briefly observe that the key points I am making in this chapter—that serious verbal disputes can arise in areas of social significance, and that these might be productively addressed by shedding light on the harms done by bad concepts—are not limited to disputes about 'romantic love'. This is merely one important case study: an area of discourse where it seems to me particularly important to look at verbal disputes for evidence of the contours of our operative concepts (because our manifest concepts are such a mess). Other analogous-looking disputes arise in connection with gender and race. For example:

C: 'X is a woman.'

D: 'X is not a woman.'

E: 'X is white.'

F: 'X is not white.'

In each of these cases, it is not hard to imagine how ideology may be underwriting the position of one or both parties, how poor understanding of the relevant areas of social metaphysics may have led to a situation where the parties' manifest concepts are extremely fuzzy (or missing) and their operative concepts significantly divergent, and how some of the operative concepts in play might be inaccurate or inadequate for representing the structure of social reality (and for that reason harmful in morally criticizable ways).

Notes

- 1 Many thanks to my audiences at the Faces of Disagreement conference at the Université de Montréal and the Metaphysics After Carnap conference at the University of Leeds. Particular thanks to Hichem Naar (my commentator at the Montreal event) and to Gurpreet Rattan for detailed comments and discussion. Thanks also to the Derivative Metaphysics Project at the University of Barcelona, funded by the Programa Nacional de Filología y Filosofía: FFI2015-66372-P (MINECO/FEDER, UE).

- 2 Jenkins 2017, chapter 1.
- 3 See Carnap 1950, Davidson 1974, and Jenkins 2008. The notion of concept accuracy doesn't require that we posit any kind of metaphysically privileged, fundamental, or 'joint-carving' structure; I take it that *any* structure the world has is available to be represented accurately or inaccurately.
- 4 The metametaphysical view I presuppose here I call 'Quinapian', since it holds with the Carnapian that there is genuine analytic knowledge, but with the Quinean that the concepts we deploy must be responsive to sensory input to be in good epistemic standing and therefore that, further, all knowledge—including that which is derived from appreciation of the relationships between one's concepts—is on a single level, and susceptible to empirical revision. See Jenkins 2014a and 2014b.
- 5 See Prior 1960.
- 6 Note again that one needn't believe in anything like 'joints in nature'—or a metaphysically special fundamental 'structure' of the kind advocated in, e.g., Sider 2012—to agree with this.
- 7 Some may have qualms about the idea that a (partly) *normative* concept can be accurate or inaccurate. However, this is no more troubling than the idea that a (partly) *normative* proposition can be true or false. Philosophers accommodate truth for normative propositions in a variety of ways. Full-on normative realism (with normative facts to which true normative propositions correspond) is not the only option; there are also various ways of attributing more or less deflationary truth to normative propositions. Correlatively, one may account for the accuracy of normative concepts in a variety of more or less metaphysically robust ways; if desired, a notion of deflationary accuracy can be developed alongside deflationary truth. More generally, for any theory of normative propositions which generates standards for their evaluation (whether or not these are standards for *truth*), a concept-level analogue of these standards may be available. For myself, I take it to be a datum that the proposition *All Germans are barbarous and cruel* is a false proposition, and I correspondingly have no qualms about attributing inaccuracy to any concept whose adoption would compel us to accept this proposition as true.
- 8 This phrasing comes from an abstract to chapter 7 provided in the electronic version of Fricker 2007 (hosted at Oxford Scholarship Online).
- 9 We need to be a bit careful with terminology here; I do not call this an *analytic truth*, but something that is *analytic* of the concept RL_B .
- 10 Some forms of semantic externalism may not permit the public-language phrase 'romantic love' to have two different meanings or definitions when used by the two speakers. In my 2014a I suggest that a proper understanding of the nature of merely verbal disputes requires us to be able to focus on a *speaker's use* of language (and, perhaps relatedly, the *utterer's meaning*) as distinct from (perhaps additional to) any externally determined semantic content.
- 11 This is one of the respects in which the diagnosis I am describing here differs from what Plunkett and Sundell (2013) have called 'metalinguistic negotiation'. A metalinguistic negotiation is another kind of situation in which what at first glance may appear to be a mere 'talking past' turns out to carry more significance. As summarized by Plunkett (2015, p. 832), it is 'a dispute in which speakers use (rather than mention) a term to pragmatically advocate for a normative view about how that term should be used'. The maneuver under consideration here does not concern how language should be used, but rather the accuracy and adequacy of the disputants' ways of thinking and classifying (i.e., whether their concepts relate to the world correctly or incorrectly). Unlike a diagnosis of metalinguistic negotiation, this maneuver issues in no verdict as to whether, in the original dispute, A and B were really advocating for a thesis of a metalinguistic nature. (That question is irrelevant for the diagnosis.) As Plunkett notes (p. 830 and p. 843), metalinguistic negotiations may sometimes be motivated by sets of issues developed by Haslanger and Sider concerning which *concepts* should be used for what purposes. I say more about Haslanger's notion of 'ameliorative' conceptual analysis, and how it differs from what I am discussing here, in the final section below. (I have already noted (in footnote 6) one of the important respects in which my position differs from Sider's.) Methodologically, I prefer to keep issues of word choice and concept choice separate here, as they raise distinct concerns. Thanks to members of my Leeds audience for discussion of these points.
- 12 My best guess is that the phrase 'romantic love' expresses analytically amatonormative concepts on some but not all occasions of use.

References

- Brake, E. 2012. *Minimizing Marriage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carnap, R. 1950. 'Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology', in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 4, pp. 20–40.

- Corvino, J. and M. Gallagher. 2012. *Debating Same-Sex Marriage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Davidson, D. 1974. 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', in *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 47, pp. 5–20.
- Dummett, M. 1973. *Frege: Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Fricker, M. 2007. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Friedan, B. 1963. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Haslanger, S. 2005. 'What Are We Talking About? The Semantic and Politics of Social Kinds', in *Hypatia* 20, pp. 10–26.
- Haslanger, S. 2006. 'What Good Are Our Intuitions? Philosophical Analysis and Social Kinds', in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 80, pp. 89–118.
- hooks, b. 2001. *All About Love: New Visions*. New York: Harper.
- Jenkins, C. 2008. *Grounding Concepts: An Empirical Basis for Arithmetical Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, C. 2014a. 'Merely Verbal Disputes', in *Erkenntnis* 79, pp. 11–30.
- Jenkins, C. 2014b. 'Serious Verbal Disputes: Ontology, Metaontology, and Analyticity', in *Journal of Philosophy* 111, pp. 454–69.
- Jenkins, C. 2015. 'What Is Love? An Incomplete Map of the Metaphysics', in *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 1, pp. 349–64.
- Jenkins, C. 2017. *What Love Is and What It Could Be*. New York: Basic Books.
- Lewis, D. 1983. 'New Work for a Theory of Universals', in *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 61, pp. 343–77.
- Plunkett, D. 2015. 'Which Concepts Should We Use?: Metalinguistic Negotiations and the Methodology of Philosophy', in *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* 58, pp. 828–74.
- Plunkett, D. and T. Sundell. 2013. 'Disagreement and the Semantics of Normative and Evaluative Terms', in *Philosophers Imprint* 13, pp. 1–37.
- Prior, A. 1960. 'The Runabout Inference Ticket', in *Analysis* 2, pp. 38–9.
- Russell, B. 1929. *Marriage and Morals*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Sider, T. 2012. *Writing the Book of the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

THE NORMATIVE POTENCY OF SEXUALLY EXCLUSIVE LOVE¹

Jennifer Ryan Lockhart

I begin with a confession: I'm married. To a man. To outsiders, there is nothing *interesting* about my marriage. Though solemn, our vows were lacking in originality: I pledged to forsake all others and to "keep only unto him ... till death us do part." What others may not know, however, is that, although publicly mundane, *privately*, my marriage has been far from uninteresting. On the contrary, my curiosity has been continually aroused by the fact that a sexual arrangement like ours—one marked by a lifelong commitment to sexual exclusivity—could be so unremarkable as to routinely pass with little comment or discussion.

One explanation for this lack of scrutiny is as follows. Perhaps one conceives sexual ethics as a matter of a set of rules that may prohibit or allow certain forms of conduct. There is nothing impermissible, it seems, about an arrangement such as the one my husband and I have entered into, so long as we both consent to it. On the other hand, there isn't an ethical requirement that one should enter into a sexually exclusive relationship. A marriage such as ours, therefore, is easily comprehended as a permissible but not obligatory form of relationship.

I find this line of reasoning not incorrect but unsatisfying. Even if it's true that I'm permitted to commit to a sexually exclusive relationship with another person who agrees to the arrangement, why would we do this? There is an ethical puzzle that is obscured by thinking about arrangements of sexual exclusivity merely in terms of obligations and permissions: what's the good of going in for this sort of thing?

In this chapter, I'll argue that we can't give a satisfying answer to this question without giving up the widely held assumption that there is no distinctively sexual ethics. Contrary to this assumption, the value of committed, sexually exclusive love is *sui generis*, not to be grasped by the application of general principles to the particular case of sexual activity.

But once we grant this point, *why* there should be such a distinctively sexual ethics nevertheless remains puzzling. I conclude by suggesting that the value of sexually exclusive love constitutes a serious problem for any normative theory that proceeds by articulating general ethical principles and then applying them to the case of sex. I conclude that we ought to seek an ethical theory that can acknowledge *sui generis* forms of sexual value and offer some explanation of the existence of such value.

The Puzzle of Committed Sexual Exclusivity

What's the good, then, of making a long-term commitment to a sexually exclusive relationship? What reasons are there for going in for this sort of thing?

In asking these questions, I'm not absurdly presupposing that committed sexually exclusive relationships constitute an "ultimately superior type of relationship" or the "uniquely best or happiest way of life."² In asking about why committed sexual exclusivity is good, I'm not assuming that everyone *ought* to be involved in such a relationship, for there are many good things in the world, and it isn't reasonable to pursue them all. I am not even assuming that committed sexual exclusivity is the best way of life *for certain people*.

I'm not asking why such relationships are *best*, but why they're choiceworthy at all. Consider an analogous case: a young woman considers two careers, one in teaching and one in medicine. In deciding which career to pursue she may ask herself which career is "best," although a reasonable answer to this question is that one is not better than the other. She may ask herself which is best *for her*, given her temperament, ambitions, etc. But, I submit, it's possible that she's equally well suited to both vocations (or that she has no idea how to answer this question). She may nevertheless, quite rationally, choose a career as a teacher. Her reasons for doing so needn't be that teaching is the best career or that it is the best career for her. Rather, her reasons may have to do with what's good about being a teacher—e.g., the value of educating young people. Similarly, I'm not assuming that committed sexual exclusivity is the best way of life or the best way of life for some given their temperament. Rather, I'm interested in what's valuable about such relationships so that, when chosen, they're choiceworthy. The presupposition that committed sexual exclusivity *is* choiceworthy is compatible with pluralism about the genuine value of different sorts of sexual arrangements. Whether or not committed sexual exclusivity is for you, anyone who is willing to support (and not merely to tolerate) friends who choose to enter into such relationships should be willing to endorse this starting point.

One reason that it's difficult to say what is good about committed sexual exclusivity is that such relationships have some *prima facie* downsides. Sex can be pleasant. Sex can also be useful: Alongside the obvious purposes for sex such as conceiving a child and making money, we might range a variety of less obvious ones such as getting rid of a headache and transmitting a venereal disease (a use, one imagines, pertinent for the vengeful).³ Generally speaking, the fact that some activity is pleasant or useful can provide a sufficient reason to engage in the activity. A commitment to sexual exclusivity requires one to forgo opportunities for pleasure and utility. Hence,

The Puzzle of Committed Sexual Exclusivity: Insofar as it is a commitment to forgo opportunities for pleasure and utility, sexual exclusivity seems bad. So what's the good of a committed sexually exclusive relationship?⁴

In a paper that appeared in 1977, Alan Goldman gave voice to a view that now passes for many as little more than enlightened common sense: "There is no morality intrinsic to sex, although general moral rules apply to the treatment of others in sex acts as they apply to all human relations" (1977: 280). I'll refer to this constraint on sex as

Normative Impotence: Normative judgments about sex must be underwritten by an appeal to a more general normative principle of which the sexual case is simply one instance.

Given a commitment to Normative Impotence, the wrong of rape, for instance,

derives from its being an extreme violation of a person's body, of the right not to be humiliated, and of the general moral prohibition against using other persons against their wills, not from the fact that it is a sexual act.

(Goldman 1977: 282)

Accepting Normative Impotence means that in trying to solve the puzzle we shouldn't appeal to normative claims distinctive of sex.⁵

Let's now turn to attempted solutions to the puzzle that are compatible with Normative Impotence.

I'll divide the solutions into three categories: first, those that ascribe an instrumental value to committed sexual exclusivity; second, those that account for the value of it in terms of the inclinations of the agents; and third, those that understand relationships of committed sexual exclusivity as valuable for their own sake. In each case, I'll argue that the purported solutions are unsatisfying. Indeed, my hope is that demonstrating the failure of these approaches heightens the sense of what is puzzling about the puzzle of committed sexual exclusivity.

This argument by elimination suggests that the prospects are not good for a solution to the puzzle of committed sexual exclusivity that is compatible with Normative Impotence. I therefore suggest finally that we solve the puzzle by rejecting the widely shared assumption of Normative Impotence. Once we do so, we can simply appeal to the *sui generis* value of sexually exclusive love to solve the puzzle.

First Purported Solution: Sexual Exclusivity Has Instrumental Value

The first way to try to account for the value of sexually exclusive relationships is in terms of their results. One could claim, for instance, that sexually exclusive relationships decrease the risk of STIs or promote the wellbeing of children involved. Empirical claims such as these face two problems: first, very little research exists on the comparative benefits of sexually exclusive relationships, and second, the current research doesn't support these empirical claims.⁶

Yet even if the empirical evidence were to support the claim that committed sexually exclusive relationships have beneficial results external to the relationship, it would be odd to hold that this *exhausts* the reasons that there are for engaging in such relationships. Although sexual exclusivity might be a small price to pay, for instance, for well-adjusted offspring, most people who engage in such relationships take there to be some reason to do so that has to do with the *relationship itself* and not merely with the good effects one hopes thereby to bring about. One way to accommodate this intuition while remaining within the framework of explaining the value of committed sexually exclusive relationships in instrumental terms is to claim that the important result in question is the maintenance of the relationship itself.

Bryan Weaver and Fiona Wollard consider such a rationale: "Since cultivating additional relationships of erotic love could undermine the current relationship, by disallowing such relationships, the partners are acting in accord with a current shared desire to protect their relationship" (2008: 513).⁷ To be clear, on this story, the relationship itself is important, but not *qua* sexually exclusive commitment. The couple commits to sexual exclusivity not as a valuable aspect of that relationship, but as a protective measure that is instrumentally valuable to the relationship's maintenance. The question is *why* sexual exclusivity would be instrumental to the preservation of the relationship—and is there any explanation of this that doesn't violate Normative Impotence? One might suggest that because sex is so intimate, having sex with another

person outside the original relationship would undermine that relationship. One problem for this explanation is that, as a psychological matter, sex may be casual or alienating as opposed to intimate. This rationale, therefore, provides no reason not to engage in “one-off sex with a stranger on holiday whom one knows one will never meet again, or an anonymous sexual encounter had in a sex club” (McKeever 2015: 4).

One might respond that such sex would nevertheless be harmful to the relationship because it would undermine trust or violate a commitment. If two people have already committed to sexual exclusivity, this will be true. But it can’t explain what’s good about making such a commitment in the first place.

One might respond, “Yes, but sex with another *might* turn out to be intimate.” But many things might be intimate and some activities like heartfelt conversation are very likely to be. The fact that some activity is likely to be intimate doesn’t ordinarily justify us in engaging in that activity with only one person. The reason for this is simple: we are capable of maintaining intimate relationships with more than one person at a time. Most of us do maintain intimate relationships with a group of family and friends. Of course, these relationships take energy and one’s ability to cultivate them properly may depend on limiting their number. But I find the suggestion that I can maintain only one intimate relationship absurd. Moreover, although one’s capacity for cultivating relationships may not be limitless, it isn’t obvious that intimacy in one relationship must trade off with intimacy in another. This rationale seems to presuppose, as Christine Overall puts it, that there is “a limited amount of love, sexual activity, intimacy, commitment, and attention to go around. The implicit economic metaphor, consistent with capitalist culture, suggests that ... relationships are zero-sum games” (1998: 5).

C.S. Lewis remarks on the way that having multiple intimate relationships at once can be enriching to all those involved:

In each of my friends there is something that only some other friend can fully bring out. By myself I am not large enough to call the whole man into activity; I want other lights than my own to show all his facets.

(1971: 61)

Far from detracting from one’s existing relationships, engaging in other intense and intimate relationships may enrich and energize the original relationship.

At this point, one might respond that Lewis is talking about *friendship*, not intimate sexual relationships. Many people can maintain only one intimate sexual relationship at a time. But note that what is crucial now to this explanation is not the *intimacy* of such relationships, but their *sexual* nature. Remember that we are exploring the possibility that there is some explanation of the good of committed sexual exclusivity that doesn’t violate Normative Impotence. While maintaining Normative Impotence, one could argue that although the claim that many people have difficulty maintaining more than one sexual relationship does pertain to a special feature of sex, it’s simply an empirical claim and therefore doesn’t violate Normative Impotence. This approach, however, relies on the empirical claim that sexually exclusive relationships are more intimate and stable. Is this empirical claim true? Conley et al. observe that “we currently have no evidence that sexual exclusivity invariably leads to greater intimacy and relationship satisfaction than CNM [consensual non-monogamy]. Instead, some evidence suggests that consensual non-monogamy can be satisfying and functional for couples” (2012: 130).⁸ Of course, one might fret over these studies when it comes to, e.g., sample size or self-selection of the sample. This matters little, since the point is just that the empirical evidence currently doesn’t support the solution to the puzzle under discussion.

I suppose one might be convinced of the claim that sexually exclusive relationships are more stable and intimate on grounds that one takes to be empirical although not scientific, namely personal experience. This line of argument might take the form, “I (or a friend) tried to engage in a sexual relationship that wasn’t exclusive and that relationship failed.” A person reasoning in this way might be urged to reflect on the vast number of relationships committed to sexual exclusivity that he has seen fail. Is he certain that he has identified the “cause” of the failure of this small group of relationships in their lack of exclusivity? I think that a more likely explanation is that the *normative* framework of the observer (his background views about how relationships should be, what might count as a betrayal, etc.) has had a role to play in his picking out the “cause” of the failure of the sexual relationship that lacked exclusivity.

One final problem for all these explanations of why committed sexually exclusive relationships are good in terms of the instrumental value of the exclusivity is that they cast the sexual restrictions in question as a necessary evil. Given this family of views, if there were a way to achieve one’s aims without undertaking such restrictions, this would be a better state of affairs.

But this way of characterizing the sexual restrictions of such relationships doesn’t seem true to the phenomenon of the way in which people can value these relationships. People committed to sexual exclusivity may think of the exclusivity itself positively rather than as a necessary evil—in terms of *love* or *faithfulness*. All the instrumental approaches to sexual exclusivity we’ve discussed so far are unable to accommodate the fact that although it “is *prima facie* a restriction on freedom, many people ... do not experience it as such” (McKeever 2015: 8).

Second Purported Solution: Sexual Exclusivity and Inclinations

In light of this criticism, I turn to the second broad category of accounts for what is good about committed sexual exclusivity consistent with Normative Impotence: those that appeal to the inclinations of those in the relationship. This sort of account may be thought to be an advance over the previous kind precisely for the reason that it doesn’t explain sexual exclusivity as a necessary evil but as something that the couple positively desires. On this view, what’s good about such relationships is just that they fulfill the desires of the agents involved.

When stated this way, this explanation of why sexual exclusivity is good raises the difficult issue of whether the goodness of an action can be explained by an appeal to the desires of the agent or whether it isn’t in fact the other way around, that the desires of the agent are explained by the goodness of the action. T.M. Scanlon, for instance, claims that

Having a desire to do something typically involves thinking, or imagining, that there is something to be said for doing it. And from the point of view of an agent it is the considerations that are seen as desirable, rather than the fact of the desire, that provide reasons for action.

(Scanlon 2014: 88)

If this is correct, then we can ask of someone who desires to commit to a sexually exclusive relationship: Yes, I understand that you *desire* to make this commitment, but what do you see as desirable about it? And we are then left where we were before: looking for some way to explain what is supposed to be good about this form of commitment such that people find it desirable to engage in it. Given the restrictions that sexual exclusivity entails, the question seems particularly pressing: what could be *desirable* about giving up opportunities for pleasure and utility?

Still, in the spirit of accounting for what’s good about committed sexual exclusivity in terms of inclinations, one could avoid this issue by offering what we might call a hedonistic explanation:

committed sexual exclusivity is desirable because one finds it pleasant, satisfying, etc. to engage in such a relationship or unpleasant, unsatisfying, etc. not to. We might still ask why a person finds something in particular satisfying, but it's familiar enough that our satisfactions *may* be brute and unresponsive in this respect, and therefore may offer the full story about what someone sees as desirable about a particular course of action. For example, lying in the sun may be desirable simply because it feels pleasant.

But what exactly do those committing to sexual exclusivity find to be satisfying? Perhaps each finds it satisfying to have sex only with this one other person. This wouldn't, however, explain why it would be good to *commit* to have sex only with this person. It only explains why it's good to be sexually exclusive so long as one finds it satisfying to do so.

It might be said that what one finds satisfying is the commitment itself. At the outset, this seems like an odd candidate for a hedonistic explanation of sexual exclusivity. Unlike lying in the sun, about which the end of the justificatory story may be that it just is satisfying, commitments are ordinarily satisfying because we see that which is committed to as itself worthwhile (which would lead us back to the question of what is worthwhile about sexual exclusivity). But suppose one were to say: I just find such a commitment satisfying, not because there is anything worthwhile about it.

This response nevertheless fails because it lacks the resources to answer the question: Why is it good to give priority to one's present satisfactions over the satisfactions of the future? The requirement of commitment suggests that it's a real possibility that in the future, one may find it satisfying to have sex with someone else. Given that there's nothing worthwhile about the commitment apart from the satisfaction it brings, there's no reason to privilege the satisfaction one gains now (from committing) over the satisfaction that one would feel in the future from having sex with someone else. If we weigh such satisfactions against one another in terms of number, duration, intensity, etc., committing to sexual exclusivity may prove imprudent—a way of satisfying oneself now at a great cost in terms of future satisfactions. While it isn't impossible that such a hedonic calculation may speak in favor of a commitment of sexual exclusivity, simply finding the commitment satisfying now is no guarantee that it will.

A different approach that nevertheless appeals to inclinations is to claim that one finds it unsatisfying if one's partner has sex with anyone else. One's own commitment, on this view, is the price one must pay to secure the commitment of sexual exclusivity from one's partner. Sexual jealousy makes it good for partners to forgo opportunities for pleasure and utility through sex with others.

When jealousy is considered simply as an unpleasant feeling, the point is: to make the unpleasantness stop. (If the claim is, on the other hand, that jealousy is justified or reasonable in this case, then, once again, we need some explanation of why this is so that doesn't violate Normative Impotence.) One possibility for making the unpleasantness stop would be to make sure that one's partner doesn't do anything to make one jealous. A second strategy for making the unpleasantness go away would be to work on oneself so that one feels less jealous.

As for the first approach, wringing from one's partner a commitment to sexual exclusivity may not be a particularly effective way of making jealousy go away. One view to take of sexually exclusive relationships is that they are not an antidote to but a breeding ground for sexual jealousy. Othello's problem was not, after all, that Desdemona wasn't committed to sexual exclusivity.

As for the second strategy, McKeever points out,

Dealing with jealousy does seem, at least *prima facie*, more conducive to the good life: people who manage it get to have sex outside of their relationship and not feel jealous

when their partner does so; whereas those who have committed to [sexual exclusivity] do not have sex outside of their relationship and feel jealous at the thought of their partner doing so.

(2015: 7)

Derek McCullough and David Hall see sexual jealousy as founded in false beliefs. They remark, “Once you can get away from the ‘either/or’ polarity, and accept an ‘and/both’ approach ... many of the accompanying demons associated with jealousy will disappear” (2003). Dossie Easton and Janet Hardy discuss a number of techniques for dealing with jealousy. This commitment to self-cultivation has additional benefits: “Acquiring these skills takes practice, like meditation” and allows one to develop techniques that are “applicable to other difficult events, like job interviews and writing your resume” (2009: 125, 129). Given a hedonistic calculus, working through jealousy may also allow one to experience other satisfactions. Polyamorists report feeling the opposite of jealousy—compersion—described as

a feeling of joy when a loved one invests in and takes pleasure from another romantic or sexual relationship.... It is analogous to the feeling of joy a parent feels when their children marry, or that best friends feel for each other when they are happy in a relationship.

(<http://theinbetween.net/polyterms.html>)

From a hedonistic point of view, the ideal seems to be non-exclusivity without jealousy.

One might reply that sexual jealousy is impossible to overcome because it is so deeply rooted in our animal nature. Sociobiologists offer an evolutionary explanation of such jealousy: it has an important role to play in passing on our genes (see, for example, Buss (2000)). Yet research indicates⁹ that

jealousy is more manageable in [consensual non-monogamous] relationships and is experienced less noxiously. Despite the common belief that monogamy is a way to prevent feelings of jealousy, research has shown that levels of jealousy were actually *lower* for those in [consensual non-monogamous] relationships than in the monogamous sample.

(Conley et al. 2012: 130)

Even if there is an evolutionary story to tell about humans’ experience of sexual jealousy, it doesn’t follow that the most satisfying way to deal with this feeling is through committing to a sexually exclusive relationship.

Even if, contrary to existing research, committing to a sexually exclusive relationship were the most satisfying way to deal with sexual jealousy, this would, again, reveal such relationships to be merely a necessary evil. Consider an analogy: suppose two people were each made madly jealous whenever the other ate a meal with anyone else. These two might decide to enter into a relationship in which they took meals only with one another in order to avoid these bad feelings. This relationship might be morally permissible, but it would be a little sad. These two would be missing out on good food and important social and cultural events. They should be working on themselves, perhaps in therapy, to try to avoid these feelings. But if, at the end of the day, such bad feelings were to prove entirely intractable, their arrangement of mutual restriction would be an unfortunate concession to unpleasant psychological facts, not a cause for celebration.

Recall that one of the motivations for turning to our inclinations to show what was good about committed sexual exclusivity was to avoid conceiving of it as merely a necessary evil. This view, in the end, suffers from the same flaw. From the point of view of the person involved in the relationship it would amount to saying to the beloved: it's rather a shame that we can't have sex with anyone else, but given the miserable sort of creatures we are, we're stuck with that. Speaking as a lover in a sexually exclusive relationship, I wouldn't say that. Sexual exclusivity isn't like a painful treatment to ameliorate the even more unpleasant effects of a mutually contracted and incurable disease. As I mentioned before, sexual exclusivity can be experienced positively, as itself deepening and enriching the relationship.

Third Purported Solution: Sexual Exclusivity as Valuable for Its Own Sake

The third way to account for what is good about a committed sexually exclusive relationship seems most promising in light of the phenomenon: to show that such a relationship is valuable in itself in a way that is consistent with Normative Impotence.

McKeever offers one such account. On her view, sharing sex exclusively is a way "to affirm the uniqueness and importance of the relationship" and a way to make "the relationship distinct and special" (2015: 9). This explanation appeals to the general principle that, "Committing to sharing an activity exclusively can be a clear way to show that the relationship is distinct and special" (2015: 9) and the further general principle that insofar as a relationship is distinctive, it is good.¹⁰

This argument faces two problems. First, distinctiveness isn't obviously a distinction when it comes to relationships. Some ways in which a relationship is unique or mark the partners as special for one another may be bad. Consider again the case of the couple who refuses to take meals with anyone else. Such a relationship is distinctive. Each one is marked out for the other as that single, special person with whom one takes meals. But in this case such exclusivity doesn't constitute a source of value not shared by the relationship of a less eccentric pair of friends.

A second related problem is that for many, the fact that it is *sex* that is exclusive rather than, say, board games is important for the way that they value the relationship. Many would balk at the idea that they could, without difference or remainder, open their relationship sexually so long as they were to close it board-game wise. The explanation in terms of such a general principle does not, therefore, accurately capture the way in which these relationships can be valuable.

One might respond that while it is true, in principle, that any activity that a couple chooses to engage in exclusively with one another could express and contribute to the meaningfulness of the relationship, sex happens to be a particularly good and therefore intelligible choice to perform these roles. McKeever suggests that sex has three features that lend it special suitability in this respect: that it is pleasant, intimate, and gives the couple the sense of being united (2015: 9). But these three properties hardly single out sex as especially appropriate. Team-building firms are expert at developing activities that are pleasant, intimate, and give people a sense of being united with one another. Participating in ropes courses exclusively with one another would be, on this explanation, equally as intelligible as exclusive sex. This account therefore doesn't explain the value that many couples place on *sexual* exclusivity.

A Successful Solution: The Value of Sexually Exclusive Love as *Sui Generis*

In arguing by elimination, I haven't shown conclusively that there is no solution to the puzzle of committed sexual exclusivity that doesn't violate Normative Impotence, but I hope to have

demonstrated that the most common attempts at such a solution fail.¹¹ One possibility at this point would be to insist that committed sexually exclusive relationships are not in fact valuable at all, or that, if they are, they are only instrumentally so. But this isn't the only option.

The alternative is to reject Normative Impotence. If we do so, there is no longer any barrier to attributing a *sui generis* normativity to sex: sex is such that when a couple decides to engage in it exclusively with one another, this way of relating can be valuable for its own sake. I suggest that this is the best way to deal with the puzzle of committed sexual exclusivity. I'll call this way of relating to one another, when all goes well, *sexually exclusive love*. By "sexually exclusive love" I don't mean to pick out a feeling, but a particular sort of valuable relationship. If my arguments against other solutions to the puzzle have been persuasive, it's likely because the value of such relationships is to many, even those who aren't involved in such a relationship and do not wish to be, apparent enough.

If sexually exclusive love possesses a *sui generis* value, this can explain what truth might lie in the various arguments above. When it comes to intimacy, why, after all, should sex be any more intimate than a massage, dental visit, or proctological examination where one maintains a business-like detachment? And why, after all, should sex be the site of special jealousies? Why might such a commitment provide ongoing satisfaction? These phenomena make sense in light of the rejection of Normative Impotence. One reason that sex is potentially quite intimate is because it has the capacity to found sexually exclusive love, a particularly intimate sort of relationship. Similarly, one may feel jealous when one hopes for that valuable sort of relationship—sexually exclusive love—but is disappointed. And one may find ongoing satisfaction in such a relationship in light of the worthwhileness of engaging in it. Perhaps the sorts of arguments that I have considered and rejected, those that attempt to salvage Normative Impotence, get the order of explanation wrong. The normative significance of sex underwrites its special potential for intimacy, jealousy and satisfaction; intimacy, jealousy, satisfaction and the like cannot ground the normative significance of sex.

In conclusion, I've suggested that we ought to reject Normative Impotence and embrace the idea that committed sexually exclusive relationships have a value that one must appreciate on its own terms if one is to appreciate it at all. The point of a committed sexually exclusive relationship, what makes it worthwhile in spite of the fact that it involves missed opportunities for pleasure and utility, is that very relationship itself, sexually exclusive love.

This solution, however, may raise another question: Why should Normative Impotence turn out to be false? For the theorist seeking a systematic ethical account, the rejection of Normative Impotence poses a further problem. How can a general ethical account *explain* the fact that sex has normative significance *qua* sex?

Does such a normative judgment about the *sui generis* value of committed sexually exclusive relationships just appear out of nowhere, so to speak—a brute part of the fabric of the universe? Can it be a coincidence that, on the one hand, sex appears as a singularity that bends normative light and, on the other hand, that humans are living beings that reproduce sexually?

As biological beings, sex has for us *some* connection to the reproduction of human life. Moreover, as cultural beings, the value we place on sexually exclusive love is bound up with the significance that such relationships can have in our culture. Elaborating these two points into a successful explanation of the value of sexually exclusive love is a difficult task. But it is an enterprise that normative theory should undertake. Normative theory cannot rest easy with the articulation of general principles that leave no room for the special ethical role that sex plays in our lives. Such a normative theory must be equipped to grapple with difficult questions about the relation of ethics to both biology and culture.

Notes

- 1 I am indebted to audiences at the University of Patras conference “Ethical and Political Intentionality” and the University of Georgia for discussions of drafts of this chapter. I’m also grateful to Stina Bäckström, Agnes Callard, Kyla Ebels-Duggan, Dan Groll, Kelly Jolley, Micah Lott, Adrienne Martin, Guy Rohrbaugh and Kieran Setiya for very helpful comments. As ever, I owe Tom Lockhart for countless conversations and help along the way.
- 2 I borrow these phrases from Simon Cabulea May (2016: 11) and Ralph Wedgwood (2016: 45) respectively who use them in the context of discussing marriage and liberalism.
- 3 Meston and Buss (2007) report 237 reasons that participants in their study gave for having sex.
- 4 For explorations of related questions see Weaver (2008) and McKeever (2015).
- 5 Although such a solution might rely on concepts that have peculiar application within the domain of sex, normative claims about the sexual domain should be a matter of instantiating general normative principles using these concepts.
- 6 See Conley et al. (2012). For a discussion of the effects of polyamorous relationships on children see Sheff (2013).
- 7 McKeever (2015) considers a similar argument.
- 8 Also see Mitchell et al. (2014).
- 9 Again, even if one harbors skepticism about these studies, the burden of demonstrating the empirical claim, that jealousy is more manageable in sexually exclusive relationships, has not been met.
- 10 McKeever gives other reasons that distinctiveness is good for a relationship. She claims that such distinctiveness also helps to define and maintain a relationship and may have other benefits as well such as letting people know what their obligations to the other person are. For my purposes here, I put these instrumental arguments to one side and focus on the claim that such a relationship is valuable for its own sake (2015: 9).
- 11 I haven’t addressed, for instance, the proposal of Weaver and Wollard (2008).

References

- Buss, David M. (2000). *The Dangerous Passion: Why Jealousy Is as Necessary as Love and Sex*. New York: Free Press.
- Conley, Terri D., Ziegler, A., Moors, Amy C., Matsick, Jes L. and Valentine, B. (2012). “A Critical Examination of Popular Assumptions About the Benefits and Outcomes of Monogamous Relationships,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 17(2), 124–141.
- Easton, Dossie and Hardy, J.W. (2009). *The Ethical Slut: A Practical Guide to Polyamory, Open Relationships and Other Adventures*. New York: Celestial Arts.
- Goldman, Alan (1977). “Plain Sex,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 6(3), 267–287.
- Lewis, C.S. (1971). *The Four Loves*. Boston, MA: Mariner Books.
- May, Simon Cabulea (2016). “Liberal Neutrality and Civil Marriage.” In E. Brake (Ed.), *After Marriage*, chapter 1, pp. 9–28. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McCullough, Derek and Hall, D.S. (2003). “Polyamory—What It Is and What It Isn’t,” *Electronic Journal of Human Sexuality* 6.
- McKeever, Natasha (2015). “Is the Requirement of Sexual Exclusivity Consistent with Romantic Love?,” *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 1–17.
- Meston, Cindy M. and Buss, D.M. (2007). “Why Humans Have Sex,” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 36, 477–507.
- Mitchell, Melissa E., Bartholomew, K. and Cobb, R.J. (2014). “Need Fulfillment in Polyamorous Relationships,” *Journal of Sex Research* 51(3), 329–339.
- Overall, Christine (1998). “Monogamy, Nonmonogamy, and Identity,” *Hypatia* 13(4), 1–17.
- Scanlon, T.M. (2014). *Being Realistic about Reasons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sheff, Elizabeth (2013). *The Polyamorists Next Door*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Weaver, Bryan R. and Wollard, F. (2008). “Marriage and the Norm of Monogamy,” *The Monist* 91(3&4), 506–522.
- Wedgwood, Ralph (2016). “Is Civil Marriage Illiberal?” In E. Brake (Ed.), *After Marriage*, chapter 2, pp. 29–50. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

8

QUEER BODIES AND QUEER LOVE

Maren Behrens

In this chapter, I contend that while we have understood how the *queer body* can be desired, we have not yet understood how *queer persons* can be loved. If we assume (as I will do for now) that romantic love is intrinsically connected to sexual desire,¹ that one of its salient features (and perhaps *the* salient feature) is erotic attraction to *embodied persons*, that all bodies must be gendered bodies, and that embodiment presupposes gender, then queer love is either nothing more than depersonalized desire or it is disembodied love with no intrinsic connection to sexual desire. On either horn of this dilemma, queer love as romantic love seems impossible. While I do believe that queer love as romantic love is, in fact, possible, I do not intend to solve this dilemma here. My point is to describe a philosophical problem. This problem description will be embedded in a broader concern about the assimilation of gay, monogamous love into the romantic mainstream and the resulting internal divisions of queer liberation as a political movement; divisions that occur especially between gays and lesbians on the one side, and gender-queer, trans, and intersex persons on the other.

In terms of its political history, the queer liberation movement could be described as an uneasy coalition of two strands: rebellion and resistance to the societal mainstream on one side and adaptation and assimilation on the other (cf. Walter 2012, 163–172). The Stonewall riots in New York in June 1969 can count as a paradigmatic instance of the rebellious strand. The protests were driven by resistance against police brutality and legal marginalization, and its most vocal figureheads were not cisgender gays, but transgender women of color like Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson. Stonewall was not merely a gay rights protest, it was a queer riot, spearheaded by some of the most marginalized people within New York's queer community. Only later was *gay pride* as a political statement adopted and taken over by mostly white, mostly middle-class gays. (It is a historical irony worth noting that the by now highly commercialized and depoliticized gay pride parades in Germany are called *Christopher Street Day*, after the street which the Stonewall Inn faced.)

In contrast to the riotous origins of queer liberation, the last decade of gay rights activism in North America, Australia, and Northern, Central, and Western Europe has been dominated by politics of adaptation and assimilation. Same-sex marriage has been and in many places still is at the top of the political agenda, and activists tend to emphasize the *formal equality* of gay and straight coupledom, often at the expense of intersectional concerns with racial strife and poverty—that is, concerns with *material inequalities*. As Frank Walter puts it in his study of the legal history

of gay rights activism in the United States: “the gay rights movement will have failed if it simply achieves equality in the midst of a society marred by poverty, deep economic inequality and inadequate education and health care” (Walter 2012, 172; see also Stewart-Winter 2015). To put the point very bluntly: The formal legal right to marry a partner of the same sex does not protect a queer person of color from racial discrimination in their workplace, nor does it protect transgender youth from homelessness and violence.²

Adaptivist and assimilationist activism has tended to alienate parts of the queer community that find themselves in deliberate or imposed opposition to the societal mainstream, in particular to the ideology of romantic coupledness (Cobb 2015). A striking example of this alienation is Ivan Coyote’s spoken-word piece *A Butch Roadmap* which begins with an acerbic commentary on the notion of “family-friendly” pride parades that seek to exclude the “drag queens and butches ... that started the whole fucking thing.”

Anti-assimilationist queers embody a more radical stance in the tradition of the Stonewall riots; a radical stance that emphasizes *difference*. Queerness is here construed as otherness, as not being part of the straight mainstream. And so the difference between the rebellious and the assimilationist paradigm can even be described as the difference between queerness and gayness: While the root of queerness is otherness, gayness is likeness; loving and longing just like one’s straight counterparts: *Same Love*, as the title of Macklemore’s cheesy song says, and as the red and pink equality sign that was made iconic by the Human Rights Campaign’s lobbying for same-sex marriage suggests.

This admittedly rough historical sketch gives me the means to redescribe the thesis statement I began with: There is *gay love* (which is ostensibly just like straight love) and there is *queer desire*; and we do not have the conceptual apparatus (yet) to bring the two together in a unified concept of queer romantic love. The queer body is caught in between: It is desirable, but not lovable; at least not if we presuppose the sameness of straight and gay love. If romantic love is necessarily love for embodied persons, then persons whose status as persons is fragile because of their queer bodies might not be lovable romantically.

Before I begin with the argument proper, a quick note on the conceptual difference between gay and queer that I propose here: I am fully aware that my presuppositions imply that some gays may not be queer, and that some stereotypically straight people, for instance those in poly-amorous relationship arrangements, could be queer. I do not think that these implications speak against the conceptual distinction I draw here; rather, I think that they support my point. If there is indeed a difference in kind between gayness and queerness, then it should not be surprising that queerness may be more than just a subset of gayness.

The Queer Body

What do I mean by a queer body, then? I mean, roughly, a body that does not conform to normative expectations of beauty, (potentially reproductive) heterosexuality, and binary sexual identifiability. Paradigmatic instances of queer bodies would be trans women with penises, trans men with fully functional vaginas and uteruses, bodies in various stages of social, surgical, and hormonal transition, and sexually ambiguous bodies (i.e., “hermaphroditic”³ bodies).

Queer bodies have been construed as abject, abnormal, and monstrous: by doctors (Feder 2011), by pundits; even by queer theorists and (too) often by those who live in and with these bodies (for just one example from a growing body of scholarly literature, see Karkazis 2008; I will return to the motif of self-abjection below). Queer bodies are not easily assimilated to the paradigm of same love, for they do not fit the classical framing of sexuality in terms of homo-, hetero-, and bisexuality. Queer bodies by virtue of their sheer existence put the stability of these categories in doubt.

I want to resist the tendency, however, to frame this resistance to categorization in terms of the (fashionably) monstrous or the (hiply) androgynous. Monsters have become a very fashionable topic in queer theory in recent years (for a recent example, see Holman, Jones, and Harris 2016); and it is not difficult to see the appeal of the monster for queers, as a mythical creature, the self-made outsider, marginalized and despised, but at the same time freed from social convention. Yet the monstrous is a category that typically operates within (and against) established concepts of gender and sexual identity—whereas the queer bodies I am interested in defy categorization.⁴

Similar concerns apply to the concept of androgyny, especially androgyny in high fashion. Most androgyny in this business does not trade in defiance of sexual categories and strict resistance to gendered codings; rather, it appears as classic femininity, either projected onto male bodies (as with Andrej Pejic and Stav Shashko) or contrasted with (partly) masculine-coded clothes and make-up (as with Freja Beha, Ruby Rose, and Saskia de Brauw). In either case, this androgyny does not seem an act of resistance, as it is a deliberate play with categories in an enormously segregated and privileged segment of society.

Neither the playful androgyny of high fashion nor the scholarly interest in the monstrous capture my concern here. The queer bodies that I am interested in are those that are truly unreadable and confusing (even to their “owners”): bodies which in virtue of their unreadability seem unfit for desire and love. In this regard, my concern with queer bodies intersects with a particular strand of crip theory: thinking about how bodies that seem beyond romantic love and sexual desire can and do express an active sexuality (see, for instance, Smith Reiner 2011). Like the crip activists who declare that they, too, are sexual beings, those with queer bodies can overcome their shame and learn that they are both romantic agents and sexually desirable. But framing the issue in this way brings us back to the conceptual dilemma I began with: When we talk about desire for queer bodies, does that actually include the potential for love? The person who lives in and with the queer body, are they loved and desired *because of* or *in spite of* their bodily queerness?

Explanations for how queer bodies can come to be sexually desired are readily available. The crudest imaginations of such desires are pornographic: we can find them in “she-male” and hermaphrodite porn, or in amputee porn. The pornographic motif of the sexual freak has also been reproduced in mainstream entertainment, for instance in Season 4 of the television series *American Horror Story*, which is set in the early 1950s and portrays one of the last American freak shows and their stay in a small town in Florida. But porn and television are meant to provide (sexual) entertainment; they do not aspire to be a realistic portrayal of love. So what happens to the freaks after porn?

The varieties of porn (and entertainment) mentioned above “work” because they sexualize otherness. But in sexualizing otherness, they necessarily disregard the person and display only queer aspects of human physiology. If “freak porn” showed its actors as persons, it would stop being sexually exciting (although it might become aesthetically exciting; *American Horror Story* is a special case in that it navigates the borderlands between the sexually and the aesthetically titillating, between displaying its characters as objects of lust and ridicule and as subjects of their own fate). The difference of queer bodies reveals itself in particular body parts; and, arguably, it is one of the essential features of porn that it puts particular body parts on display without regard for the whole body or the entire person.

The pornographic mode of presenting queer bodies illustrates why these bodies are so precariously located between the possibility of desire and the seeming impossibility of love, and why they are in this way different from the “fashionable monstrosity” and the “hip androgyny” I briefly discussed above. Any discussion of sexual desire and queer bodies will sooner or later

become a conversation about bodily differences, about the particular things these bodies have or do not have, can or cannot do sexually. At any such point, there is a risk that this conversation turns into a depersonalizing moment; either in the form of rejection from a potential romantic partner, or (perhaps more common) in the form of internalized shame, as the worry that one cannot be desirable and lovable at the same time.

Queer Shame and Self-Love as Therapy

The issue of internalized shame has been salient in the testimonial literature produced by intersex activists over the last couple of decades. In one of the earliest publications of this kind (a blend of testimonial and scholarly texts), *Intersex in the Age of Ethics*, Tamara Alexander writes this about her experience with her intersexual partner's struggle with suicidal depression (1999, 108):

Each time she [contacted other intersex people] she would feel a little less alone, and a little more hopeful. And then the depression would creep back, telling her to give up. Telling her she would never be whole, would never be accepted, would never be anything but a shameful secret. As many times as I had learned in that first precious year together that love is an amazing healer, I had still to learn that sometimes shame and blatant evil can be stronger. I might love her with all my heart, but that was one small glow against the bitterness and dark of the rest of her experiences.

While Alexander's testimony ends on a hopeful note, the point she makes in this extended quote casts doubt on the notion that the shame and the silence (and the bodily scars) inflicted by the social, legal, and medical sexing of people as either men or women can be healed by the love of another person alone. We might consider this shame a particular kind of queer shame; a suffering from falling outside established, normalizing categories, from being unrecognizable (even to oneself), and from being unique in a profoundly isolating manner. It is a shame that comes, in the broadest possible meaning, from the pain of being different.

This shame is not limited to intersex people; closeted gays and lesbians may suffer from it as well as transgender persons who are not yet ready to disclose their trans identities to others or to themselves (on the queer connection between intersex, trans, and gay identities, see Behrens 2012). This shame is essentially the feeling that one is worthless, ugly, and unlovable, *because* one is different; and where this shame coincides with or triggers depression, affirmations that one is loved *for* one's differences might simply not be enough of a remedy.

For our present discussion of queer desire and love, this raises the question of whether it is really love for others (and being loved by others) that is the core issue, and not rather the problem of self-love. It is a classical trope in psychotherapy to insist that the ability to love and be loved depends on self-acceptance. Applied to persons with queer bodies, this might imply that only the ability to see one's own body as desirable and lovable can overcome queer shame. In the volume I cited above, there is another testimonial that traces this route; Martha Coventry (1999) describes how she came to accept her identity as an intersexual lesbian by being intimate with herself and exploring her own body.

This motif is also at the narrative core of the queer cult movie (and punk rock musical) *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. The main character Hedwig is introduced in the first two songs of the movie-musical ("Tear Me Down," "Angry Inch") as both the victim of a "botched sex-change operation" in Eastern Germany and a defiantly and proudly American queer punk rocker. In the movie's spoken-word passages, Hedwig ponders their search for love; the search

for their “other half” (an obvious reference to Aristophanes’ speech in Plato’s *Symposium*). This search leads Hedwig through three ultimately unhappy love affairs with three very different men, and the narrative katharsis offered in the final act of the story is one of self-love rather than romance: Stripped of their drag and naked, Hedwig walks out of a club and onto the street, alone into the night. Matthew Henry notes in his exegesis of the movie: “The mythological search for another is rendered false, and the film becomes a tale of self-acceptance, self-identification, and self-actualization” (Henry 2016, 73). What prevented Hedwig from finding love, it seems, was not their queer body and their queer history, but the fact that they could not see themselves as *already complete* in their exquisite blend of masculine and feminine qualities.

Queer pride generally can be read as a Hedwig-style antidote to queer shame. Wherever queers come out of the closet, they show acceptance for themselves and so allow themselves to become part of a larger community. From this perspective, queer self-love and non-sexual kinship might be much more important (politically and individually) than sexual and romantic love. As Kath Weston argues in her study *Chosen Families*, distinguishing between “just friends” and “more than friends” and integrating non-sexual or post-sexual friendships into a queer model of kinship may have been what helped the gay and lesbian communities emerge as *communities* with social and political leverage (Weston 1991, 116–122). What one might suggest then, following Weston, is that while gay and lesbian identity is frequently coded as primarily sexual, this coding may well overstate the importance of sex and romance. If we accept a non-sexual model of queer kinship, we could solve our initial problem rather elegantly: If we claim that *gay communities* are primarily about kinship and only in the second instance about sex and desire, we circumvent the need to explain whether there can be queer love that incorporates sexual desire (that is, queer love in the sense I suggested above). The fulfillment of sexual desire becomes no more than an addition to the psycho-social good of being part of a gay or queer community. This is a position that has actually been adopted by parts of the queer community, partly as a response to social prejudices that portrayed gays (and to a lesser extent, lesbians) as hypersexualized and promiscuous. Rothblum and Brehony (1993) explicitly advocated a non-sexual model for lesbian companionship in their book *Boston Marriages*; and recent research on asexuality (Bogaert 2015) shows that a significant portion of asexuals do *not* also define themselves as aromantics—while they do not desire sexual contact with another person, they feel romantic attraction and can identify this attraction as “straight,” “gay,” or “bi.” Hence, Bogaert (2015, 385) warns that “it is important to make a distinction between romantic attraction ... and sexual attraction.”

On such a view, desire and love can co-exist, but they remain fundamentally different things—as with asexuals in romantic relationships or lesbians in “Boston marriages.” Returning to the theme of queer shame, on a psycho-social level, it might well be the separation of romance and sex that can help overcome this shame—in the sense that, for instance, a young gay man realizes that his queerness is not all about sex, but that it can be about self-respect and belonging. For this young man, the most important “achievement” might not be to love and be loved by another, but to embrace himself through queer pride (we will see below that Roger Scruton’s reading of Plato’s *Symposium* yields interesting parallels to this interpretation).

So there might be some good reasons to accept a view that reduces queer love to self-love (and the overcoming of queer shame). Yet I already indicated above that this amounts to an evasion of rather than a solution to my initial question. If we relegate romantic love and sexual desire to different realms of human experience, then we will not be able to explain queer sexual love—and we will not do justice to the experience of queers who experience their romantic relationships as inseparable from sexual attraction and desire.

Platonic Love and the Myth of the Other Half

One particularly persistent myth and constitutive trope of the Western ideology of romantic love is the myth of “the other half.” At the core of this myth is the notion that in romantic and sexual union, two separate persons become one and complete one another (Nozick 1989; Delaney 1996). We can find examples of this myth in ancient religious mythologies as well as in contemporary pop culture. Its philosophical roots in the Western tradition are commonly traced back to Aristophanes’ speech in Plato’s *Symposium*: human beings used to be four-legged, four-armed, and two-headed creatures until they were split in half by the fearful and vengeful gods; and ever since then, they are looking for their lost half (Plato 1993: 189c–193e; as already mentioned, this myth is also a central theme of the movie *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, where the song “The Origin of Love” directly references Aristophanes’ speech).

The myth of sexual and romantic union endures both in common-sense conceptions of romantic love and in Christian and especially Catholic teachings on sexuality and the sacrament of marriage. According to Catholic doctrine, morally sanctioned sexuality must be an expression both of love for the other person and of potential reproduction. Proper love is the union of two *persons*, man and woman, in marriage, and not simply the sexual union of two bodies. In the words of Pope Francis in the exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (AL 13):

The result of this union is that [man and woman] “become one flesh,” both physically and in the union of their hearts and lives, and, eventually, in a child, who will share not only genetically but also spiritually in the “flesh” of both parents.

The notion that man and woman are “one flesh” occurs in the Biblical story of creation, interestingly with rather different connotations at different points. In Genesis 1, God appears as the androgynous origin of gendered personhood: “So God created mankind in his image, ... male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27). Both are created as God’s likeness, simultaneously, and thus as equals. In Genesis 2 (and the Epistle to the Ephesians in the New Testament), however, Adam is created first—and here, man and woman are one flesh in the sense that Eve is created from Adam’s rib (Gen 2:24) as his companion and servant (Eph 5:22–24). The tension between the two accounts has an indirect connection to the Platonic myth of the other half, through the Hellenic-Jewish mystic Philo of Alexandria. “Borrowing from Plato, Philo argues that in the beginning, before Eve was taken out of Adam, the original man was bisexual or androgynous, with the two halves (male and female) perfectly united in to one” (Villeneuve 2016, 105).

But the unification of man and woman in Christian marriage is not just a *re*-unification (as in Aristophanes’ speech) but also a “sign of how much Christ loved his Church in the covenant sealed on the cross” (AL 73) and the only union that “has a plenary role to play in society as a stable commitment that bears fruit in new life” (AL 52). Aristophanes’ speech and the Catholic teaching on marriage share the imagery of a union “in the flesh,” but the Catholic concept of this union insists on its spiritual dimension (as a symbol of God’s love for humanity) as well as its socio-biological dimension (as a potentially reproductive union) and therefore remains closed to same-sex couples.

We could also describe this as an insistence on the transcendent character of sexual love: through its spiritual and socio-biological dimension, morally licit sexuality overcomes the immediacy and the transience of physical touch and carnal desire. This emphasis on transcendence in Catholic teaching bears similarities to Kant’s sexual ethics (in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant 1996: §§24–27), and to reflections from contemporary sexual conservatives, such as John Finnis (1997) or Roger Scruton (1986). However, Scruton, in his voluminous study *Sexual*

Desire, rejects a central assumption of the Platonic, the Catholic, and the Kantian position, namely that sexual desire, in order to become the basis of a human good, needs to be morally ennobled by love.

In the *Symposium*, Plato lets Socrates give an account of Eros (which Socrates presents as having learned from the philosopher-priestess Diotima; Plato 1993: 201d–212a) that differs sharply from the praises of sexual desire by those who spoke before him. For Socrates, desire is merely a base instinct, and the point of the erotic, and thus the point of love, is to transcend it in an appreciation of beauty (Scruton 1986: 216–217). Kant’s position is similar in that he insists that sex is morally adequate only in marriage, since marriage is a legal bond that sanctions the mutual use of one another’s genitals for pleasure and procreation. Any form of non-marital and non-procreative sex amounts to the mere use of another’s body for pleasure and is thus unnatural and immoral (Kant 1996: § 24). Similarly, the Catholic Church insists that “sexuality is not a means of gratification or entertainment” and must respect the “sacred and inviolable dignity” of the sexual partner (AL 151).

Scruton rejects the Catholic position as too focused on the biological nature of the sex act, and he rejects the Platonic position for denying an intrinsic connection between sexual desire and romantic love (1986: 251–253). He defends a conservatism that insists on a moral connection between sexual union and love, but he denies that this connection is grounded in the biological features of reproduction. Rather, he suggests that it is the difference and the complementarity of the sexes that gives sexual union its specific moral meaning (Scruton 1986: 265–268). While he does not condemn homosexuality as outright immoral, he does raise the question of whether homosexual desire, in its supposed focus on sameness rather than difference, is intrinsically deficient (Scruton 1986: 310–311).

Despite Scruton’s criticism of biologicistic accounts of desire and love, his central notion of sexual desire as arising from difference is structurally similar to the Catholic dictum that homosexual desire and homosexual intercourse are sinful because of their intrinsic infertility. In both cases the unification of differences is presented as the moral benchmark of sexual desire and erotic love; and in both cases, the myth of the other half (truly *another* half) resonates.

Today, the myth of the other half has been appropriated by gays, lesbians, and their allies, and it has been used against conservative and religious doctrines that portrayed gay love as “inverted,” “barren,” or “perverse.” Against Catholic doctrine, gays and lesbians have argued that it is inconsistent to make the fertility of a sexual union the benchmark of its moral status; for if fertility were indicative of moral status, the church should not sanction, for instance, infertile heterosexual marriages (Koppelman 2008). Against Scruton’s version of the myth of the other half, it can be argued that he mistakes sexual difference for the only relevant kind of difference that can add an erotic and romantic dynamic to a sexual encounter. Even if Scruton were right to claim that difference is a necessary element of fully moral sexuality, it is difficult to see why this would necessarily exclude gays and lesbians. As Kath Weston notes in her study on queer kinship, *Families We Choose*: “The assumption that gender identity will be the primary *subjective* identity for every lesbian or gay man, universally and without respect to context, remains just that: an assumption” (Weston 1991, 143–144). If we let go of the idea that erotic and romantic complementarity can be expressed only through sexual difference, and adopt instead the view that there are many other ways in which personal differences could give rise to this complementarity, then we can fairly easily assimilate gay and lesbian love into the framework of love as transcendence of difference.

But this assimilation of gay and lesbian love into the “mainstream” myth of the other half does not yet offer a solution for our initial problem. If we want an account of queer desire that can be integrated in an account of romantic love *for persons*, we need to ask whether and to what

extent the category of personhood itself is sexed and might prevent the “translation” of sexual desire for queer bodies into love for queer persons. This leads us to another aspect of Scruton’s argument that is not as easily refuted or adapted to a queer framework as the notion of complementarity. For Scruton, *embodiment* is an essential aspect of personhood; we cannot and should not think of personhood as something that can be detached from our bodies (on this point, see also Thomas Nagel’s classic account of sexual perversion, 1969). But it seems that our bodies are necessarily gendered and that, thus, having a gender is a condition for personhood. Now gays and lesbians quite clearly have a gender, or as Scruton rather crudely puts it: “The ‘homo’ or ‘hetero’ element is *imposed* by our divisions of gender, and cannot be made intelligible independently” (1986: 257). But if he is right about this, then what about queers with “unintelligible” bodies?

Sex and Personhood

A part of Scruton’s analysis deals with what he terms “Kantian feminism” (Scruton 1986: 258–260). While I doubt that this label is more than a caricature of liberal feminism (although it has some interesting parallels to David Velleman’s Kantian account of love, 1999), the core ideas he ascribes to this position are illuminating in their own right. Scruton suggests that “Kantian feminists” have a philosophical and political agenda that seeks to completely decouple gender from personhood. What should matter morally, says the “Kantian feminist,” is someone’s personality—their skills, their moral convictions, their integrity—and not their gender; and they suggest that we can perceive this personality without reference to gender. In contrast, Scruton argues that persons are *embodied* entities and that as persons, they must be either women or men.

We could of course dismiss this argument simply by pointing to genderqueer and intersex persons who do not identify (and are not easily identifiable) as either men or women and who prefer gender-neutral pronouns, where those are available. (Scruton might dismiss such a view by claiming that these people are merely tragic deviations from the norm.) But there is more to Scruton’s idea if we strip it of its conservative condescension. The point that persons are necessarily embodied, and that their personhood and agency cannot be understood apart from their embodiedness, has been raised by progressive thinkers. Anti-sexist and anti-racist agendas frequently emphasize that it would do injustice to women or to Blacks to say that they are persons *just like* everyone else (including those who benefit from the structures that marginalize their identities). The liberal stance would suggest that we should focus on what is purely and generally human about oppressed people; but many advocates of oppressed people have been saying for a long time now that we cannot understand oppression by talking about it in the most general terms. Instead, we need to understand it by talking about what it means specifically to be a woman, or Black, or gay.

Social identities exist within a web of social structures and cultural meanings. These structures and meanings are also constitutive elements of personal identities: for better or for worse, they influence who one is (becoming) as an individual. Social identity categories also act as norms, and limit the range of options that are open to each individual. And while we might wish that we could free all of us from the social norms that constrain us, it is nevertheless important to pay attention to how these norms continue to shape us as persons.

Consider how much attention is being paid—both in private and in official contexts—to ensuring that people are properly gendered: from pink and blue clothing for infants, to telling children that their behavior is inappropriate “for girls” or “for boys,” to hostility to persons (or their caretakers) whose gender is not immediately or easily recognizable, to political mobilization and violence against trans persons. Indeed, in the vast majority of legal and administrative

contexts, it is impossible to record a person's existence without recording their gender—which is exactly why political moves to allow some forms of non-gendered identification on birth certificates or passports tend to attract significant media attention.

Within such structures, it makes sense to say that personhood is tied to gender (even if we preferred the structures to be such that this would not matter). It does not make sense to seek to understand personhood as something that exists outside these social structures; and whether these structures are oppressive or liberating, the social practice of treating oneself and others like persons can only be understood *within* them.

Now what does this view imply for persons with queer bodies? We could of course introduce new genders (perhaps along the lines of the recent Facebook initiative that offered several dozen new sexual identity designations). But this would only count as an option for those who actually identify as a more or less stable third gender outside the traditional binary and who can make this gender *understood* in their social environment. Those who “fall through the cracks” by not having access to a social structure that recognizes alternative genders, or those who cannot be tied to one alternative category, would then still lack personhood. So while we could attempt to do justice to sexual ambiguity by proliferating identity categories, this would not chip away at the link between sex, gender, and personhood.

Eventually, a proliferation tactic will also run into practical and philosophical limits: If we consider sexual differences as a multi-axis spectrum rather than a dimorphic structure, as philosophers of biology like Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) have suggested, it will be either practically impossible or entirely arbitrary to name fixed “identity ranges.” (One medical model that tried to do this and arguably failed was the attempt to classify disorders of sexual development as male and female pseudo-hermaphroditism, and true hermaphroditism.) Queer bodies in virtue of their variety will resist being pinned down on a spectrum, and thus also resist being “personalized” via assigning alternative sex categories to them. Hence, if we accept the idea that sexual desire and love come together through seeing the desired and loved one as a *sexed* person, we face a dilemma: Queer love that is more than fetishism seems impossible.

Fetishism and the Dangers of Depersonalization

Fetishism typically means the attachment of sexual desire to lifeless objects, such as shoes or panties. As such, it is widely considered a sexual perversion; that is, a pathological misdirection of sexual desire. The meaning I intend here, however, is that of the sexualization of specific body parts (such as in a foot fetish). Along these lines, we *might* conceptualize a straight man's desire for non-op or pre-op trans women as a kind of fetishism.⁵ Perhaps what he is drawn to is the idea of a penis on a woman; and not just this woman, but any trans woman in the same category will do. Such a man's desire would be simultaneously fetishizing (in that it makes a body part into an object of desire) and depersonalizing (in that anyone with the “right” constellation of body parts will do). The refusal to see the trans person *as a person* is part and parcel of this fetishism.

This moral concern regarding a tendency to fetishize can be expanded to all queer bodies: Every body that resists being assigned to a sex or gender category is at risk of being no more than the object of fetishistic desire, if the person inhabiting the body is not intelligible as a *sexed person*. As I already suggested above, this fetishistic attitude is expressed nowhere more clearly than in porn, and particularly in “freak porn” that caters to specific fantasies. This fetishizing attitude goes far beyond queer porn, of course: So-called “she-male” porn caters predominantly to straight men; and there are all kinds of fetishistic straight porn featuring ATM, BBWs, big cocks, pregnant women, diaper sex, and so on, and so on. I do not mean to imply that all porn

is by necessity fetishistic or that all fetishizing porn is morally objectionable (indeed, I have no interest in the question of whether fetishism as such is morally objectionable; see also Nagel's hesitant remarks on the *moral* status of perversions: 1969, 16–17). Rather, I am using porn as an illustration of the conceptual gap I am diagnosing: If porn is fetishistic, there can be desire in porn (acted and projected, or even genuine) but there cannot be any love. Indeed, what porn aims for—as a product designed to sexually stimulate its consumers—is to portray desire, but not love (although one might argue that genres like “female-friendly,” feminist porn or written porn use the portrayal of love as a means to convey sexual desire).

Now if desire for queer bodies were merely fetishistic, then this would seem to exclude the possibility of love. This desire would then be relegated to an inferior level of the erotic. The alternative to this exclusionary view would then be the Platonic strategy that Scruton discusses and eventually dismisses: to decouple love from desire, and treat the two as entirely independent phenomena. On this view, desire for a queer body might *co-exist* with love for the person inhabiting the body; but at best, this would yield no more than the therapeutic, self-centered account of queer love I discussed above. Under this account, it is unclear what the object of queer love would be, other than a *general* feature, namely that of membership in a particular community. This account can make no sense of the individualizing character of romantic love.

The idea that love can take on a disembodied and general form is of course venerable; and it can arguably find noble expression in love for a deity or love for humankind. Contemporary philosophers, most notably David Velleman (1999), have defended this idea in Kantian terms and suggested that the purest form of love is love of pure personhood; that is, love of rationality as completely detached from all corporeality. But this conception of love fails as an account of romantic love on its own terms, because we could insist (with Scruton) that any account of romantic love must be able to explain the specificity of desire and love for an *embodied* person. Velleman's Kantian conception of a person hinges on the disembodied aspects of personhood that are common to all human beings. If we want to explain queer love with this Kantian ideal, namely as love for the person apart from their queer body, then this love can only ever aspire to the status of “love regardless”: a trans person is loved despite their trans status, an intersex person is loved despite their complicated genitals, a genderqueer person is loved despite their complex and variant gender presentation. This view seems to do as little justice to actual queer love as the one I sketched before, where love sometimes coincides with queer desire, but has no intrinsic connection to it.

Conclusion

At this point, we can formulate our philosophical problem in the form of a dilemma: On any account of love that tries to explain romantic love as rooted in desire for an embodied, sexed person, queer desire either appears as a lesser kind of the erotic (as fetishism), or it can only become love *in spite of* a queer body. But if we believe that queer love exists in the sense of a harmonious conjunction of queer desire and person-centered love, then even if we reject Scrutonite or Catholic sexual conservatism, we need to ask how queer bodies can be integrated in the paradigm of sexed personhood—and whether and how personhood can be decoupled from the “sexing” of particular body parts.

Acknowledgments

I thank Adrienne Martin and my colleague Josef Becker for their helpful feedback on earlier versions of this chapter.

Notes

- 1 This is of course a contentious assumption, which has been challenged by philosophers, psychologists, sexologists, and members of the asexual community who consider themselves asexual, but not aromantic.
- 2 As I was revising this chapter for publication (late February 2017) the *Journal of the American Medical Association for Pediatrics* published an article (Raifman, Moscoe, and Austin 2017) that correlated the legalization of same-sex marriage with a reduction in suicide attempts among high school students, and which was picked up by many media outlets. Since the conclusions drawn in this study contradict my claim that formal equality (same-sex marriage) does little to nothing for the material well-being of queers, I would be remiss not to mention it here, even though I neither have the space nor time to comment on it in any detail here.
- 3 While the terms “hermaphrodite” and “hermaphroditic” are considered medically outdated and offensive by many in the intersex community, I use them here to emphasize the queerness of these bodies, and the cruel treatment they endure(d) as a result of their queerness.
- 4 Frankenstein’s monster, for instance, may well be monstrous both in his appearance and in his genesis—but his gender is traditionally masculine as his sexual desires are traditionally heterosexual.
- 5 I should emphasize that this is not meant to imply that *all* desire for trans persons is fetishistic (after all, I am defending the need to formulate a viable concept of queer romantic love). What I am suggesting here is that some forms of sexual desire for trans bodies are fetishistic.

References

- Alexander, T. (1999) “Silence = Death,” in A. D. Dreger (ed.), *Intersex in the Age of Ethics*, Hagerstown, MD: University Publishing Group, 103–108.
- Behrens, M. (2012; with S. Brennan) “Margins within the Marginal: Bi-Invisibility and Intersexual Passing,” in D. R. Cooley and K. Harrison (eds.), *Passing/Out: Identity Veiled and Revealed*, Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 171–202.
- Bogaert, A. F. (2015) “Asexuality: What It Is and Why It Matters,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 52 (4), 362–379.
- Cobb, M. (2015) “The Supreme Court’s Lonely Hearts Club,” *New York Times*, 30 June. Available from: www.nytimes.com/2015/06/30/opinion/the-supreme-courts-lonely-hearts-club.html?smid=fb-share&r=0 [1 November 2016].
- Coventry, M. (1999) “Finding the Words,” *Intersex in the Age of Ethics*, Hagerstown, MD: University Publishing Group, 71–76.
- Delaney, N. (1996) “Romantic Love and Loving Commitment: Articulating a Modern Ideal,” *American Philosophy Quarterly* 33 (4), 339–356.
- Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000) *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*, New York: Basic Books.
- Feder, E. K. (2011) “Tilting the Ethical Lens: Shame, Disgust and the Body in Question,” *Hypatia* 26 (3), 632–650.
- Finnis, J. (1997) “The Good of Marriage and the Morality of Sexual Relations: Some Philosophical and Historical Observations,” *The American Journal of Jurisprudence* 42, 97–134.
- Henry, M. (2016) “A One-Inch Mound of Flesh: Troubling Queer Identity in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*,” *The Journal of American Culture* 39 (1), 64–77.
- Holman Jones, S. and A. Harris (2016) “Monsters, Desire and the Creative Queer Body,” *Continuum* 30 (5), 518–530.
- Kant, I. (1996) *The Metaphysics of Morals*, in M. J. Gregor (ed.), *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 353–603.
- Karkazis, K. (2008) *Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority, and Lived Experience*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Koppelman, A. (2008) “Homosexuality and Infertility,” in A. Soble (ed.), *The Philosophy of Love and Sex: An Introduction*, St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 141–154.
- Nagel, T. (1969) “Sexual Perversion,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1), 5–17.
- Nozick, R. (1989) “Love’s Bond,” in *The Examined Life*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 68–86.
- Plato (1993) “The Symposium,” in R. E. Allen (ed.), *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 2, New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 111–170.

- Raifman, J., E. Moscoe, and B. Austin (2017) "Difference-in-Differences Analysis of the Association between State Same-Sex Marriage Policies and Adolescent Suicide Attempts," *JAMA Pediatrics*, online first 20 February, doi: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2016.4529.
- Rothblum, E. D. and K. A. Brehony (1993) (eds.) *Boston Marriages: Romantic but Asexual Relationship between Contemporary Lesbians*, Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Scruton, R. (1986) *Sexual Desire: A Moral Philosophy of the Erotic*, New York: The Free Press.
- Smith Reiner, S. (2011) *Love, Sex, and Disability: The Pleasures of Care*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Stewart-Winter, T. (2015) "The Price of Gay Marriage," *New York Times*, 26 June. Available from: <http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/opinion/sunday/the-price-of-gay-marriage.html?referrer> [1 November 2016].
- Velleman, D. (1999) "Love as A Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109 (2), 338–374.
- Villeneuve, A. (2016) *Nuptial Symbolism in Second Temple Writings, the New Testament and Rabbinic Literature*, Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill.
- Walter, F. (2012) *Law and the Gay Rights Story: The Long Search for Equal Justice in a Divided Democracy*, New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press.
- Weston, K. (1991) *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Church Documents

- Amoris Laetitia* (AL, 2016), post-synodal exhortation of the Holy Father to bishops, priests and deacons, consecrated persons, Christian married couples, and all the lay faithful on love in the family by Pope Francis. Available from: https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf [1 November 2016].

Videos and Films

- Coyote, I. (2010) *A Butch Roadmap* at Speak Out!, 10 April 2010. Available from: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN-py8zofk [1 November 2016].
- Falchuk, B. and R. Murphy (2011–) *American Horror Story*, Brad Falchuk Tele-Vision and Ryan Murphy Productions in association with 20th Century Fox.
- Mitchell, J. C. and S. Trask (2001) *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, Killer Films and New Line Cinema.

9

PLATO ON LOVE AND SEX

Jeremy Reid

Romantic relationships in ancient Greece were somewhat complicated. In his *Politics*, in order to show how conflicts can arise in a city, Aristotle tells a story of two unnamed but influential men in Syracuse, on the eastern coast of Sicily. While the first man was away from the city, the second man seduced the first man's boyfriend. The first man, upon learning about this, became enraged and seduced the second man's wife. This started a civil war (V.4, 1303b17–28). Back in Athens, the brilliant and beautiful Alcibiades, who was once Socrates' boyfriend, angered his own wife so much that she tried to divorce him, because he brought courtesans and (female) prostitutes into their family home (Andocides: IV.14).

Given the messy entanglements between homosexual relations, heterosexual relations, sex, marriage, fidelity, pederasty, and prostitution, one would hope that ancient philosophers had something to say about how to conceptualize and evaluate different kinds of romantic and sexual relationships.¹ Modern readers, however, may be left disappointed on this point when they read Plato's most famous work on love (*erós*), the *Symposium*. In the first place, the dialogue is composed of seven speeches from different people who do not seem to be talking about the same thing (further complicating the picture about what *Plato* thinks). Then we find Socrates telling us that love is originally inspired by a beautiful body, but that those who love properly will move their attention from one beautiful body to many beautiful bodies, then to beautiful souls, then to beautiful customs and laws, then to different kinds of knowledge, then ultimately to the Form of Beauty (210a4–211d1). But most people don't fall in love with laws and it's unclear how we're supposed to love a Platonic Form (whatever that is). Thus, overall, the *Symposium* seems to analyze romantic *relationships* tangentially at best. The lack of resonance between what we call love and what Plato is discussing in that dialogue has led prominent scholars to claim that Plato either has an unsatisfactory theory of love that has no place for the individual as an object of love, or that he's not even talking about love at all.²

While the *Symposium*'s literary brilliance is beyond question and much insightful work has been done on the interpretation of its text, if we want to know what Plato thinks about the complicated romantic relationships of his historical context and what we call love, we should look elsewhere in his corpus. My project here is to take Plato's discussion of love from the less-studied passages in the *Laws* and then use that as a framework to analyze the dynamics of the vivid relationships in the *Phaedrus*.³ As we will see, Plato's fundamental point is that some lovers just want to use your body for sex and pleasure, whereas others genuinely love who you are as

a person. Interestingly, these two forces of attraction can conflict with each other in the same person, but they can also be harmonized in good people. Thus, Plato's account of love is one in which we have to fight within ourselves to overcome our baser desires, which lead us to use our beloved, and to encourage our better desires, which lead us to appreciate the true beauty of our beloved and make both lover and beloved better people.

Two Kinds of Love; Three Kinds of Lovers

Let us begin with the important passage from the *Laws* where the Athenian Visitor (who I take to be Plato's spokesperson in the *Laws*) explains the conceptual relations between love, friendship, and desire. Because the passage is the basis for my understanding of Plato's views on love,⁴ I will quote it in full:

If you want to get these things straight, you have to analyze the nature of friendship and desire and "love", as people call it. There are two separate categories, plus a third which is a combination of both. But one term covers all three, and that causes no end of muddle and confusion.... When two people are virtuous and alike, or when they are equals, we say that one is a "friend" of the other; but we also speak of the poor man's "friendship" for the man who has grown rich, even though they are poles apart. In either case, when the friendship is particularly ardent [*sphodron*], we call it "love".... And a violent and stormy friendship it is, when a man is attracted to someone widely different to himself, and only seldom do we see it reciprocated. When men are alike, however, they show a calm and mutual affection that lasts a lifetime. But there is a third category, compounded of the other two. The first problem here is to discover what this third kind of lover is really after. There is the further difficulty that he himself is confused and torn between two opposing instincts: one tells him to enjoy his beloved, the other forbids him. The lover of the body, hungry for his partner who is ripe to be enjoyed, like a luscious fruit, tells himself to have his fill, without showing any consideration for his beloved's character and disposition. But in another case physical desire is a secondary concern [*parergon*] and the lover prefers looking to lusting [*orôn de mallon ê erôn*]*—a desire of soul for soul. That body should sate itself with body he'll think outrageous; being reverent and respectful, self-control, courage, greatness of soul and wisdom will make him always want to be pure with a pure beloved. This combination of the first two is the "third" love we enumerated a moment ago.*⁵

(837a2–d2)

First, love [*erôs*] is a species of friendship [*philia*], but it has greater intensity. We needn't be puzzled by this initial move insofar as *philia* covers a wide range of relationships, including the love that a mother has for her children, brotherly love, and paradigmatic friendships. The Athenian then explains that there are two kinds of relationship, one of which is "violent and stormy" and tends to be one-sided, whereas the other is "calm" and involves reciprocated feeling. As the Athenian will go on to condemn it in later passages, let us call the love exhibited in the first kind of relationship "bad love" and that of the second kind of relationship "good love."

The bad kind of love involves a desire primarily directed at the beloved's body, and (though explained with ancient reticence) aims at gaining sexual pleasure from him. The good kind of love, however, is directed at the beloved's soul—i.e., his character, or who he is as a person. In the good kind of love, there is still clearly physical attraction, but it is a "secondary concern" [*parergon*] and the lover is happy merely to look upon the beloved.⁶ Thus there are two kinds of

love with different objects (body and soul). Notably, though, there are *three* kinds of lover, as we can be torn between the two kinds of love. This also means both kinds of love can coexist in the same person, though the coexistence makes it difficult to determine what the third kind of lover really wants. After all, it can be hard to work out whether you really love the *person* or whether you just enjoy the pleasure they bring you.

While this discussion of love in the *Laws* is interesting, we do not get much of an idea about what these different kinds of lovers are like. Luckily, Plato's *Phaedrus* seems to use the same conceptual framework but gives us a more vivid and dramatic depiction of how these lovers behave. "We should think," Plato's Socrates says, "that there is in each of us two things that rule and guide, which we follow wherever they lead: the one is the innate desire for pleasures, but the other is the acquired belief to pursue what is best" (237d6–9). When the desire for the pleasure of food rules someone and overpowers their belief about what is best, we call them a glutton; when it is pleasure of drink, we call them a drunk; when it is pleasure of the human body, we call that person a lover (238a6–c4). As we have seen, the kind of love that is directed toward bodies is only one of the kinds of love in the *Laws*, and Socrates in the *Phaedrus* will later give a second speech about a better kind of love—but first let us see what this first kind of pleasure-driven lover is like.

The goal of the lover who is ruled by the desire for pleasure is to "train his beloved to be as pleasant to him as possible" (238e4). Because he does not want the beloved to resist him in any way, the lover tries to make the beloved inferior to him however he can, so the lover makes the beloved ignorant, cowardly, ineffective at public speaking, and slow-witted (239a1–4). This desire to prevent the beloved from being improved means that the lover is jealous of the beloved's company, preventing the beloved from spending time with anybody who might benefit him as a person. In particular, the lover is eager to keep the beloved away from philosophy, as such education will cause the beloved to despise and look down on the lover rather than rely on the lover completely (239a7–b6). The lover will also prevent the beloved from developing physically as much as possible. Because he wants him to seek pleasure, the lover will stop the beloved from going to the gymnasium (Plato thinks a benefit of habitual physical exercise is that it stops you from thinking that pain is a bad thing). Thus instead of getting a tanned muscular body from working out in the sun, the beloved will become soft and pale, adorning himself with cosmetics—the kind of appearance that would fill an enemy army with confidence and your allies with worry (239c3–7).

Socrates then explains that the pleasure-driven lover will keep his boyfriend away from his family, try to cut him off from his family's wealth, and will "hope that his boyfriend will be unmarried, childless, and homeless for as long as possible" so that he can enjoy ongoing pleasure from his boyfriend (240a6–8).⁷ The lover will also be obsessive and clingy, following the beloved around day and night (240c6–d4). This causes the beloved to become disgusted with the lover over time, frustrated at his constant guarding, excessive and unwarranted compliments, and false accusations and insults—especially when the lover isn't even that handsome (240d4–e7)!

With the lover becoming more obsessive and the beloved more frustrated, the relationship inevitably begins to fall apart. As he stops getting the pleasure he wants, the lover's love fades, and he breaks the promises he made to his beloved. The lover becomes a different person, ashamed of how he acted in the past, but doesn't dare tell his boyfriend that he isn't going to follow through on what he said he would do for his beloved. Fearful of becoming as he once was, the lover becomes a fugitive, fleeing the now-angry boy who chases him around demanding that he fulfill his promises.⁸ Thus the beloved ends up frustrated, having given himself to someone "untrustworthy, hard to please, jealous, disgusting, harmful with respect to his property, harmful with respect to the state of his body, and most of all harmful to the development

of his soul” (241c2–5). Socrates says that people who are dominated by the desire for pleasure love their boyfriends in the same way that wolves love lambs (241c6–d1).

Having given this speech about how harmful love is, Socrates feels ashamed, for Love (*Erōs* = Cupid) is a god and a god shouldn’t be responsible for something harmful. You would have had to have been brought up by the most vulgar sailors to think that the pleasure-driven kind of love was the only kind of love (243c6–d1). Socrates thus redeems himself by giving a second speech about a different kind of love—a love which is beneficial and philosophical, where the lovers are ruled by a rich conception of goodness and not simply by pleasure.

In order to explain the dynamics and psychologies of the philosophical lovers, Socrates introduces the image of the tripartite soul as a winged chariot with two horses, one white and one black. The charioteer represents the reasoning part of the soul, which desires truth and knowledge; the white horse represents the spirited part of the soul, which is responsible for our feelings of shame, anger, and the desire to be honored; the black horse represents the appetitive part of the soul, which is responsible for our desires for bodily pleasure; the black horse is unresponsive to reasoning and has to be kept in check with beatings and threats (253c7–255a1). Socrates explains that the soul is immortal and that when disembodied our souls embark on a cosmic circuit following the gods of the Greek pantheon around the outer heavens, where our souls see the Forms, including the Form of Beauty—i.e., what beauty really is. There is much to say about this bizarre story, but what is important is that on this circuit the bad horse tries to drag the soul away from the Forms and that the stronger your wings are, the better chance you have of staying close to the god you are following and to see the Forms. After the circuit is complete, the soul is reincarnated and it retains a memory of the Forms it saw, though the memory is dim, especially if you were distracted by your bad horse and dragged away from getting a good look at them.

Because it was the most radiant in appearance, the memory of the Form of Beauty is most easily reawakened in our embodied state (250c8–e1). Importantly, beauty is most obviously seen in a beautiful body. Some people, upon seeing a beautiful body, surrender to pleasure and pursue sex with the person. But others, those with a clearer memory of what they saw when they were disembodied, are struck by the divinity of the image before them. They respond with reverence and awe, being reminded of the god they followed by the face of the person they see (250e1–251b1).⁹ Socrates describes this kind of lover as at one time shuddering and being chilled at the image of divine beauty, but then that feeling is replaced by warmth and sweating as streams of beauty pour into his eyes, nourishing the wings of his soul so that he feels a swelling and throbbing; the soul aches, itches, and tingles as the wings grow, and the lover is filled with joy (251b1–d1). When separated from the beautiful boy, the lover becomes pained and longs to be back in the presence of such beauty, and he is joyful whenever he is near the boy again. But this alternating pain and joy causes a kind of madness in the lover, making it difficult for him to stay still, or to sleep at night (251d7–e3). For somebody in this state, nothing is more important to them than the beautiful person and they are completely unwilling to give them up (252a1–2).

Though he is initially inspired by the physical beauty of the beloved, the philosophical lover directs his attentions to improving the character of the beloved, fashioning him to be more like the god of whom he is already an image. Thus those lovers who followed Zeus make their beloved grow in wisdom and in guiding others, and similarly with the other gods of the pantheon. If the lovers themselves realize that they are unfit to help somebody grow in this way, they take it upon themselves to learn so that they can progress too. They are inspired by the beloved to live in a more godlike way, so that both they and their beloved can follow the customs and practices of the god. Such a lover is not jealous or ungenerous but is devoted to their beloved, joyed to see them improve (252d1–253c2).

Socrates then explains in more detail how the parts of the lover's soul respond while in the presence of the beloved. While the whole soul is filled with warmth by the beauty of the beloved, the black horse experiences sexual desire and seeks to jump on the boy. The white horse, however, is ashamed at the thought of using the beloved in this way and so pulls against the movements of the black horse. Part of the soul draws the lover to be physically close to the beloved, but the lover's sense of shame and self-control keeps them respectfully apart (253e5–254c3). The lover thus desires to spend time with the beloved and so he stays near him, but he follows the beloved in awe and reverence, not forcing himself upon him in lust (254e8–255a1).

Over time, the beloved comes to notice the goodwill of the lover and appreciates the good things that the lover is doing for him. The beloved and lover become friends with each other, as “good is never not friends with good” (255b2). Spending more time together (and occasionally touching), the beloved then comes to love the lover back.¹⁰ Socrates describes this experience vividly:

Think how a breeze or an echo bounces back from a smooth solid object to its source; that is how the stream of beauty goes back to the beautiful boy and sets him aflutter. It enters through his eyes, which are its natural route to the soul; there it waters the passages for the wings, starts the wings growing, and fills the soul of the loved one with love in return.¹¹

(255c4–d2)

Thus friends also become mutual lovers and their desires are the same, seeing in each other a kind of reflection of themselves. Now the beloved too wants to touch, kiss, and lie down with the lover, though once again the white horse and charioteer prevent them from having sex (255e2–256a6). If the couple continue to win this battle within themselves and follow the path of philosophy, they live a blessed life on this earth together, of one mind and orderly in what they do (256a7–b2). Such lovers are also rewarded in the afterlife, having lived a good life and nourished each other's wings for the next cosmic circuit.

Socrates also mentions a second-best kind of lover, who, though their love is still beneficial, adopts a lower way of living than the philosophical lovers, having replaced philosophy with the love of honor (256c1). Such lovers get caught off guard by their black horse when they have been drinking or are careless for some other reason, and thus have sex with each other. These people have sex over the course of their whole lives together, but because they do not fully endorse what they are doing, they do so sparingly. Nonetheless, these lovers live in mutual friendship and remain with each other because they refuse to break the promises they have made to one another and become enemies (256b7–d3).

While contemporary readers are unlikely to accept the details of Plato's metaphysics, the story is supposed to be illustrative of more than cosmology. What Plato is giving us are models of different ways in which people love. Some people use their lovers merely to get pleasure—especially sexual pleasure—out of them. Others genuinely care about the development of their beloved's character, and, while they are attracted to their beloved's body and experience sexual desire, sex is a secondary concern for such lovers. They see their beloved's beauty as inspirational, something that is to be respected, something that generates feelings of awe and joy, not something that is to be devoured for your own personal gratification. Plato thinks that we will find both of these desires in ourselves and that these forces will fight against each other for superiority. We should thus strive to cultivate the beneficial and divine kind of love, and, to the best of our abilities, suppress the harmful kind of love.

The Sex Question

While most readers find the description of the relationship in the *Phaedrus* beautiful, an obvious question arises: *why don't the best lovers have sex?* Plato repeats his position unequivocally: in the *Symposium*, even while in bed together, Socrates refuses to gratify a persistent Alcibiades (219b3–d2); in the *Phaedrus*, the philosophical lovers are chaste; in the *Laws*, homosexual sex is prohibited by law. Plato's reasoning to support this position is unclear, though, so we should try to get to the bottom of it. In the *Symposium*, Socrates tells Alcibiades that exchanging Alcibiades' body for Socrates wisdom wouldn't be a "fair trade"—it would be like exchanging bronze for gold—and wisdom is not something that Socrates could provide anyway (218e1–219a4). But this reasoning only works for Alcibiades' context, where Alcibiades thinks that Socrates can make him wise and that sex is a (partial) means to that. Why couldn't philosophical lovers, who have a more enlightened view about how to achieve wisdom, engage in sexual activity? The *Phaedrus* only really gives us one clue, which is that this would be shamefully going after a "pleasure contrary to nature" (251a1). But that response only pushes the question back: why would their sex be contrary to nature?

Luckily, the *Laws* gives a fuller justification for why homosexual sex should be prohibited. Plato there seems to provide two related justifications for the chastity of homosexual lovers: the first is that the natural function of sexual activity is the production of good children, and so any non-procreative sex is contrary to nature;¹² the second is that engaging in sexual activity leads to intemperance, because the pleasures involved in sex are *intense* and (unless you are making children) *unnecessary*. Thus while Plato endorses a certain form of homosexual *love*, he does not endorse any form of homosexual *sex*.

In the *Laws*, the Athenian explicitly says that the only use of sex in accordance with nature is in producing children (838e6; cf. 636c1–6). Because men don't have a womb, Plato is committed to the position that all homosexual sex is contrary to nature. Notably, however, he stresses that the same point applies to masturbation, sex with infertile women, and couples who would not produce good children (838e8–839a3). As the discussion of marriage from Book VI makes clear, Plato does not just think that *any* procreative sexual activity is good, but only that which produces good children. Marriages are carefully arranged to ensure that parents are of complementary psychological types and that they are in the optimal physical state for producing good children (772e7–773e4),¹³ for example, neither the wife *nor the husband* are to be drunk when copulating, as alcohol compromises the quality of the seed (775c4–d4); moreover, only people of certain ages are to produce children, and for no longer than 10 years (783d8–785b9). The prohibition on homosexual sex is interesting insofar as it is (to my knowledge) the only non-Judeo-Christian criticism of homosexual sex as an act-type rather than as a possible manifestation of intemperance in antiquity.¹⁴ But note that Plato is not targeting homosexual sex because it is *homosexual*; he is targeting it because it is *non-procreative*. Thus the prohibition on homosexual sex falls out of a more general teleology.

If sex is for the production of children, non-procreative sex is *unnecessary*. But so what? Isn't the fact that it's enjoyable and intensely pleasurable reason enough to think that it's good? Not for Plato. Recall from the *Phaedrus* that there are two contrary principles competing for supremacy in us: the innate desire for pleasure and the acquired belief about what's best. Because we want our judgments about what's best to be supreme and we want the rational part of our souls to rule over our appetites, we need to *resist* the temptation to engage in activities that produce bodily pleasure. Throughout his corpus, Plato emphasizes that the more we feed the appetites for bodily pleasure—the desires to eat, drink, and have sex—the bigger they grow and the harder they are to control (e.g., *Rep.* 558d4–561c8, 571b2–572b1; *Gorg.* 493d5–495a4,

505a6–b12). If we let our appetites get too strong, they will overturn our judgments about what is best all-things-considered and make us like a slave, ordered around by whatever appears most pleasant to us. The danger that we might become like animals who just eat, drink, and sleep all day is bad enough for Plato, but because sex is the most intense bodily pleasure, controlling sexual desire is paramount if we are to become temperate.

Thus, in the *Laws*, the Athenian claims that it is an additional benefit of the prohibition on non-procreative sex that it promotes temperance. If men have their sexual activities restricted such that they only sleep with their wives (at certain times), then these men will be less likely to commit adultery, less likely to be excessive with respect to food and drink, and more likely to be affectionate toward their own wives (839a6–b3). After a long history of promoting abstinence and monogamy, we might be skeptical of Plato's optimism here, but what is interesting from an historical perspective is that *Plato* anticipates that his audience is going to be completely unconvinced by his proposals too. The Athenian imagines a young man "bursting with seed" (as Saunders translates it) standing alongside them listening to the discussion, calling their proposals stupid and impossible (839b4–6). Apparently for Plato's Athenian readers, the idea of a monogamous, heterosexual sex life is ridiculous.

To help soften this apparent shock, Plato has the Athenian Visitor give a number of strategies to convince people that there could be a city where the citizens were self-controlled enough only to sleep with their spouses. First, he says, we could encourage people to think about homosexual sex as religiously prohibited like incest, where one doesn't feel any sexual desire for one's brother or sister, even while recognizing that they are attractive (838a4–e1). Second, athletes are capable of showing self-control and discipline in not having sex in the period leading up to a competition, and they are less well trained and lustier than people brought up with the kind of education that Plato recommends (839a5–840b1). Third, birds and other animals are capable of controlling themselves such that they only have sex during the appropriate mating seasons, and some animals are even monogamous for life. If animals can live this way without the guidance that reason, spirit, and law can provide, then humans should be able to do the same thing much more easily (840c11–e7). Finally, the Athenian suggests that by cultivating a culture where people are ashamed to engage in sexual activity or talk about it publicly, the appetites for sexual pleasure will be starved because the pleasures will always be mixed with the pain of feeling ashamed for engaging in sex. Thus decency and disgust will help to ensure that the citizens only have sex when they need to make children (841a6–c2).

These passages are not quite as charming as those we find in the *Phaedrus*, and we may find ourselves siding with the seed-full young man in the face of these implausible and puritanical proposals.¹⁵ Nonetheless, Plato's desperation in laying out these strategies should alert us to just how far he is departing from the cultural norms of his day. Of course, we can retain much of what Plato says about the different kinds of love without buying wholesale into his theories about the proper role of sex. In the first place, we could deny either (a) that sex has a function, (b) that sex has a *single* function, (c) that the function of sex is the procreation of children, or (d) that the function of sex is normative. Any of these options could get us out of the claim that non-procreative sex is unnatural. The temperance argument, however, is harder to rebut, and many people find Plato's model of the appetites plausible. Indeed, the intensity of the pleasure of (e.g.) heroin leads us to think that one cannot enjoy it in a temperate and self-controlled way—it's so addictive because it feels so good, and taking the drug once or twice a month won't satisfy the craving.¹⁶ Now, cheesecake is also pleasurable, but we do think we can eat cheesecake temperately on occasion without becoming slaves to its delicious charms. Thus the task for the person who is generally friendly to Plato's views on love but who rejects his views on sex is to explain why sex is more like cheesecake and less like heroin. If it were shown that one could

have sex in such a way that neither led you to become intemperate nor led you to treat your beloved as an object to use for your own pleasure, then I see no reason why Platonic philosophical love couldn't involve at least some sexual activity. At any rate, hopefully we can understand why Plato himself thought that the best homosexual lovers are to remain chaste with each other.

Taking a step back and appreciating Plato's arguments, it is easy to see why the question, "Was Plato against homosexuality?" is somewhat misguided.¹⁷ While sexual orientation is no easy thing to define, most people have some intuitive notion that homosexuality regularly involves being attracted to, loving, having sex with, and being in relationships with people of the same gender. But we cannot give a straight answer to whether Plato was against *that*, because the philosophical love between men he endorses includes lifelong commitment but not marriage, physical attraction at the other's beauty and physical affection but not sex.¹⁸ Thus we should remember that sexual orientation is part of our conceptual framework but probably not Plato's.

Given that women have been largely absent from this discussion except as vessels for producing children, a final question about Plato's views on love and sex remains: is it possible to be a *heterosexual* philosophical lover, and, if so, could *they* could have sex? Presumably the reason that Plato focuses on erotic attachment between males is that females weren't typically educated in ancient Greece, so if a male were pursuing a female, it may have been assumed that he was after her for her body and not for the good qualities of her soul.¹⁹ Thus any male erotically attached to a female must be a pleasure lover. Now, in fact, this argument is too quick, as Plato in the *Republic* thinks that women can be philosophers and so attain the same kind of knowledge that makes men virtuous.²⁰ Plato clearly thinks that women can have the kinds of souls that are worthy of love. Notably, though, Plato takes the quasi-feminist arguments of the *Republic* to be controversial and there is only so much you can argue for in one dialogue. Therefore, though he never says as much explicitly, it seems consistent with Plato's views that philosophical love could occur between men and women.

Should a philosophical heterosexual couple have sex, then? Certainly not often. Plato's arguments from the *Laws* will still apply to the heterosexual couple as much as to the homosexual couple. The pleasure from sex is still intense and thus dangerous from the standpoint of temperance and self-control, which means it should be minimized. Moreover, our heterosexual philosophers should only have sex insofar as they need to produce children. Given this goal, heterosexual sex between philosophical lovers will probably aim less at generating pleasure for oneself and one's lover and more at efficiency.

Conclusion: Are Platonic Lovers Just Friends?

We can end by reflecting on a problem I raised early in the chapter, namely whether Plato is even talking about love at all. *Erôs* can easily be translated as "desire" and *erôs* was explicitly defined in the *Laws* as a species of friendship (*philia*). So are these non-sexual Platonic lovers really just friends?

I don't think so. First, the emotion they experience is described as being perceptibly more intense than that of friendly fellow-feeling. Moreover, the person is initially inspired by their partner's *physical* beauty and, while this develops into a profound love of their character, we are not told that the attraction ever fades—only that we come to think that who they are is more important than how they look. Also consider how Plato describes how the person feels when in the presence of their partner: they are filled with warmth, excitement, tingling, swelling, and joy. The Greek is as euphemistic as the English here, and it would be strange to claim that the

best kind of friendship entails this kind of phenomenology. I care deeply about my friends and think that they are wonderful people, but they don't make me tingle and I am not filled with streams of warmth when our gazes connect. What Plato is describing is *love* and while it has much in common with friendship, it is also more than friendship. Finally, while Plato does not think that engaging in sexual activity is necessary to have the best kind of loving relationship, it's not obvious that we think it is necessary now either. We recognize that (especially older) couples who no longer have sex can still be deeply in love with each other. Nor do we think that sex is even necessary for couples to be in love in the first place: many couples are sincere in their wedding vows before they have had sex, and insofar as we recognize asexuality as a genuine phenomenon, we can see how two people might love each other deeply without also assuming anything about what they do with their genitalia.

What is distinctive about Platonic love, then, is the intense longing for the beauty of the beloved in both body and soul. I can like a friend for who they are, but Platonic lovers are *drawn* to their beloved in a way that goes beyond mere approbation. They want to be with them, see them grow into a better version of themselves, and they want to develop their own character so that they can better benefit their beloved in their life together. No doubt this kind of Platonic love is rare, but Plato's point is to highlight the importance of the struggle between the two kinds of love in us. The philosophical lovers are aspirational—we should try to be *more like them* in our relationships, even if we fall short. Nonetheless, there is nothing impossible about the kind of philosophical lovers Plato describes. Even if we disagree with him on the sex question, Plato is surely right in thinking that the way in which the philosophical lovers are disposed toward each other is a truly beneficial and divine thing.²¹

Notes

- 1 Most say surprisingly little about love, though this is largely due to the fragmentary nature of the texts. Aristotle's discussion of friendship in Books VIII–IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics* mentions romantic relationships only in passing; Epicurus thinks that love is always irrational and so should simply be purged, though we may engage in casual sex with friends under certain circumstances (see Arenson (2016)). The Stoic texts are extremely fragmentary, but the early Stoics appear to have distinguished between a good form of love that includes sexual activity and a pathological form of love which ought to be purged (see Gaca (2000); Inwood (1997); Schofield (1999)). For a helpful summary of the different philosophical views in antiquity, see Nussbaum (2002).
- 2 See Vlastos (1981) and Sheffield (2012). Of course, there is much to be said about love in the *Symposium*, but this initial reaction is at least common among my students. Sheffield herself (2011) suggests that the *Phaedrus* is a better place to look in Plato for an account of interpersonal love, and I owe much to her excellent work on this topic.
- 3 For a thorough treatment of this topic in the *Laus*, see Moore (2005: chapter VII).
- 4 The Middle Platonist commentator Alcinous also takes this passage to be the best presentation of Plato's views on love (see *Handbook of Platonism*: 33.3).
- 5 Trans. Saunders, with modifications. Translations are mine unless stated otherwise.
- 6 In Greece, your *ergon* was your job or the main skill (*technē*) at which you made a living; your *parergon* was your hobby or what you did on the side. Thanks to Emily Hulme Kozey for this point.
- 7 The Athenians thought that there was an appropriate period of time that one could stay in a homosexual relationship. Once one started showing the signs of manhood, most importantly the ability to grow a full beard, it was expected that the older lover in the relationship would encourage the younger lover to marry a woman and start a family, breaking off their relationship. Socrates' point here is that the pleasure-lover doesn't care about the social consequences for the younger beloved, who should be entering the next stage of his development. Emily Hulme Kozey has also pointed out to me that Greeks often inherited their parents' wealth when they were married, so stopping a man from getting married amounted to keeping them from inheriting.

- 8 These relationships often involved the older lover giving material and political advantages to the younger beloved in exchange for sexual gratification.
- 9 See Nussbaum (2001: chapter 7).
- 10 For the importance of the reciprocal nature of love in the *Phaedrus*, see Halperin (1986).
- 11 Trans. Nehamas and Woodruff.
- 12 It may be thought that Plato is making a fallacious argument here, insofar as he is appealing to what is natural as a standard for what is good. Plato, like most ancient philosophers, is using “natural” in a normative way that is not vulnerable to this objection (see Annas (1995: chapter 3)). Nature is an ideal—not what happens regularly or innately.
- 13 Clark is right to highlight the importance of the different psychological types for Plato’s theory of marriage in the *Laws*, but he is wrong to think that this is directly relevant for the condemnation of homosexual sex. Clark (2000: 23, 27) claims that the problem with homosexual lovers is that they are too similar and that homosexual lovers tend to go after those who are most similar to themselves. But this is contrary to the text quoted in the first section where the Athenian says explicitly that in the bad form of love, homosexual lovers tend to go after those who are *most opposite* to themselves (837b2). Plato’s problem is not that homosexual lovers are picking mates who are too similar to themselves and thus producing psychologically unbalanced children—his problem is that they are *not producing children at all*.
- 14 Nussbaum (1994) argues that it fits the more common intemperance model, but *Laws* 839a6–7 makes clear that prohibiting sexual activity being beneficial for developing temperance is an *additional* reason for favoring the law *on top of* its naturalness.
- 15 Plato recognizes that even these strategies might not be enough, so he suggests a second-best approach, whereby men are allowed to go to prostitutes just as long as they don’t tell anybody about it and don’t get caught—and if they do get caught, they will lose their citizen rights (841c4–842a2).
- 16 This is why Plato describes trying to satisfy pleasures as like trying to fill leaky jars (*Gorg.* 493d5–495a4).
- 17 This became a topic of legal controversy during the 1993 Colorado case of *Evans v. Romer*, during which professors of Classics and Ancient Philosophy, Martha Nussbaum, John Finnis, and Robert George, were called in as expert witnesses. As I understand the case, much of the argument rested on the fact that Nussbaum was right about the status of homosexual *love* in Plato, while Finnis and George were right about the status of homosexual *sex*.
- 18 As we saw in the *Phaedrus*, the philosophical lovers lie down together, touch each other, and kiss each other. But how *sexual* we find this depends, I suspect, on whether we were brought up in the British-American cultural milieu rather than that of, e.g., France or the Mediterranean (and post the homophobic panic the Oscar Wilde trial generated).
- 19 Importantly, females were generally kept separate from men in ancient Athens and marriages were arranged. So other than the women of his family, most women an Athenian man would have interacted with would have been paid for their services (see Davidson (1998: part II)). Thus because Plato wants to emphasize the voluntary, respectful, mutual affection between philosophical lovers, male–male relationships are the obvious candidate to exemplify this dynamic.
- 20 See Annas (1976).
- 21 Thanks first to my students at the University of Arizona in my classes on Love, Sex, and Friendship in Ancient Thought, who helped to clarify my thinking on this topic. Thanks also to Julia Annas, Mark Barnard, Dylan Barton, Emily Hulme Kozey, Adrienne Martin, Suzanne Obdrzalek, Levi Patel, Sasha Rasmussen, Rachel Singpurwalla, Eric Solis, and Robert Wallace for comments on earlier versions of this chapter.

References

- Annas, J. (1976), “Plato’s ‘Republic’ and Feminism”, *Philosophy*, 51/197, 307–321.
- Annas, J. (1995), *The Morality of Happiness*, Oxford University Press.
- Arenson, K. (2016), “Epicurus on Marriage as Sexual Therapy”, *Polis*, 33, 291–311.
- Clark, R.B. (2000), “Platonic Love in a Colorado Courtroom: Martha Nussbaum, John Finnis, and Plato’s Laws in *Evans v. Romer*”, *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities*, 12/1, Article 1.
- Davidson, J. (1998), *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens*, St. Martin’s Press.
- Gaca, K.L. (2000), “Early Stoic Eros: The Sexual Ethics of Zeno and Chrysippus and Their Evaluation of the Greek Erotic Tradition”, *Apeiron*, 33/3, 207–238.

- Halperin, D.M. (1986), "Plato and Erotic Reciprocity", *Classical Antiquity*, 5/1, 60–80.
- Inwood, B. (1997), "Why Do Fools Fall in Love", in Sorabji (ed.) *Aristotle and After*, Institute of Classical Studies, 55–69.
- Moore, K.R. (2005), *Sex and the Second-Best City*, Routledge.
- Nussbaum, M.C. (1994), "Platonic Love and Colorado Law: The Relevance of Ancient Greek Norms to Modern Sexual Controversies", *Virginia Law Review*, 80/7, 1515–1651.
- Nussbaum, M.C. (2001), *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, University of Chicago Press.
- Nussbaum, M.C. (2002), "Eros and Ethical Norms: Philosophers Respond to a Cultural Dilemma", in Nussbaum and Sihvola (eds.) *The Sleep of Reason: Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece and Rome*, University of Chicago Press, 55–94.
- Schofield, M. (1999), *The Stoic Idea of the City*, University of Chicago Press.
- Sheffield, F. (2011), "Beyond Eros: Friendship in the *Phaedrus*", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, CXI/2, 251–273.
- Sheffield, F. (2012), "The *Symposium* and Platonic Ethics: Plato, Vlastos, and a Misguided Debate", *Phronesis*, 57, 117–141.
- Vlastos, G. (1981), "The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato", in *Platonic Studies*, Princeton University Press, 3–34.

Further Reading

The landmark works on Greek homosexual and romantic norms are:

- Foucault, M. (1986), *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2, The Use of Pleasure*, Vintage Books; Dover, K. (1989), *Greek Homosexuality*, Harvard University Press. For a more recent (and highly entertaining) study, see Davidson, J. (1998), *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens*, St. Martin's Press.

There is an enormous body of literature on love in Plato's *Symposium*. For a judicious and thorough treatment, see Sheffield, F. (2009), *Plato's Symposium: The Ethics of Desire*, Oxford University Press. Other seminal works on this issue include: Vlastos, G. (1981), "The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato", in *Platonic Studies*, Princeton University Press, 3–34; Denyer, N. (2001), *Plato's Alcibiades*, Cambridge University Press; Kosman, A. (1976), "Platonic Love", in Werkmeister (ed.) *Facets of Plato's Philosophy*, Assen, 53–69; Nussbaum, M. (1986), "The Speech of Alcibiades: A Reading of Plato's *Symposium*", in *The Fragility of Goodness*, Cambridge University Press, 165–95; Price, A. (1989), *Love and Friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, Oxford University Press.

10

EROS AND AGAPE IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Plato, Emerson, and Peirce

Daniel G. Campos

Her email message arrived in my inbox three years after our breakup. My heart pounded in my chest when I received it. I felt joy and fear, desire to read and gut-wrenching doubt. Why would she write to me after all that time? The subject line read “*Compartilhar*”—“to share” in Portuguese. What might she tell me? Could she be sharing news that would make me happy for her but nostalgic for our lost love? Had she written a sentence, even a word, that might reopen wounds that had taken a long time to heal? We had loved each other intensely and had tried to cultivate a long-term relationship. We had wanted to create a life together. Though our relationship bloomed in periods of delight, it had not endured. Our breakup had been painful, even without any intention to wound each other, and our separate recoveries had been difficult—of the sort that inwardly make you crawl minute to minute, day to day, until slowly you begin to stand up and walk again. Taking an emotional risk but wanting to know what she had written, I opened her message and began reading.

She wrote from Italy, sharing with me her joy at finally being able to visit the homeland of her father, meet her relatives, experience one of her places of origin, and understand herself through her own roots better. She had been born and raised in Brazil, the daughter of an Italian man and a Brazilian woman, and she had dreamed of traveling to Italy all her life. I had encouraged her when we were together. We had even considered possible ways of traveling to Italy together even though our relationship was long distance; we worked on different school calendars in different countries, and coordinating trips was difficult.

“I want to share this experience with you because when we were close, you knew of my intimate dream to meet my father’s family in his homeland,” she wrote. “I am conscious that our story cannot be taken up again, that its meaning is lost, but I feel a deep thankfulness in expressing that you were important to me, that I loved you and felt pleasure in sharing my dreams with you. You encouraged me a lot and have a share in what I am experiencing now. I think it is just and good to let you know that I acknowledge it, that I recognize your part in this.” Her Ph.D. studies had taken her to Italy, and this added to the significance of her accomplishments—she had also shared her academic aspirations with me, and I had tried to be supportive and nurturing. She concluded by telling me, in caring words, that she wished

that my most intimate dreams, those which I had shared with her, would also be realized in time.

I read her message several times. I felt genuine joy while imagining her in Italy, bright-eyed and smiling among her father's relatives. I delighted in her wellbeing and personal growth. I also felt relieved that she had written with warmth, in a spirit of gratefulness. I tasted, however, a bit of life's bittersweetness. She thanked me for our past love, for what we had shared, and for my encouragement of her personal projects. But what did past love mean in the present? Had I been a stepping stone in her path? And did she understand that my intimate hopes—those she now wished would be realized for me—had been nurtured in the context of our relationship? That in its aftermath I had had to let those hopes go so I could move on? That they hadn't been *my* hopes but hopes for *us*? The tone and content of her letter didn't justify those conflicted feelings, but I felt them all the same. As Anne Carson writes, "It was Sappho who first called eros 'bittersweet.' No one who has been in love disputes her" (Carson 1998: 3). I, at least, do not dispute Sappho.

Experiencing genuine doubt as to how to resolve those conflicted emotions, I turned to philosophical reflection. Much of ancient Greek as well as American philosophy arises from lived experience and addresses it directly. What had our love meant for her, for me, for us? What did it mean in the present? Could the meaning of that love evolve over time? I sought the company of Plato's *Symposium*, Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Love," and Charles Peirce's "Evolutionary Love" for reflection.

Eros as Desiring-Love in Plato's Symposium

Plato's *Symposium* focuses on the nature of *eros* as desiring-love and its function in human lives. Its dramatic structure is complex: Apollodorus recounts to a friend what Aristodemus reported to him about a banquet that had taken place long before. In that banquet, held at the poet Agathon's house, several speakers, including Socrates, gave speeches in praise of the god Eros. At the heart of those speeches, Socrates interrogated Agathon as to the nature and beneficent effects of Eros and then explained how he learned erotics, or the art of love, from a woman named Diotima. According to Socrates, Diotima initiated him in the "rites of love," a living process sometimes called "the ascent of love" or "the ladder of love," the culmination of which is to behold Beauty.

Though I am not a Plato scholar, I am a careful reader who understands philosophical reflection and action, theory and practice, thought and life, as being intimately linked and enriched by each other. Thus, I returned to read the *Symposium*, and especially Diotima's account of the ascent of love, motivated by living doubt and an experiential drive to inquire. I had some living questions spurring my reading: What is the significance of one's beloveds as one moves along the ladder? What happens to them as one ascends, step by step, toward the contemplation of Beauty? Does one abandon them? Use and forget them? Despise them? Or does one continue to love them? And how? Desiring them? Committing to them in partnership? Cherishing them while setting them free to continue along their own ascent?

In the dialogue, Socrates questions Agathon to establish that Eros is love as desire for beautiful and good things, but Eros is not beautiful or good itself (Plato 1989: 199c–201c). Socrates then tells how Diotima interrogated him to reveal that Eros is not beautiful or ugly, good or bad, a god or a mortal, but something in between, a mediator (Plato 1989: 201c–203b). She then told him a myth as to the origins and nature of Eros. At the gods' celebration of Aphrodite's birth, Penia (Poverty) devised a plan to become pregnant from Poros (Resource), son of Metis (Cunning). She became pregnant with Eros (Love). Thus, Eros was born to serve Aphrodite,

and he is also “by nature a lover of beauty” because Aphrodite is especially beautiful (Plato 1989: 203b–c). Like Penia, Eros is poor and far from delicate and beautiful. Like Poros, Eros is “a schemer after the beautiful and the good,” “brave and resourceful in his pursuit of intelligence,” and “a lover of wisdom throughout his life” (Plato 1989: 203c–d). Anne Carson notes that “the Greek word *eros* denotes ‘want,’ ‘lack,’ ‘desire for that which is missing.’ The lover wants what he does not have” (1998: 10). This myth in Plato’s *Symposium* illustrates this conception of erotic love as desire what is lacking, missing, not present: “As Diotima puts it ... Eros is a bastard got by Wealth [or Resource] on Poverty and ever at home in a life of want” (Carson 1998: 10). For my purposes, it was also important to note that Eros is a philosopher. By nature, he is neither immortal nor mortal, and he is in a state between wisdom and ignorance, since the gods are wise and need not seek wisdom and the ignorant are content in their ignorance (Plato 1989: 203e–204a). But Eros the philosopher seeks wisdom, as this argument shows: Eros is in love with what is beautiful; wisdom is beautiful; therefore, Eros must be a lover of wisdom (Plato 1989: 204b). Diotima concluded her speech by telling Socrates that he had thought Love was beautiful because he conceived it on the model of “*being loved*, rather than *being a lover*” (Plato 1989: 204c). Love desires.

At this point, the conversation most directly pertinent to my living doubts begins. Socrates asked Diotima: “What is the use of Love to human beings?” (Plato 1989: 204d). Rather than responding directly, Diotima asked Socrates a series of questions to lead him to understand that Love is wanting to possess the good forever, so that the real purpose of love “is giving birth in beauty, whether in body or in soul” (Plato 1989: 206a–b). What Love wants is not beauty but “reproduction and birth in beauty” because “reproduction goes on forever; it is what mortals have in place of immortality” (Plato 1989: 206e). Since Love wants to possess the good forever, Love must desire immortality (Plato 1989: 207a). Diotima then states that “some people are pregnant in body ... while others are pregnant in soul” (Plato 1989: 208e–209a). Some lovers desire their beloved’s beautiful body and feel an intense drive to have children with them, or at least to have sexual intercourse with them. Other lovers also desire the beauty of noble, well-formed souls, and even prefer this kind of beauty when they find such a beloved. These lovers’ souls are gravid with craftsmanship, poetic creativity, moderation, and justice for the ordering of households and cities, and accounts, arguments, and speeches (*logoi*) regarding excellence or virtue (*arete*) and wisdom. They want to give birth in beauty by, say, crafting beautiful artifacts, writing poetry, legislating wisely, ruling prudently, and cultivating knowledge in the company of their beloved. That is, they want to give birth in beauty in the presence of their beloved. But they also want to give birth in the soul of their beloved by educating them with regards to excellence and wisdom (Plato 1989: 209a–e). The latter kind of lovers “have much more to share than do the parents of human children, and have a firmer bond of friendship, because the children in whom they have a share are more beautiful and more immortal” (Plato 1989: 209c).

At this juncture, Diotima initiated Socrates in the “rites of love” (Plato 1989: 210a–212b). The purpose of these rites is “the highest and final mystery” (Plato 1989: 210a). I highlight that these are rites; that is, they are a practice with a method. And they are a “mystery”; that is, a secret religious practice or ritual intended to provide eternal bliss to the initiate. Diotima indeed warned Socrates that he might not be capable of practicing the rites but must try to follow if he can, and this suggests a difficult, arduous practice. She then described the steps for the Ascent to Beauty. First, in youth the budding lover must “love one body and beget beautiful ideas there” (Plato 1989: 210a). Second, if the lover is to pursue the beauty of form, he must realize that the beauty of all bodies is one and the same form, and thus become a lover of all beautiful bodies, and “despise” gaping at one body (Plato 1989: 210b). Third, the maturing lover must think that the beauty of people’s souls is more valuable than the beauty of their bodies, and thus he must

love and care for young men and seek to give birth to ideas (*logoi*) that make these young men better (Plato 1989: 210b–c). Fourth, he must gaze at the beauty of activities and laws, presumably because these foster the cultivation of excellence in good souls (Plato 1989: 210c). Fifth, he must gaze at the beauty of various kinds of knowledge, presumably because the lover, as he matures, ponders the kinds of knowledge that underlie different excellent activities and underwrite wise laws (Plato 1989: 210c). Sixth, he must see the beauty of knowledge in general and gaze at the great sea of beauty so as to “give birth to many gloriously beautiful ideas and theories” (*logoi*) in “unstinting love of wisdom” (*philosophia*) (Plato 1989: 210d). He must grow in this contemplation and gain strength. And finally, he must reach the “goal of Loving”—that is, catch sight or contemplate something that is beautiful in its very nature (Plato 1989: 210e).

Diotima then described the characteristics of Beauty, namely: It always is; it never becomes or changes. It is absolutely, not relatively, beautiful—in all respects, at all times, in relation to anything, at all places. It is not relative to the observer but beautiful in itself. And it is not in a particular physical object, idea, or type of knowledge (Plato 1989: 211a). It is not a particular thing but a general Form:

itself by itself with itself, it is always one in form; and all the other beautiful things share in that, in such a way that when those others come to be or pass away, this does not become the least bit smaller or greater nor suffer any change.

(Plato 1989: 211b)

Finally, she established “beholding Beauty” as the final end of a good life (Plato 1989: 211d–212b). The ascent to Beauty leads to the fulfillment of the Good Life: “There if anywhere should a person live his life, beholding that Beauty” (Plato 1989: 211d). When a person

looks at Beauty in the only way that Beauty can be seen—only then will it become possible for him to give birth not to images of virtue (because he is in touch with no images) but to true virtue (because he is in touch with the true Beauty).

(Plato 1989: 212a)

Socrates concludes his account of Diotima’s speech by answering the question: “What use is Love to human beings?” (Plato 1989: 204c–d). The answer is that Eros as desiring-love is our power and guide in our ascent to Beauty, and thus to happiness and the good life. He also emphasizes philosophy as practice: “I honor the rites of Love myself and practice them with special diligence” (Plato 1989: 212b).

Upon reading this while tasting love’s bittersweetness, I found it all to sound very lofty and fine, but my questions still troubled me: What is the significance of one’s beloveds as one ascends to Beauty? What place do they have in one’s life when one attains happiness and the good life? What do interpersonal loving relations mean to enlightened philosophers as they not only create beautiful and good arguments and discourses but contemplate Beauty itself? After all, Beauty is an idea while flesh and bone beloveds are tangible and concrete presences, or painful absences, in one’s life. A way to focus my questions is by way of Diotima’s summary of the ascent to beauty:

This is what it is to go aright, or be led by another, into the mystery of Love: one goes always upwards for the sake of this Beauty, starting out from beautiful things and using them like rising stairs: from one body to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, then from beautiful bodies to beautiful customs, and from customs to learning beautiful

things, and from these lessons he arrives in the end at this lesson, which is the learning of this very Beauty, so that in the end he comes to know just what it is to be beautiful.

(Plato 1989: 211c)

My philosophical habit is to clarify the meaning of concepts, such as Diotima's ladder of love, by tracing out all their conceivable experiential bearings.¹ What are the conceivable experiences for the lover and his beloved as the lover ascends up the ladder? The problem, from my point of view, is that in the ascent to Beauty the preponderant experience is to *use* things and persons as steps in a rising stairwell. It implies using lovers as stepping stones. It means that what truly matters in life is to behold Beauty itself, an idealization, while the things and people we love on our way to such beholding are treated as means to an end.

The thrust of the rites of love struck me this way. They describe an individual ascent, like the solo climbing of a mountain to become the contemplative sage at the top, and not a cooperative hike, side by side, to a shared destination, much less a playful, spontaneous saunter of two walkers exploring uncharted territory together. And the highest forms of desire-love are directed at ideas, not at persons. Some aspects of Diotima's account exacerbated my suspicions. When she claimed that if the lover is to pursue the beauty of form, he must love all beautiful bodies and come to "despise" gaping at one body (Plato 1989: 210b), she meant in part that the lover comes to despise sexual obsession with one body. According to my reading, however, this also meant that the lover despises the intense sexual desire for one beloved—the exclusivity and intensity of a sexual affair with one person. Such an experience is fraught with the perils of transience and flux, while the erotic philosopher strives for safe, constant, unblemished, pure, and unchanging Beauty. And when Diotima claimed that those who are pregnant in soul give birth to more beautiful things—like plays, sculptures, political constitutions, scientific treatises, and philosophical discourses—than those who are pregnant in body and give birth to children (Plato 1989: 209a–e), she demeaned the intense desire-love between partners who express their love sexually and want to cultivate it by having and educating children together. In terms of the rites of love, it is better and more beautiful, for example, to pursue intellectual endeavors and write fine works of philosophy than to love sexually and spiritually the body-minded person who is next to you, sharing household and bed with you, even as you are in the process of studying, researching, creating, and writing. You can enjoy your love affairs with individual persons as part of your growth. Eventually, however, you will learn that it is better to set them aside or leave them behind, put them out of your mind, heart, and life, and move on to write your plays, novels, treatises, articles, or dissertations, and eventually to behold Beauty. Or you may be the former beloved who gets a thank you note from the lover who is standing further up above in the ladder. This possibility stung.

But was I misinterpreting Diotima? I was measuring an ancient Greek text by the standards of my contemporary affective, intellectual, and cultural perspectives. In his article "The Individual as the Object of Love in Plato," Gregory Vlastos investigates the question of interpersonal love in Plato's thought, but he seeks to measure it against a standard from the Greek philosopher's own time and place in order to avoid anachronism. According to him, Aristotle supplies this standard in his account of *philia* as a form of interpersonal love: "That to love a person we must wish for [and actively foster] that person's good for that person's sake, not for ours—so much Aristotle understands. Does Plato?" (Vlastos 1973: 6). Based on an extensive reading of Plato's corpus well beyond the *Symposium*, Vlastos argues that

Plato's theory is not, and is not meant to be, about personal love for persons—i.e., about the kind of love we can have only for persons and cannot have for things or

abstractions.... In his theory persons evoke [*eros*] if they have beautiful bodies, minds, or dispositions. But so do quite impersonal objects—social or political programs, literary compositions, scientific theories, philosophical systems and, best of all, the Idea of Beauty itself.

(*Vlastos 1973: 26*)

We can see this, for example, in Diotima's view that what erotic lovers desire is "to give birth in beauty"—for Plato, "Beauty stirs us so deeply ... because we have the power to create and only the beauty we love can release that power" (*Vlastos 1973: 21*). There is extraordinary achievement in Plato's insight since he is "the first Western man to realize how intense and passionate may be our attachment to objects as abstract as social reform, poetry, art, the sciences, and philosophy" (*Vlastos 1973: 27*). However, the scope of Plato's theory of love is too narrow to account for "kindness, tenderness, compassion, concern for the freedom, and respect for the integrity of the beloved, as essential ingredients of the highest type of interpersonal love" (*Vlastos 1973: 30*). The crux of the problem is this: "What we are to love in persons is the 'image' of the Idea [of Beauty] in them. We are to love the persons so far, and only so far, as they are good and beautiful" (*Vlastos 1973: 31*). For *Vlastos*, Platonic love is not directed at whole persons with their excellences and vices, their thoughts, feelings, hopes, and fears, but to abstract versions of persons that consist in bundles of their best qualities—that is, to persons as objectifications of excellence (*Vlastos 1973: 31–2*). This does not satisfy him: "What love for our fellows requires of us is, above all, imaginative sympathy and concern for what they themselves think, feel, and want" (*Vlastos 1973: 32*).

Martha Nussbaum develops *Vlastos*' criticism by arguing that the Platonic lover lacks compassion, reciprocity, and respect for individuality (2000). Regarding compassion, Platonic lovers disdain the sufferings of those who love lesser objects, or at least disregard them, and therefore lack a drive for justice (*Nussbaum 2000: 496–8*). Regarding reciprocity, Platonic lovers do not acknowledge other persons, even their beloveds, as independent beings with their own will, desires, and ends, and is not motivated to foster their wellbeing and flourishing; therefore, they lack drive for solidarity (*Nussbaum 2000: 498–9*). Regarding individuality, Platonic lovers do not respect or embrace the separateness and qualitative difference of their beloveds, or love the given *all* of their qualities, but only regard them as containers of bundles of the fine and good (*Nussbaum 2000: 499–500*). Thus, Nussbaum concludes that the Platonic lover "has climbed too high—out of the reach of human need and imperfection, and therefore out of the reach of an altruism, whether personal or political, that can constructively address real human beings" (2000: 500).

I generally agree with *Vlastos* and Nussbaum. Diotima's rites of love do not describe the kind of interpersonal loving relationship in which I want to take part, either as lover or as beloved. I may love a person, or be loved by one, based on a desire only for those aspects in the other person that the lover perceives to be good and beautiful. Such idealizations are often partially false projections by the lover onto the beloved. They crumble in time, leaving both persons to confront lost love. Moreover, concrete individuals, specific persons, are expendable or exchangeable. The lover can love them for his own benefit, for the creative zest for knowledge and beauty that they inspire in him, and then leave them behind, without much concern for their wellbeing, perhaps even for the sake of the pursuit of allegedly higher forms of goodness and beauty—for the sake of a mysterious version of the good life.²

This, I concluded, had not been the sort of loving relationship that, as part of a good life, my letter-writing ex-lover and I had attempted. Loving each other, body and soul, had been an integral part of our attempt at cultivating together a life worth living, not just a passing

station toward higher forms of goodness. We had meant valuable and genuine partnership in willful care, unwilling hurt, pleasure, concern, pain, joy, and sorrow to each other. And now that our relationship had passed, she had not written to me as if, from her new vantage point and stage in life, I had come to mean a mere step, or even a pleasurable and restful landing, along her ascent to higher personal and intellectual accomplishments. To understand our experience philosophically, I had to look at other sources. Whereas Vlastos turns to Aristotelian *philia* for contrast to Platonic *eros*, I turned to Emersonian “love” and Peircean *agape* for inquiry.

Emerson’s Romantic Love

In his essay “Love,” published in 1841 in *Essays: First Series*, Ralph Emerson writes that “persons are love’s world” (2000: 192). This starting point seemed more appropriate for the kind of reflection I sought. His essay begins with a poetic description of the ways in which young people of his time and place—New England in the nineteenth century—fall in romantic love with each other’s looks and character. The passion of romance leads them to see all things in nature as being alive and significant and to become inspired to create and appreciate music and verse (Emerson 2000: 193–4). Emerson observes that love influences human youth so that to them “Beauty ... seems sufficient to itself” (2000: 194), and notes that “the ancients called beauty the flowering of virtue” (2000: 195). He thus aligns his view with the tradition of Plato’s *Symposium* and the ancient philosophy of Beauty, but he re-interprets it as the “ascent to the highest beauty, to love and knowledge of Divinity, by steps on this ladder of created souls” (2000: 196–7). In his account of the ascent, Emerson inherits and preserves a relative disdain for sensual, bodily love in favor of the allegedly better spiritual, intellectual love. He also shifts Diotima’s order of ascent. The Platonic character described an ascent from desire for one body to desire for all bodies and then to love of the soul, while Emerson describes an ascent from the love of one body to the love of one soul and then the love of all souls. To be fair, he does understand and express lucidly the experience of intense romantic love between two persons: “Passion beholds its object as a perfect unit. The soul is wholly embodied, and the body is wholly ensouled” (Emerson 2000: 197). This is the intense desire between two lovers to give and to receive in heart, body, and soul, to share the whole of their body-minds with each other.

However, Emerson’s romantic love, just as Diotima’s *eros*, points beyond interpersonal love toward allegedly higher, worthier, forms of love. Thus, for Emerson, “even love, which is the deification of persons, must become more impersonal every day” (2000: 197). This is bound up with Emerson’s Transcendentalist form of idealism—that is, with his view that the universe is primarily of the nature of spirit or idea, that physical nature is infused with the life of spirit and is its expression, and that each of us is an integral part of that spiritual-natural whole. He had articulated this view in his 1836 essay “Nature,” where he wrote of transcendent intellectual and spiritual experience within the immanent beauty of nature:

Standing on the bare ground—my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and parcel of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental; to be brothers, to be acquaintances, master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty.

(2000: 6)

Accordingly, the highest form of love to which we can aspire, as integral parts of the spiritual whole, is the impersonal love of Divinity, of Universal Being, in all its beauty. Romantic interpersonal love points the way toward such love. Thus, in “Love” Emerson writes:

But this dream of love, though beautiful, is only one scene in our play. In the procession of the soul from within outward, it enlarges its circles ever, like the pebble thrown into the pond, or the light proceeding from the orb.

(2000: 197)

The lover’s soul grows from loving particular things and persons toward loving Divinity.

This process is reflected in Emerson’s account of a romantic loving relationship as exemplified in heterosexual marriage. The young lovers evolve from the enamored passion and joy of their initial enchantment with each other to the sorrow and disillusionment of gradually discovering each other’s flaws. Yet, they were initially attracted to each other’s signs of loveliness and virtue, and such loveliness and virtue remains in them, even if imperfect. The lovers then come to love the substance, rather than the signs, of each other’s virtues, and their wounded affection is repaired. From then onward, their loving relationship matures, as they undergo a variety of changes in their widening regard and deepening understanding of each other. They learn to love each other with all their virtues and vices, and they come to represent humankind to each other (Emerson 2000: 198). Finally, however, the lovers let go of their romantic love as they “exchange the passion which once could not lose sight of its object, for a cheerful disengaged furtherance, whether present or absent, of each other’s designs” (Emerson 2000: 199). From my perspective, Emerson marks here a transition from passionate desire-love, or *eros*, between the lovers, toward a form of friendship, perhaps akin to the *philia* that Vlastos finds in Aristotle (1973). They encourage each other’s projects and aims with detachment. Though this may seem disappointing to romantics, I think it does capture an important experiential possibility—namely, that when the passion of desire-love is not involved, it becomes much easier for the lover to encourage and foster the growth of his or her beloved’s projects when these projects require their absence and, perhaps, a relative measure of impersonal distance. In such cases, though, personal love is not bittersweet. It is rather bland.

In the end, for Emerson personal, romantic love is training “for a love which knows no sex, nor person, nor partiality, but which seeks virtue and wisdom everywhere, to the end of increasing virtue and wisdom” (Emerson 2000: 199). He recognizes that experientially this is often painful because we have to let go of our intense affections for particular things and persons. Albeit difficult, this is worthwhile given Emerson’s optimistic view that we are all part and parcel of Nature–Divinity:

The warm loves and fears, that swept over us as clouds, must lose their finite character and blend with God, to attain their own perfection. But we need not fear that we can lose any thing by the progress of the soul. The soul must be trusted to the end. That which is so beautiful and attractive as these relations, must be succeeded and supplanted only by what is more beautiful, and so on forever.

(2000: 200)

If romantic love between persons ceases, something better, finer, and more beautiful emerges.

I pondered this for a good while. Emerson placed greater experiential and philosophical value in interpersonal love—in this case, romantic love—than Diotima. Emerson’s romantic lovers need not look past or beyond each other in order to grow in excellence of character and mind;

they can in fact learn from each other and grow together. In spite of his optimism, moreover, he understood the pain and sorrow that people feel when undergoing difficulties and even parting with a lover. He sensed the bittersweet taste of *eros* more acutely and distinctly than Diotima. He understood, for example, that when my relationship with my ex-lover ended, a possibility of great vital significance had been severed both for me and for her. The pain may have led each of us to grow through a different path than the one described by Emerson. Perhaps we had learned to direct our love to ever-expanding circles of being—to knowing other people, to cherishing other forms of beauty in art, literature, and philosophy. Emerson captured all of these aspects of the loving experience. And yet, in the end his ascent also pointed toward impersonal love as an ideal—love of beauty, excellence, and wisdom; love of the impersonal Divinity. I remained dissatisfied in my gut and heart. Why should the love of persons be any less meaningful and valuable? In my loving experience, our loss of each other had been significant and she, as a person, was irreplaceable and unexchangeable to me. Other lovers, equally valuable, could arrive into our respective lives. From my perspective, however, one interpersonal love could not be exchanged for another, nor could it be transcended by the love of Universal Being.

Peirce's Agape

I sought an account of interpersonal love that does not seek eventual creative sublimation, ideal contemplation, or impersonal transcendence, but rather remains focused on persons. In his 1893 essay “Evolutionary Love,” Charles Peirce emphatically affirms,

Love is not directed to abstractions but to persons, not to persons we do not know, nor to numbers of people, but to our own dear ones, our family and neighbors. “Our neighbor,” we remember, is one whom we live near, not locally perhaps, but in life and feeling.

(Peirce 1992: 354)

He writes this in contrast to what he calls the “public spirit” of ethical theories like utilitarianism, in which an agent’s actions ought to aim at maximizing the common good—such a public spirit may have its place and function in society, but it is not love because it is not directed at persons (Peirce 1992: 356). By love Peirce means *agape* or cherishing-love, which he describes in contrast to *eros*:

Philosophy, when just escaping from its golden pupa-skin, mythology, proclaimed the great evolutionary agency of the universe to be Love. Or ... let us say Eros, the exuberance-love. Afterwards Empedocles set up passionate-love and hate as the two coordinate powers of the universe.

(Peirce 1992: 352)

Peirce means that at the rise of ancient Greek philosophy, several philosophers postulated *eros* as a cosmic mediator between opposites that hate each other—hot and cold, bitter and sweet, wet and dry, and so on. This is reflected, perhaps, in Plato’s *Symposium* when the character Eryximachus argues that Eros is just such a mediator that brings harmony between opposites to cause health in organisms, good climate in the Earth, harmony and rhythm in music, political justice in society, and piety of humankind toward the gods. For Eryximachus, the power of Love is greatest when Love “is directed, in temperance and justice, toward the good, whether in heaven

or on earth: happiness and good fortune, the bonds of human society, concord with the gods above—all these are among [Love's] gifts" (Plato 1989: 188d).

According to Peirce, in this understanding of exuberance-, passionate-, or desiring-love, hatred and love are equal and opposite powers. In contrast, for Peirce *agape* or cherishing-love is the only real, effective cosmic power of mediation that leads to growth and harmony, whereas hatred is but the absence of love. Peirce inherited this concept of *agape* from the Christian gospel of Saint John, but he secularized it and incorporated it into his philosophical cosmology as a central evolutionary force. That is a complex philosophical issue in itself. At the time of my inquiry, I focused on the implications of this concept of cherishing-love for interpersonal relations.

Describing the action of *agape*, Peirce writes: "The movement of love is circular, at one and the same impulse projecting creations into independency and drawing them into harmony" (Peirce 1992: 353). This may be illustrated by the cherishing-love that parents may have for their children. Agapistic parents at once recognize and respect the spontaneity, freedom, intrinsic worth, and independent life-ends of their children while nurturing their wellbeing and fostering their growth toward those life-ends. More generally, *agape* is unconditional love that cherishes and nurtures the wellbeing of the beloved persons so they can thrive and grow toward their own ends (Anderson and Ventimiglia 2006: 170–3). I tend to imagine it in terms of movement along a spiral rather than a circular movement. The beloved person unfolds and develops from the center or core outward, expanding and growing in terms of experiences, capabilities, projects, and life-guiding aims while maintaining harmony and integrity of wellbeing. The agapistic lover recognizes the independent life-trajectory of the beloved persons toward their own growing and evolving aims. The lover also fosters their growth through effective care and nurture. This does not mean spoiling and indulgence. To love agapically does not mean "Do everything to gratify the egoistic impulses of others, but ... Sacrifice your own perfection to the perfectionment of your neighbor" (Peirce 1992: 353). Peirce translates this into the main thesis of "Evolutionary Love," namely that "growth comes only from love, from—I will not say self-sacrifice, but from the ardent impulse to fulfil another's highest impulse" (Peirce 1992: 353). Lovers wholeheartedly and unconditionally seek to promote the growth of their beloved persons. Beloved persons thrive and evolve under such nurturing conditions. For Peirce, other alleged forms of love that are self-seeking or possessive do not lead to growth. Diotima's desiring-love along the ladder, for example, does not primarily seek to foster the growth of beloved persons but the lover's possession of the good and beautiful. The agapistic lover focuses on caring for the wellbeing and development of the beloved.

I found this to be an admirable form of interpersonal love. In many ways I thought it similar to the form of love as *philia* that Vlastos finds in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* but not in Plato's *Symposium* and other dialogues (1973). A loving person centrally seeks to promote the wellbeing of the people they love for their own sake. In interpersonal relations between parents and children and teachers and students, *agape* can act asymmetrically—the former can love the latter agapically because they are in the vital position to recognize the independence of children and students and encourage their creativity and evolution. In interpersonal relations between friends—and between "neighbors" in Peirce's sense of the word—*agape* can function symmetrically—friends can love each other. Agapic love can also function to restore fraught relationships and repair wounded affections, as Emerson would put it. Peirce writes, "Love, recognizing germs of loveliness in the hateful, gradually warms it into life, and makes it lovely" (Peirce 1992: 354). In concrete terms of interpersonal relations, this means that when lovers recognize problems or harmful characteristics in themselves or in the relationships, out of love they want and effectively act to remedy those problems. It also means that when they recognize such problematic characteristics in the other,

their loving gaze can see the possibilities for improvement and nurture them. In the flux of evolving relationships, *agape* heals, restores, and nourishes.

It seemed to me difficult for two people to be purely agapic lovers when erotic desire is involved. When I reflected upon my past relationship, I thought that we had been able to care for each other's emotional wellbeing, respect each other's independence, and encourage each other's personal and intellectual projects. But we had also desired each other in body and heart, and in some ways this intense attraction and desire to be together was incompatible with our individual creative and intellectual paths. We were erotic and agapic lovers at once, and sometimes these loves were in tension. Finding balance became difficult. We both wanted to enjoy, rather than sublimate or transcend, our mutual, body-minded erotic love. At times, we had also been possessive. I wanted her for me; she wanted me for her, even as we both wanted the best paths for each other. In our case, the possessive aspect of *eros* became unsustainable, and very painfully we decided to let go of each other. In some ways, this was an agapic act. We did not harm or hurt each other willingly. We let go in part so that the other could continue along their path more freely. But I had not sought to exchange, overcome, or transcend our relationship. And after pondering her letter carefully, I concluded that she had not done so either. We had loved each other and were both thankful for what we had shared. Perhaps our past love now meant the possibility of healing and being grateful after the intense pain of letting go of erotic-romantic love.

I decided to respond to her letter. I thanked her for sharing with me her affective experience in Italy and her personal projects and intellectual accomplishments. I shared some of mine. And I wholeheartedly wished her to continue to thrive and grow along her life-path. Our exchange soothed and further healed past wounds. Passing bittersweetness turned into zest for continuing to trust that love leads to growth, in spite of painful experiences. And though we had not been able to remain erotic lovers in the sense of desiring and enjoying each other's companionship in body and soul, perhaps after further healing we could become sincere agapic friends, encouraging each other's free and independent growth.

Notes

- 1 This is the pragmatist method first articulated by American philosopher Charles Peirce in his 1878 article "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" (Peirce 1992: 124–41).
- 2 For a rejoinder, however, see Terence Irwin who argues that the ascent to the love of Beauty need not lead the lover away from concern for persons (1995: 310–11).

References

- Anderson, D. and M. Ventimiglia. (2006) "Learning and Teaching: Gambling, Love, and Growth," in D. Anderson, *Philosophy Americana: Making Philosophy at Home in American Culture*, New York: Fordham University Press, 167–87.
- Carson, A. (1998) *Eros the Bittersweet*, Champaign, IL and London: Dalkey Archive Press.
- Emerson, R. W. (2000) *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, New York: The Modern Library.
- Irwin, T. (1995) "Platonic Love," in *Plato's Ethics*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 298–317.
- Nussbaum, M. (2000) "Contemplative Creativity: Plato, Spinoza, Proust," in *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 482–500.
- Peirce, C. S. (1992) *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings Volume 1*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Plato. (1989) *Symposium*, Indianapolis, IN and Cambridge: Hackett.
- Vlastos, G. (1973) *Platonic Studies*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Further Reading

- Anderson, D. (1995) "Peirce's Agape and the Generality of Concern," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 37(2): 103–12.
- Goodman, R. (2010) "Emerson and Skepticism: A Reading of 'Friendship'," *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* 2(2): 5–15.
- Hausman, C. (1974) "Eros and Agape in Creative Evolution: A Peircean Insight," *Process Studies* 4: 11–25.
- Lekan, T. (2007) "Appreciating the Impersonal in Emerson (That's What Friends Are For)," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 21(2): 91–105.
- Ventimiglia, M. (2005) "Three Educational Orientations: A Peircean Perspective on Education and the Growth of the Self," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 24(3–4): 291–308.

11

THREATS, WARNINGS, AND RELATIONSHIP ULTIMATUMS

Hallie Liberto

“You have a choice between the cigarettes and me.” “If you don’t want to marry me, then I think we should go our separate ways.” These utterances are infamous in magazines, advice columns, books about dating, and pop-psychology. We call them ultimatums. They carve out the boundaries of relationships—establish what the necessary conditions are for one person to enter a relationship or stay in a relationship. Less flatteringly, we call them “threats.” Men complain that marital ultimatums force them into marriage before they are ready. Popular movies portray the marriages that result from ultimatums as fraught with problems. Advice columns caution women to use ultimatums only if they are willing to carry out the threat of a break-up. In this chapter I explore three types of relationship ultimatums—those that come in the form of: warnings, threats, and bluffing threats. I explain how ultimatums can be used as part of coercive strategies. I make some suggestions as to when and why they are wrongful. I argue that some coercive strategies within intimate relationships, especially when they are insincere, involve a special, additional wrong that does not arise in most cases of coercion operating outside of intimate relationships.

Before I delve into the topic of ultimatums, I want to discuss the concept of coercion and distinguish it from a related concept, exploitation. This will be important for understanding the coercive nature of some ultimatums. Later in the chapter, it will be a distinction important for examining different uses of exit power in an intimate relationship.

One very common way of distinguishing coercion from exploitation is to associate coercion with threats and exploitation with offers. This certainly is not a perfect method for demarcating the two concepts, and I will not discuss the various, nuanced complaints here. However, as a general method of distinguishing one from the other, it is useful. When the mugger says, “your money or your life,” he is coercing you. When the surgeon demands an exorbitant price for a simple surgery, but you have no time to find another surgeon, she might also say, “your money or your life.” However, she does not coerce you into giving up your money. She exploits you.

Coercion is not the only thing that can have a coercive effect on an individual. Poverty, desperation, offers that we cannot refuse—these all might constitute circumstances that constrain our options, or what counts to us as a viable option in ways that feel coercive (Sachs 2013: 69–70). However, when I say “coercion” as a manipulative strategy, I mean something very particular. Coercion involves taking away some conjunction of options (e.g., keeping both your

money and your life) that otherwise the person targeted by coercion, the coercee, would have had available to him—with the expressed intention of getting the coercee to do what it is rational for him to do in light of his restricted options—something that the coercer wants him to do (e.g., keep his life, but give the mugger his money).

What about the surgeon? He is taking advantage of the fact that the victim is about to die without surgery. Why isn't this a type of threat? Robert Nozick suggests that the reason why this is an offer and not a threat is because the option provided by the surgeon—paying an exorbitant amount for life-saving surgery—is still better than the options previously available to the victim (Nozick 1969; Wertheimer 1987: 202–221; Frankfurt 1988: 28). David Zimmerman does not think that the difference can be explained in terms of “better” and “worse.” He suggests that the reason why the surgeon makes an offer and not a threat is because the option provided by the surgeon is *preferred* by the victim to the options previously available to her (Zimmerman 1981: 121–145). Benjamin Sachs suggests that neither Nozick nor Zimmerman's explanations adequately account for very bad offers. For instance, a sardine-enthusiast might say to a vegetarian: “Give me your wallet and I will seek out and purchase all of the sardines that you can afford.” Now, you do not prefer, nor are you made better off, by the option presented. However, you can refuse both to give the sardine-enthusiast your wallet and refuse to be saddled with truck-loads of sardines. Similarly, you *can* refuse to give the surgeon your money and refuse the life-saving surgery (however little you might want to refuse). Whereas, with a threat, you *cannot* refuse the introduced terms (Sachs 2013: 69–70). The mugger does not say, “if you accept this arrangement, then give me your money or I'll take your life.” The surgeon says, “if you accept this arrangement, then give me your money and I'll save your life.”

These are extreme examples of wrongful threats and offers. The sort of coercion and exploitation that occurs between loved ones is more subtle and harder to discern. However, I will point out that there certainly are marriages that start or stay together because of very brutal uses of these manipulative tactics. Imagine a couple living in a country where men are legally entitled to the custody of children after a divorce. Men in such situations can say, “if you leave me, then you'll never see your children again.” There may be no love between husband and wife. However, there is clearly love between a mother and her children—love that can be relied on, by the husband, to keep the wife in the marriage.

It is also clear how marriages can start out with an exploitative arrangement. Alan Wertheimer considers a case in which a man (A) and woman (B) are dating, and the woman very much wants to get married, whereas the man is rather ambivalent.

Now, suppose that A proposes to marry B if but only if B will agree to terms that are unfair with respect to the distribution of financial resources, care for children, the division of household labor, and so forth. In other words, a traditional marriage. B would prefer to marry A on non-exploitative terms, but that option is unavailable.

(Wertheimer 1996: 290)

Wertheimer asks us to imagine that the woman really is better off in the exploitative marriage than she would be if not married to this man at all (imagine some combination of extreme love, plus children that she would otherwise not have, etc.). Wertheimer claims that it is perfectly reasonable to say that, even though the woman is made better off by the marriage, it is morally worse for the man to marry her in this unfair way than to refrain from marrying her.

Wertheimer calls this traditional marriage arrangement exploitative. He thinks that no matter what the difference is between how much the man values the marriage and how much the woman values the marriage, the man acts wrongfully in using this difference in valuation to

secure an unfair marital arrangement. Whereas if an employee cares less about receiving a job offer than an employer cares about hiring him, then it might well be morally permissible for the potential employee to hold out for an unusually high salary to sweeten the deal. However, for Wertheimer, relationships are not like employment negotiations. Wertheimer says, "Relationships create a new moral context, a different moral baseline, so to speak" (Wertheimer 1996: 291).

We have looked at coercive and exploitative methods for starting/maintaining marriages that are clearly wrongful—involving abuses of power or unfair domestic arrangements. However, there are some coercive ways to initiate marriages that are not clearly wrongful. Consider a common phenomenon that initiates marriages: ultimatums. Often one member of a couple, after a lengthy period of dating, will say something to this effect: if you want to stay with me, then you must marry me/commit to me. Now, marriage ultimatums are not the only ultimatums used in relationships. Ultimatums can be used to articulate any deal-breaker. For instance, "if you don't stop using drugs, then I will break up with you." It is clear why this ultimatum might be permissible: maintaining a relationship with a drug addict—or someone who habitually uses drugs—can be too much of a burden to bear. However, marital ultimatums can also be motivated by considerations of real moral concern.

Usually, pre-marital relationships involve romantic and sexual exclusivity—just like marriages. For this reason, pre-marital relationships prevent members from exploring other romantic and sexual futures with other potential partners. Once one member of a couple is certain that she or he wants to commit to the relationship, and the other member is not certain, then the relationship becomes analogous to submitting an article for consideration in a philosophy journal. The submitter may not submit her paper for review at any other journal until a decision is rendered, or the paper is withdrawn. At some point, if the journal has sat on the article for too long, it is sensible for the submitter to withdraw it. If it will be refused eventually, then the time it spends in review is harmful to the submitter. However, before withdrawing it, it is prudent for the submitter to give the journal a chance to hurry up and review it. This might sound a lot like a marital ultimatum: if you don't want to commit to this paper now, then I am withdrawing it. Notice that what I am calling a "marital ultimatum" could just be called a "commitment ultimatum," since the commitment is what the ultimatum-maker is seeking from the marriage. I will continue to use "marriage ultimatum" for consistency, but my discussion could equally well apply to cases of commitment ultimatums that do not come in the form of marriage ultimatums.

Notice that if pre-marital relationships were not romantically and sexually exclusive—more similar to submissions at law journals—then marital ultimatums would not be necessary to prevent harm (opportunity cost) to more-committed members of couples. Of course, marital ultimatums still might be useful in situations wherein one less-committed partner was asking a more committed partner to make a sacrifice (e.g., to move across country, to change jobs, etc.). It might be reasonable to say, "I will only quit my job and follow you across the country if you marry me." After all, quitting one's job and moving are both sacrifices—ones that would be unworthy for a relationship that might end at any time.

Are ultimatums, as I have described them, truly forms of coercion? One might object and say that *if* the more-committed partner really deems the extension of the relationship, on its current terms, undesirable (or deems it a bad gamble because of the opportunity cost), then when he or she voices the ultimatum, it is a warning, not a threat. Certainly, in the case of the drug-use ultimatum, the utterance sounds like a warning and not a threat. ("If you don't stop using drugs, then I will break up with you.")

Some philosophers characterize the difference between warnings and threats (pertaining to one's own future actions) by saying that warnings are descriptions of previously formed conditional

intentions. Threats may use the same words as warnings. However, it is only when we *make* a threat that we form the conditional intention. We link the antecedent and consequent together in our intentions for the sake of the strategy (Sachs 2013: 70–71; Greenawalt 1983: 1081–1124). Of course, threats can also involve no intention to follow through, when they are bluffing threats. Let me explain these differences using the example of the drug-use ultimatum. Sammy wants her partner, Pat, to stop using drugs. Sammy says, “if you don’t stop using drugs, go to rehab, and stay clean, then I’m going to break up with you.”

Drug Ultimatum Scenario, Warning: Sammy no longer wants to be in a relationship with Pat if Pat continues using drugs and has already formed the conditional intention to break up with Pat if Pat does not stop using drugs. Sammy issues the ultimatum, which gives Pat the information and Pat’s restricted options that will allow Pat to make a choice between Sammy and drugs. Of course, Sammy hopes that Pat will choose to stop using drugs.

Drug Ultimatum Scenario, Threat: Sammy really wants to stay with Pat whether or not Pat continues using drugs. Sammy hopes that, if faced with a choice, Pat will give up drugs rather than lose the relationship. Sammy is willing to take a chance at losing Pat by issuing the ultimatum. If Pat refuses, Sammy will carry through on their threat.

Drug Ultimatum Scenario, Bluffing Threat: Sammy really wants to stay with Pat whether or not Pat continues using drugs. Sammy issues the ultimatum. Sammy hopes that, if faced with a choice, Pat will give up drugs rather than lose the relationship. However, if Pat refuses, Sammy will stay with Pat anyway.

In all of these scenarios, the ultimatum is being used with the hope that it will convince Pat to stop using drugs. However, in *Warning*, the ultimatum is not part of any scheme—let alone coercion. Why not? Sammy does not take away Pat’s preferred option (i.e., doing drugs and keeping Sammy) as part of a strategy for getting Pat to stop using drugs. Note that words are not coercive *because* they are an attempt to get the hearer to do something. For instance, imagine Sammy follows up the ultimatum with something like the following, “You really should choose me over drugs. I’m good for you. I encourage you to finish your projects and invest time in your career. The drugs are slowly killing you and, in the meantime, they’re keeping you from fulfilling your dreams.” This is not coercion even though Sammy is choosing her words in an attempt to get Pat to stop using drugs. Sammy has previously reduced Pat’s options—by making a decision that she is not going to stay in the relationship as it is now. With her ultimatum, Sammy informed Pat of the limited options available to Pat. With this little follow-up speech, Sammy is giving Pat reasons for choosing one of Pat’s existing options over another option—engaging in rational persuasion (Conly 2004).

In *Threat*, Sammy is using a coercive technique to try to get Pat to stop using drugs. Perhaps Sammy presents the threat as if it is a warning and says, “I’ve decided that the relationship is not worth it to me anymore if you’re going to keep using drugs.” This is false—Sammy actually prefers to stay with Pat in any case, but has decided to take a gamble in an effort to stop Pat’s drug use. However, Sammy might also be completely honest with Pat and say, “I love you so much that I *want* to stay with you no matter what, and had intended to do so. However, now I’m going to use some tough love and make you choose. It’s either me or the drugs. If you choose the drugs, I’m going to follow through on my threat.”

Before moving forward, I want to make it very clear that I am not claiming that Sammy’s method—the tough love method—is really a good strategy at all for getting Pat to stop using drugs. We know that drug addiction is complicated and that decisions about drug use are rarely made rationally. However, I have chosen a case involving drug use because it is precisely the sort of case in which threats are often implemented in the name of “tough love.”

In this case Sammy is using a coercive technique, and being completely honest about it, in order to get something that she wants. Below, I’ll discuss the moral implications of a sincere

threat. By contrast, in *Bluffing Threat*, Sammy is dishonest, and makes Pat believe that Pat's options have been limited by Sammy's conditional intention, when in fact Sammy's conditional intention has not altered. Below, I will suggest that there might be an additional problem with bluffing threats in the context of ultimatums between members of an intimate relationship.

For now, let us return to the marriage ultimatum—because I suspect that many readers who are sympathetic to Sammy in some, if not all, of the above scenarios will nonetheless find a marital ultimatum hard to endorse. Consider Tammy, who says to her girlfriend, Bette, “If you don't agree to marry me before the lease is up for our apartment, then I'm going end our relationship.” Consider these analogous scenarios to the above cases.

Marital Ultimatum Scenario, Warning: Tammy wants to have a family with children, and knows that it will take time to find someone whom she really loves and who would be a good co-parent. She wants to spend time dating any prospective partner, and living with her. She has done all of these things with Bette for many years. However, Bette has not committed to Tammy. If Tammy ultimately will need to spend years finding someone else, dating, and co-habiting with her, then she needs to get started on that exploratory project soon. So, unless Bette is ready to commit now, Tammy is ready to move on. She has already formed the conditional intention to break up with Bette if Bette will not commit. Tammy issues the ultimatum.

Marital Ultimatum Scenario, Threat: Tammy is in the same situation as above and recognizes the time/opportunity costs involved in staying with Bette. However, she prefers to stay with Bette even if Bette does not commit. Tammy is not ready to move on and has not yet formed a conditional intention to break up with Bette. However, she is resolved to follow through on her ultimatum. She hopes that the ultimatum will make Bette recognize how important the relationship is to Bette's happiness, and to commit.

Marital Ultimatum Scenario, Bluffing Threat: Tammy is in the same situation as above and recognizes the time/opportunity costs involved in staying with Bette. However, she prefers to stay with Bette even if she does not commit. Tammy is not ready to move on. She hopes that the ultimatum will make Bette recognize how important the relationship is to Bette's happiness, and to commit. However, she is not resolved to follow through on her ultimatum, and knows that she probably will not.

Tammy's *Warning* is not coercive, as with Sammy's *Warning*. What about Sammy and Tammy's threats? One important difference between relationship ultimatums, when they are threats, and most other threats that we consider in moral philosophy is that the content of the threat in relationship ultimatums is not wrong. It is permissible for Sammy and Tammy to carry out their threats and break up with Pat and Bette—at least, it would not be a wrong done to Pat or Bette. No one is entitled to another person remaining in a romantic relationship, unless commitment has been made. If there is anything morally wrong with their issuing of threats it is because of the threats' role in a coercive strategy.

Another important difference between relationship ultimatums, when they are threats, and most other threats that we consider in moral philosophy is that the coercers are withdrawing an option from the coercee that they themselves have been providing. In blackmail cases, I might threaten to do something that is otherwise permissible—if it was not done as part of a coercive strategy—like tell your wife that you have been cheating on her (Shaw 2012). However, this would not be the withdrawal of an option that I had myself been providing and sustaining up until this point. The option-elimination involved in blackmail cases usually involves the coercer meddling with something that is not his business. However, with relationship ultimatums, the coercer is eliminating an option that is well within the realm of her own discretion.

Do these features of relationship ultimatums, when they are threats and not warnings, render them permissible? Some think that there is always *something* morally problematic about

coercion—even legitimate coercion, for instance coercion by the state (Sachs 2013: 74). Here is a general way of describing the type of reasoning used by a variety of theorists who think that coercion is a *pro tanto* wrong: For anyone, A, to use a coercive strategy on another, Z, always involves A controlling, or trying to control Z. After all, one is constraining another's options for the sake of re-routing the other's deliberations toward a particular end, rather than merely providing the other with reasons to choose that end (Feinberg 1986: 189–262; Pallikkathayil 2011).

I am not going to take on this view—that there is always something wrong with coercion, and so it requires justification. However, I do want to point out that even if it is not true, in general, it might be true in the context of a loving relationship. Perhaps, when negotiating a raise in one's workplace, it is permissible to threaten to leave the job (perhaps with another offer in hand) just as a strategy for getting the raise. However, in the context of a loving relationship, intentionally reducing someone's current array of options (even by means of withdrawing an option) for the express purpose of trying to get them to do something that they otherwise would not choose to do is a method of steering one's partner's decision-making. Even if justifiable, there is, perhaps, always something problematic or, at least, sub-optimal about attempting to steer a romantic partner's decision. We should try to change our partners' minds through discussion and debate—forms of persuasion that leave our partner in the driver's seat, doing his or her own steering. In other arenas, like in jobs, markets, and in politics, changes that might benefit an individual are often not the sort that can be achieved through discussion and debate, but *must* be triggered by something like an external job offer, a price offer from another supplier, or a threat to vote against a future bill. Certain institutional contexts might demand it, or persons expect it, and plan accordingly. In fact, depending on the job, giving an employee a raise in response to an employee appealing to his own interests might be unfair to other employees.

Further, there is an opportunity cost to using a coercive strategy instead of discussion or debate to persuade a partner in an intimate relationship. If one member of a couple changes his or her behavior because of the other's interests, or the other's reasons, that is a change that is an expression of care—something vital to an intimate relationship. If he or she changes his or her behavior because of restricted options, this is not an expression of care, just an expression of preferences. For example, he or she would prefer to change an element of behavior instead of exiting the relationship. I think these considerations suggest that there is, at least, a moral reason against using coercion in an intimate relationship, one in which two people are meant to care for one another.

If coercion within a relationship always requires *some* justification—in light of the reason against—then this might explain why we are more sympathetic to Sammy's ultimatum-making than to Tammy's. Sammy has more moral justification for implementing her threat than does Tammy.

First, Sammy is more harmed and wronged by Pat's drug use than Tammy is harmed or wronged by Bette's failure to commit. Second, Pat might not be responsive to reasons, offered through means of rational persuasion. It could be that what Pat really needs to stop doing drugs is some external pressure and deliberative control. By contrast, Bette suffers from no addiction that compromises her rationality. Tammy can articulate her circumstances to Bette and Bette can weigh Tammy's reasons and interests against her own. Sammy is better justified in making a threat than Tammy is justified. However, note that Tammy is gradually more and more harmed by Bette's delay and the degree to which she is justified in implementing a threat probably increases over time.

There is a missing detail in the narratives that I have described above—especially important, I think, in the case of Tammy's threat. Just how confident is Tammy that Bette will choose

marriage over a break-up? If Tammy is quite confident (in the way that a mugger is confident that I will choose my life over my wallet), then Tammy does not take herself to be risking much in making the threat. If she knows that Bette won't break up with her, then Tammy really does coerce Bette, in the traditional sense, defensible or not. She knows that her threat will leave Bette with only one acceptable option and, in this way, Tammy steers Bette into marriage.

However, if Tammy is not confident about Bette's ordered preference ranking, then Tammy takes on a big risk in making her threat. She withdraws her own second-choice option, knowing that she could end up with either her first choice or her least preferred option. I think that this type of threat is different. When relationship ultimatums are (i) sincere threats, (ii) with uncertain outcomes, then the threat-making takes on a different character. The threat-maker who knows that her partner will comply sits in a seat of power, as a rule-maker over her partner. The sincere threat-maker who is uncertain whether her partner will comply, and very much hopes that her partner will comply rather than exit, is not in a powerful position. If she believes that her partner takes exit to be a viable option, then by issuing the ultimatum, she is making herself vulnerable to her partner. She eliminates an option valued by her partner, but her partner might well eliminate an option valuable to her. For these reasons, under uncertainty, the threat is not as *controlling*. As you will see in my discussion of insincere threats below, I believe that controlling behavior is particularly problematic in intimate relationships.

When she decides to make a sincere threat to break up with Bette if Bette will not commit to marry her, Tammy resolves to choose a conditional course of action that is different from her preferred one—for an albeit strategic reason. Tammy might not have had sufficient motivation to break up with Bette without making the threat; the threat is what generates her [conditional] resolve (Sachs 2013: 66–68). The same is true with Sammy's sincere threat. Sammy is willing to take on the chance of losing the relationship in order to have a chance at keeping Pat, and losing the drugs. Bette's non-commitment and Pat's drug use may not have been deal-breakers for Tammy and Sammy before they made their threats. However, upon making their sincere threats, they turn these issues into real deal-breakers. Bette is being forced to respond to what is now a real deal-breaker of Tammy's. Responding to real deal-breakers is part of the real, negotiative work of relationship building.

Consider: sometimes a threat is the only means by which we can truly adopt a new deal-breaker—because announcing it to our partner is what generates our resolve. Perhaps we want to adopt a new deal-breaker because we think it is one that is consistent with our self-respect, or what it takes to stand up for ourselves.

Let us now consider the *Bluffing Threats*, made by Sammy and Tammy. In all cases of bluffing threats—inside or outside the realm of intimate relationships—there is the wrong of deception. However, ordinarily, when the content of threats is wrongful, it is morally better if a coercer is *not* sincere. For instance, if the mugger is insincere and actually would never shoot you, certainly this is better than if his threat is sincere, even if the bluff is deceptive. Because of the bluff, you think that you are in a situation where your only options are to hand over your wallet or be shot. Certainly, thinking that you are in such a situation is sufficient to undermine your autonomy and render the wallet “stolen” rather than consensually given. However, it is surely better if it is the case that the mugger does not have the conditional intention to shoot. It is not better in terms of the probable consequences for you. However, it is less wrongful on the part of the mugger—he did not initiate an action that had the possible consequence of you ending up dead.

With relationship ultimatums, there is a difference. First, as I explained at the outset, ending the relationship (if there is no existing commitment) is not any sort of violation of the other person's rights or entitlements—even if it might, in some respect, and for some period of time,

constitute a harm. For this reason, there is no moral *advantage* to a bluffing threat like there is in the mugging case. Further, I will argue that there is a wrong done when a bluffing threat is used in an intimate relationship that goes beyond the wrong of deception.

Keep in mind that when Sammy and Tammy make bluffing threats, they do not turn Bette's non-commitment and Pat's drug use into real deal-breakers. They merely present these issues as real deal-breakers to Bette and Pat. Sammy and Tammy use a coercive strategy to increase the chances of getting what they most want. However, they do not allow their threats to alter their own conditional intentions. So, they are forcing Bette and Pat to seriously consider an outcome that they themselves are not taking seriously—ending the relationship. Now, we could say that this is the wrong of deception that I have described—the bluffing threat is worse than the sincere threat because the bluffing threat implements two forms of manipulation, and the sincere threat just one. However, I think that there is some extra wrong involved in bluffing threats, beyond deception.

With the bluffing threat, Sammy and Tammy don't have a real stake in their partner's decision—or rather, they stand to win but they do not stand to lose (except maybe their credibility).

Part of what makes a threat defensible, I think, is that it is brought about by a real crisis of discontent—one that makes a partner really consider leaving a relationship. When we use our deal-breakers—existing ones, or those adopted through sincere threats—to shape the boundaries of our relationship, and our partner does the same, then we are left with a relationship that is open to all the possibilities that are not governed by deal-breakers. Those possibilities are the subjects of our debates, speculative discussions, hypothetical plan-making, persuasion, temporary disagreements, and persistent disagreements. Whenever we adopt a new deal-breaker, we carve out a relationship with a slightly narrower array of topics in this realm of possibility—which is fine, if it represents our true conditions for maintaining the relationship.

When we implement bluffing relationship ultimatums, we deceive. Further, our deception has a very particular kind of consequence. We usurp complete control over issues that belong in the array of possibilities—the realm of debate and disagreement. If I say, “You must choose between your pornography and me,” and I don't really mean it, then there is a wide range of options on the table that I have blocked my partner from accessing. For instance, there is the option of him continuing to use pornography and me being upset about it, and occasionally arguing or fighting about it. There is the option of him generally avoiding pornography, to indulge my preferences and keep the relationship harmonious, but to use it when I am away, or when we are fighting about something else—and the relationship is already out of harmony. There is the option of him asking me to try to persuade him that there is something wrong with pornography—and that if I convince him, then he will stop using it. These are the kinds of options that are usually on the table for features of relationships that are under dispute. When I make my bluffing ultimatum, I take control of the disputed issue. In so doing, I take it out of the Realm of Dispute.

When one partner regularly makes bluffing ultimatums—regularly threatening to leave the relationship without meaning it—and his partner perceives him as credible (or credible enough that she won't risk non-compliance), then he controls her by blocking her access to all of the possible ways that she could contribute to shaping the relationship. Someone who engages in this behavior needs to know his partner well enough to choose only those ultimatums with which she will comply, rather than leave the relationship. After all, a long-term strategy of this sort cannot involve too many instances of the bluffs being discovered. If he can maintain his credibility, then a long-term bluffing strategy allows the bluffer to control all features of the

relationship that are not themselves deal-breakers for his partner. Knowing what falls into this category is tricky; so, it is the type of manipulation that is easiest to employ in a very intimate relationship.

My depiction of the man with the long-term strategy of employing bluffing ultimatums is importantly different from the man described by Wertheimer, in his example of an exploitative marriage arrangement. In Wertheimer's example, the man isn't bluffing. He only wants the relationship if it has traditional gender roles and an unfair division of domestic labor (Wertheimer 1996: 290). Wertheimer describes the man as making an exploitative offer, rather than a coercive ultimatum. However, we know from the context that Wertheimer provides that the couple has already been in a relationship—such that the woman loves the man enough to favor the unfair relationship over no relationship. We could describe the same case as the man saying, “accept this unfair arrangement or I'll end our relationship.” That is: we can describe his act as a sincere threat instead of an offer.

Susan Okin describes the various ways that traditional marriages are bad for women. She points out that women consent to unfair terms of marriage because men have more exit power. (She has a comprehensive political theory accounting for why men have more exit power, and what we could do to address the power imbalance.) She explains that women “give in” on any number of household disagreements for the sake of keeping their marriages harmonious, and keeping their husbands from leaving (Okin 1989: 134–169). When commentators object to views like Okin's, they often point to the women's consent—much like a libertarian might highlight the fact that workers at a sweatshop consent to their conditions of employment. It is women's choices (e.g., quitting their jobs to stay home with babies) that lead to the conditions that give men more exit power from marriage, and allow women to be exploited.

In this way, we tend to think about (and write about) men benefitting from their exit power as exploitative—at worst. It is rather like an employer benefitting from a tough job market in making his hiring negotiations. However, when we think about (and write about) women benefitting from their exit power—from using ultimatums, for instance—we use the language of coercion. Perhaps men's exit power is more obvious and does not need to be verbally threatened. When a man is unhappy with a relationship, a woman knows that he might leave, whereas women's exit power is less obvious. A man might not worry that a woman will leave him because of some source of unhappiness in the relationship unless she says so. If Okin's sociological premises are still correct, and women still have less financial exit power, then perhaps ultimatums are ascribed to women because women are the only ones who need to say them out loud. This makes them sound like threats.

I am not going to theorize about the difference between how we talk about women's ultimatums versus men's ultimatums. However, I want to end this exploratory chapter by pointing it out, and recommending some consistency. I have argued that ultimatums can be morally permissible or not—and that the difference will have to do with whether they are warnings or threats, sincere threats or bluffing threats, and whether the outcome is uncertain. I have argued that any threat, in an intimate relationship, requires some justification (in ways that threats outside of intimate relationships do not), but that threats with uncertain outcomes are less problematic because they are not devices of power and control. Finally, I have made a case that insincere threats involve a moral wrong beyond deception when implemented in intimate relationships. Insincere threats are power plays to control areas of relationships that should properly remain in the relationship's Realm of Dispute.

References

- Conly, Sarah. (2004) "Seduction, Rape, Coercion." *Ethics* 115: 96–121.
- Feinberg, Joel. (1986) *Harm to Self*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Frankfurt, Harry. (1988) *The Importance of What We Care About*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Greenawalt, Kent. (1983) "Criminal Coercion and Freedom of Speech." *Northwestern University Law Review* 78: 1081–1124.
- Nozick, Robert. (1969) *Coercion, in Philosophy, Science, and Method: Essays in Honor of Ernest Nagel*, ed. Sidney Morgenbesser, Patrick Suppes, and Morton White, New York: St. Martin's Press: 447–453.
- Okin, Susan Moller. (1989) *Justice, Gender, and the Family*, New York: Basic Books.
- Pallikkathayil, Japa. (2011) "The Possibility of Choice: Three Accounts of the Problem with Coercion." *Philosophers' Imprint* 11(16): 1–20.
- Sachs, Benjamin. (2013) "Why Coercion Is Wrong When It's Wrong." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 91(1): 63–82.
- Shaw, James. (2012) "The Morality of Blackmail." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 40(3): 165–196.
- Wertheimer, Alan. (1987) *Coercion*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wertheimer, Alan. (1996) *Exploitation*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Zimmerman, David. (1981) "Coercive Wage Offers." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 10(2): 121–145.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

PART III

Politics and Society



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

12

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Brook J. Sadler

“Modern marriage can be understood only in the light of a past that it tends to perpetuate in part.”

(Simone De Beauvoir)

Introduction

What does philosophy have to say about love and marriage? By reviewing different accounts of love and marriage, I aim to show that both love and marriage are social practices, which are perennially reinvented. As social practices, they are historically and culturally situated, and philosophical accounts of love and marriage reflect their situation, whether by reifying dominant norms and ideals or by challenging them. By juxtaposing various accounts of love and marriage, I show that both social practices are highly malleable, having varied social, political, economic, and discursive functions. Philosophical thinking about love and marriage is a fully normative enterprise, which urges us to scrutinize our basic social institutions and ways of living. What love and marriage *are*, and whether and how they are related, is a matter of what we make of them—individually and collectively. Looking at the ancestors of our current practices is an aid to understanding their present status and the possibilities we have for reinventing them or—what I take to be a form of reinvention—eschewing them. I proceed in chronological fashion, emphasizing developments since the modern period. Because of the enormous literature and the long history, my review is necessarily highly selective.

Philosophical interest in love and marriage has had three main concerns: epistemic, ethical, and political. In the epistemic domain, love is credited with providing access to knowledge, and the question is whether marriage facilitates such knowledge, comprises a significant part of it, or, quite the opposite, hampers it. In the ethical domain, the value of love is weighed against the value of marriage in promoting the good. For some, love is thought to be morally elevating, and the question is whether marriage makes possible this elevation or, to the contrary, stands in the way of a genuine ethical relationship. For others, erotic love is an illusion, a ruse, or a fickle emotion, ill-suited as the basis for a lifelong relationship. Those who hold love up as of high moral importance scrutinize marriage as a vehicle for promoting love; while those who regard marriage as a centrally important social institution will need to account for love’s precarious

connection to it. The ethical concerns ultimately cannot be disentangled from the epistemic; if love is a matter of knowledge, its ethical implications are different than if love is deceptive, leading lovers away from truth or justice. If marriage, as a social institution, is itself founded on unjust social arrangements or contributes to perpetuating them, then we might be urged to separate the injustice of marriage from the laudatory features of love (whether moral or epistemic). So, from the epistemic and ethical, we quickly move into the domain of the political. Understood as a social institution, marriage is subject to political analysis: To what extent does the State depend upon marriage? Is love at odds with State-supported marriage? While some suggest that love is an interpersonal phenomenon not properly under the aegis of the State or, more trenchantly, antithetical to State interest, others see marital love, and the family unit it creates, as the site in which fellow-feeling is inculcated, a necessary component of citizenship and a model for the larger social contract that authorizes the State. It should be clear that the philosophical concerns are fluid and complex.

The Modern Marriage Contract and the Emergence of Marital Love

Modern philosophers inherited several guiding notions about love and marriage from their medieval predecessors including a focus on male/female love rather than male homoeroticism (which was prominent in the Ancient Greek world); a concern with justifying sex, which was suspect as a site of sin or vice on the medieval Christian view; the gender roles assigned in love; and the commitment to the nuclear family as a basic social unit (which emerged in medieval Europe in connection with Christian patriarchal and paternalistic values). These ideas would be molded to fit new socio-cultural conditions. The consolidation of populations in larger cities, the rise of the nation-state, the emergence of Protestantism, the industrial revolution, and the development of a propertied middle class all influenced the social practices of love and marriage and their philosophical representations. As people encountered more potential marriage partners in cities, marriage took a turn from being arranged by elders to being open to individual choice. Factory work and the commerce of cities meant that large numbers of men and women no longer worked side by side on a farm or in cottage industries, but were divided by gender in their work activities and work places. Middle-class acquisition of private property intensified concern with inheritance and therefore with paternity and control of female sexuality. The foreclosure of higher education and the professions to women, coupled with laws that limited women's rights to own property or to custody of their children, left most women dependent on husbands for support. As the modern nation-state developed, so did the bureaucratic apparatus of the law, enabling government to authorize civil marriage, record marriages, and regulate business and property (Coontz 2006). Laws of coverture ensured that women had no independent legal status; a woman was "covered" by her husband, her identity subsumed under that of a man (Okin 1979). Marital status became a well-documented fact, whose primary importance involved ensuring male interests in custody of children, control of wives, and ownership of property. The more central marriage became to securing these interests, the more entrenched became the social norms surrounding marriage—norms for courtship, dating, weddings, and the like.

How do philosophers of this time period construct the relationship between love and marriage? What epistemic, moral, and political values and purposes do they attach to these social practices? Three representative examples will show how philosophers cemented the heteronormative nuclear family, monogamy, the gendered division of labor, and gender essentialism in the process of upholding marriage as the new locus for an exalted love.

In his *Second Treatise of Government* (1690), Locke opposes the patriarchal theory of the divine right of monarchs and (initially) challenges the patriarchal construction of the family—a significant

departure from his medieval predecessors. He sees in mother and father an “equal title” to their children. If an accurate view of families were taken, he suggests, “parental” power would be the model for government, not “paternal” or “patriarchal” power (Locke 1690: VI.52). If both a mother’s and a father’s place in the family were recognized, the authority of any government modeled on the family would have to acknowledge the consent of a plurality of persons rather than the absolute rule of a single person. If it seems that Locke is here defying the patriarchal view of family, reaching toward a proto-feminist politics, he soon reverts to reestablishing it: He claims that fathers, “as the abler and the stronger,” should “naturally” have an executive power within the family (VII.82). He is clear that the father is the “master of a family with all these subordinate relations of wife, children, servants, and slaves, united under the domestic rule of a family” (VII.86). Finally, he reverts to claiming that “the paternal is a natural government” in the family (XV.170). Despite challenging absolutist patriarchal government, Locke leaves in place the basic patriarchal structure of the family.

What is important to observe in Locke’s view is that he articulates a relationship between family and government wherein the marital relation constitutes the “first society,” upon which other forms of society, including family and the commonwealth, are built. The “conjugal society” of man and wife issues from what is presumed to be a *natural* “communion of [their] interests” (VII.78): procreation and the continuation of the species (VII.79). According to this theory, marriage is anchored in natural law and preserved as a matter distinct from civil society and the political consent or contract thought to establish it. Marriage is conceptualized as outside the realm of civil society, a theoretical stance which enables the exclusion of women from the political fraternity of men (Pateman 1988; Okin 1979). Marriage is preserved as a separate, private sphere in which naturally aligned interests and natural affection serve the ends of both husband and wife. Locke does not amplify the role of love, but with marriage cordoned off from the rest of civil society, the way has been cleared to justify its separateness by seeing it as the place in which love is paramount and moral education is possible, themes that would later be addressed by Hegel.

Like Locke, Kant theorizes marriage in relationship to civil authority. However, while Locke takes the conjugal relation (sex) as natural and unproblematic, Kant does not. And while Locke uses marriage and family as a stepping stone into political theory, Kant backs into a concern with marriage from his ethical theory. In his ethical theory, he argues that it is always wrong to use another person as a mere means (to one’s own ends). On his view, sex involves just such a morally problematic instrumentalization of another person: The other becomes a mere object by which to achieve one’s own pleasure or sexual satisfaction. Sex thus appears to be morally prohibited. But if sex is morally prohibited, then the natural end of human procreation cannot be achieved. To rescue procreation from immorality, Kant must argue that there is some form of sex that does not instrumentalize one’s sexual partner. The marriage contract provides the solution he is looking for. Kant argues that sex is morally acceptable only in marriage because the marriage contract ensures that each spouse obtains total rights to the possession of the person of the other spouse. Since the contract establishes a mutual and reciprocal possession, each spouse effectively retains control of his or her own person under the contract. Thus, the apparent loss of individual autonomy is restored by the reciprocity of the marital relationship. Without directly referring to Christian mores, Kant recapitulates the basic Christian stance that denounces all non-marital sexuality and endorses sex for its procreative necessity (Kant 1797; Herman 2002; Sadler 2013). Importantly, Kant’s view of marriage as a contract embeds it firmly in his “doctrine of right” or the philosophical discussion of ethical duties that are properly enforceable by the State. For Kant, marriage is, in a very fundamental sense, a concern of the State. Sex, but not love, is its mandate. And it is definitively contractual.

Kant allows that the marriage contract, in giving possession of the *whole* of one's person to one's spouse, will likely involve more than merely sex; spouses will share various enjoyments, interests, and responsibilities, and the love that starts with sexual inclination may develop into something else over time (Kant 1997: 159, 404). Kant distinguishes two forms of love. One is pathological love, which arises from non-rational inclinations, such as the sexual impulse or emotional feelings and urges. The other is moral love, founded in principles and subject to rational cultivation. Moral love can develop over time and outlast pathological love. Moral love will thus serve spouses well when, for example, "beauty or talent" disappear (Kant 1997: 404). In this way, Kant sees marriage as a relationship that, due to the comprehensive engagement with the humanity of the spouse (his or her whole, embodied person), is amenable to the development of genuine, edifying love.

Yet spouses cannot achieve the highest form of human companionship, which is to be found in the love between friends (Kant 1997: 25). Kant argues that in friendship, the "unity of the persons" is

more perfectly present, and with more equality, than in marriage; for here there is no denying that owing to her weakness the wife needs the protection of the husband, and is subject to his deciding influence in the directing of her actions.

(Kant 1997: 413)

Ascribing gender-based differences in the marriage roles of husband and wife, Kant claims that the relationship between spouses is one of "mutual dominance." The woman dominates the man by her beauty, which is alluring; the man dominates the woman by his intellect, learning, or self-confidence, which she admires. But this relation of dominance is not one of tyranny and servitude, he claims, because of the union established by the marriage (Kant 1997: 23). The complementarity of mutual interests between spouses prevents marriage from mitigating individual autonomy. But because women and men are not equal in their capabilities nor in their social position, the marital union cannot achieve the highest form of love, to be found in friendship among men. Kant's thinking about the potential for marital love is thus limited by his gender essentialism and his belief that equality is required for the highest form of love or friendship (Kant 1997: 412).

In both his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and his *Philosophy of Right* (1820), Hegel takes up where Locke left off, arguing that marriage represents a sphere of life in which contract is not apt (in disagreement with Kant) because love, affection, and sentiment are sufficient to order family life. He sees family life as a preparatory ground in which sons learn values and traits, such as trust and fellow-feeling, that will be useful for them when they take on the responsibilities of public life (Hegel 1807, 1820; Okin 1979). Hegel sustains the separateness of family life by gender essentialism: males and females simply have different natures, which is reflected in the scope and nature of their ethical orientations. Women are relegated to family life where divine law (or natural law) operates, while sons grow out of this setting, transitioning into the public sphere, where human law operates (Hegel 1807: §456–463). He claims that men are "powerful and active," suited to "life in the state, in learning, and otherwise in work," while women are "passive and subjective," more like plants than animals, and suited to family life and emotionality (Hegel 1820: §166). It is important to see how this gender essentialism functions: It guarantees that women remain in the private sphere, lacking the natural attributes needed to transition to the public sphere. And by allowing men to transition, it gives males political dominion over their families; only men can represent the interests of the family because only men participate in the public sphere and become familiar with human law.

The separateness of marriage and family life from the rest of public life, together with women's confinement to the private sphere, and the association of both women and family with sentiment and affection allow Hegel to amplify the role of love in marriage. Hegel calls marriage "ethical love" that goes beyond mere sexual and procreative functions (Hegel 1820: §161). In marriage, there is a "spiritual bond" that is "exalted above the contingency of the [sexual] passions," and spouses form a union that involves "love, trust, and the sharing of the whole of individual existence" (§163). Importantly, Hegel sees men as benefitting from the emotional resources of marriage and family life, while they "struggle with the external world" (§166). Like Kant, Hegel sees marriage as uniting husband and wife in their whole persons. But whereas Hegel deems the resulting union an especially important ethical relationship due to the complementarity of men's and women's distinct natures, Kant believed it was limited by the essential inequality between the sexes. What comes clearly into view with the contrast between Hegel and Kant is that one's outlook about the promise and potential of the marital union depends very much on how one views the two sexes, both with respect to their natures and abilities (allegedly distinct or largely similar) and with respect to their social positions (equal with similar opportunities and vocations or unequal and yet complementary in their respective gender roles). In other words, what sort of love is possible in modern marriage depends on how one wrestles with the reality of gender.

Early Critiques of Marriage: Wollstonecraft, Fuller, and Mill

As early as 1792, with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, feminist critiques of the new form of modern marriage and its philosophical foundations had begun to appear. In a chapter with the frank and piercing title, "Observations on the State of Degradation to which Woman is Reduced by Various Causes," Wollstonecraft adopts the opinion of so many male thinkers that women are insufficiently rational, overly emotional, outfitted primarily for domestic concerns, feeble-minded, lacking the serious virtues, fickle, indecisive, and concerned in the main with frivolous matters. But unlike her male contemporaries and philosophical predecessors, she believes the benighted condition of women is a product of their limited education and opportunity, not of their nature. In short, she offers a detailed analysis of how women's character and abilities are the product of gendered social roles and the enforcement of their legal and material dependency on men. Love and marriage, she explains, are among the culprits.

For Wollstonecraft, women's material dependency on men means that they must seek to marry advantageously, above all else. The result is that women are often "legally prostituted" in marriage (Wollstonecraft 1792: 68). The protection and direction of men, which writers such as Kant and Hegel believed benefitted women in marriage, are perceived by Wollstonecraft as aspects of women's ultimate degradation. Women have been socialized to exhibit an "amiable weakness" and fragility so that they must turn to men for protection and comfort (70). And where others see a benign complementarity formed in the union of man's reason and public endeavor with woman's sentiment and domestic nurturance, Wollstonecraft unmasks this "natural" arrangement, charging that women's moral, physical, and intellectual limitations have been sustained to serve men's interests. Mincing no words, she observes a "male prejudice" in the idea that women's perfection exists in their physical beauty while men's perfection "is allowed to have some connection with the mind" (79). Yet she does not undercut marriage itself, remarking that it is "the foundation of almost every social virtue" (81). The problem with marriage, for Wollstonecraft, is the situation of women, who have no other aspiration than marriage, no real opportunities for intellectual, moral, or physical improvement, and who must

focus on trivial and selfish activities in order to preserve their material and economic prospects in their dependency on men.

Though Wollstonecraft does not renounce the pleasure of love, she calls it into question. Insofar as love is an “animal appetite,” it is short-lived, which makes the initial love that inspires marital unions a precarious basis for lasting marital happiness (83). Furthermore, the current “picture of love” is drawn so unrealistically that women and men alike are left “panting after unattainable perfection” (84). The romantic vision of love Wollstonecraft criticizes is one in which pleasure is paramount and all meanness of “affection and desire” are eclipsed by “pure affection and permanent virtue” (84). Without abandoning love, Wollstonecraft shifts her hopes onto friendship. Friendship is a personal attachment based on esteem, “founded in principle, and cemented by time” (83). It has the power to defeat the “vain fears and fond jealousies” that fuel love and detract from virtue, while fostering “tender confidence and sincere respect” (83).

Wollstonecraft’s critique is based on her recognition of the falsity of the gender essentialism that underwrites modern constructions of marriage and her awareness of the social limitations that enforce gender roles. Though her critique is forceful, she does not fully abandon the potential of either love or marriage, envisioning the possibility of an egalitarian marriage wrought from friendship more than sexual love. Her position preserves Hegelian and Kantian confidence in the marital union, while undercutting their gendered claims, and advances friendship above erotic (sexual) love as morally instructive and conducive to virtue.

In 1845, Margaret Fuller’s *Woman in the 19th Century* further propelled the feminist critique of the separate spheres ideology and unmasked the normative picture of marital harmony that bolstered it. Part of the transcendentalist movement, Fuller believed in a style of individualism that emphasized self-reliance. Fuller’s aim was to remove “all arbitrary barriers” to women’s human potential and development. She believed that all “offices” ought to be open to women, remarking, as if to emphasize how far she was willing to carry the claim, “let them be sea captains, if you will” (Fuller 1845: 329). Like Wollstonecraft, Fuller believed marriage, under its current construction, was a significant barrier to women’s development. Fuller’s discussion of marriage and love carried forward themes established by Wollstonecraft, but added new arguments and expanded the picture of what egalitarian marriage might mean.

Fuller gives voice to an imagined critic, who, seeing women as instrumental in the abolitionist movement, complains that women now seek to “break up family union, to take my wife away from the cradle and the kitchen hearth to vote at polls, and preach from a pulpit,” taking her away from the responsibilities of “her own sphere” (238). Fuller offers several lengthy rebuttals to the critic. Among these, she charges that women’s assent to their allegedly happy condition in marriage has not been established and that a husband’s view cannot be thought to represent the truth. She challenges the notion of the husband as the “head” of the household. She objects to the “contemptuous phrase ‘women and children’” that so nicely elides the interests of adult women and places them under the paternalistic care of men. She compares women in marriage to slaves, on account of their being barred from holding property in their own name and having no legal title to their own children. To those who argue for women’s protection and sequestering in the domestic sphere on account of their alleged physical weakness, she retorts that women are already exploited for their physical labor in agricultural work, as washers, in factories, etc.; taking up the pen or participating in legislation would not be too taxing for women (242). The many strands of argument that Fuller must summon to unlock women’s independence testify to how comprehensive and entrenched had become women’s subjugation in an era founded on ideals of economic individualism and political equality. Women’s subjection in marriage under the laws of coverture was a primary support of their political effacement.

But Fuller does not abandon marriage. She argues that there are four kinds of “equality” in marriage. The first concerns a “household partnership” in which the husband is a “good provider” and the wife is a “capital housekeeper.” The gendered division of labor is clear and there is cheerful cooperation. This is, Fuller says, “good, as far as it goes” (266). Next there is a marriage of “mutual idolatry,” in which husband and wife “weaken and narrow one another” in a shared infatuation. Such a marriage, though apparently enjoyable to the spouses, is not to be admired or emulated. Third is the marriage of intellectual companionship, a marriage of friendship, which may exist without love (266). The highest form of equal marriage is the “religious, which may be expressed as a pilgrimage towards a common shrine” (272). Fuller worries that though this type of marriage offers much in theory, in reality it is often a matter of a woman following her husband in a pilgrimage of *his* choosing, not hers. Fuller’s account of marital equality is interesting for its hierarchical ordering: The picture of complementary, gender-based roles extolled by Hegel comes at the lowest rung. Though Fuller is not direct in her endorsement of egalitarian marriage, it seems that she envisions in the highest form of marriage not only regard for virtue, but shared intellectual and spiritual pursuits. Arguably, this ideal is elitist or classist, but her analysis shows the need to examine more carefully just what “equality” in marriage means.

Fuller’s picture of the highest form of marriage clearly rests on the premise that women must be liberated from patriarchal legal restraints if they are to attain the degree of self-reliance in thought and action that is needed to participate in marriage on equal footing with their husbands: “We must have units before we can have union” (284). She goes so far as to recommend the unmarried life for the opportunities of self-reliance it brings, offering the possibility of “deep experience” and the chance, “by steadfast contemplation,” to enter “the secret of truth and love” and use it for the benefit of humanity in general, rather than just a few (spouse, children) (282). In this passage, the briefest mention of love connects it to truth and to benevolence but not to interpersonal passion or erotic connection. In one sense, this may be the most radical passage of the text, in which Fuller challenges stereotypical denigrations of older women and unmarried women and perceives opportunities for women who remain unattached to husbands.

Here, we can make a connection to the experience of African-American women under slavery, who were prohibited from marrying and whose children were often forcibly removed from their care and custody. With the culturally prevalent norms for family life thus ruptured, slave women and former slaves had to reinvent motherhood, childcare, family life, and erotic relationship. After emancipation, many African-American women chose not to marry: Since the laws of coverture made women the property of their husbands, African-American women were not eager to trade one master for another. Liberated from slavery and not bound to a husband, but also without economic support, they developed forms of extended family support and childcare and traditions of female autonomy that have had a long legacy in American life (Moynihan 1965; Hill 2006). Later, anti-miscegenation laws, which further limited marriage prospects for African-Americans, provide evidence that marriage has also served to support racism and state control of populations according to racial classifications.

John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* continues the line of argument found in Wollstonecraft and Fuller for companionate, egalitarian marriage and extends the comparison between marriage and slavery. He addresses the enslavement of women in marriage not just through their political disenfranchisement and material dependency but through husbands’ rights to sexual access to their wives and their demands on women’s temperament and personality. Mill claims, “Men do not want solely the obedience of women, they want their sentiments ... not a forced slave but a willing one, not a slave merely but a favourite” (Mill 1869: 16). According to this

view, even women's professed feelings of love and sentiment for their husbands are suspect, having been generated under social conditions that do not allow women freedom of thought or sufficient independence to develop authentic feeling.

Mill's analysis of marriage extends beyond the situation of women to the influences that the current marriage practice has on larger social issues and on the general character of men and women. He is clear about the hypocrisy of the institution of marriage in the light of modern moral and political principles:

The law of servitude in marriage is a monstrous contradiction to all the principles of the modern world.... Marriage is the only actual bondage known to our law. There remain no legal slaves, except the mistress of every house.

(79–80)

He sees in women's material dependency on their husbands a model for women's interest in philanthropy. Having never learned self-sufficiency and having been given much of what they have, women see the answer to social problems in likewise giving to those in need. Mill laments that this view of charity precludes greater scrutiny of social injustices and the need to remedy them through broader legislative policies and social initiatives (87–88). He exposes the state of psychological domination, "bribery and intimidation" practiced upon women by men in marriage (12–13) and makes plain the problematic influences on character, for both men and women, that are caused by the subjection of women.

Wollstonecraft, Fuller, and Mill clearly challenged the idea that modern marriage, with its gender essentialism and separate spheres ideology, was the pinnacle of human flourishing or the proper foundation for an exalted love. As social changes and legal reforms advanced the position and rights of women, and as the prospect of gender equality grew nearer, perspectives on modern marriage and its relation to love adapted.

Early Twentieth-Century Radicalism: Goldman and Russell

By the early twentieth century, significant changes had been wrought with respect to legal rights, education, and vocational opportunities for women. There were corresponding shifts in attitudes about sexuality. These changes spelled new forms of critical scrutiny of marriage and love.

The radical labor organizer, writer, and activist Emma Goldman, a.k.a. "Red Emma," utterly denounced marriage in her 1914 essay "Marriage and Love," while praising love in lofty terms. For Goldman, marriage is a "sham," a "hypocrisy," and a "failure," thoroughly antagonistic to love (Goldman 1914: 234, 228, 227). Goldman sees marriage as an institution that endures only because of a patriarchal insistence on "man's superiority" (230). The institution will have to end with the advent of truly free women, she urges, and "no amount of sentimental lamentation" will be able to save marriage. Speaking more openly than her predecessors about sexuality, Goldman holds that marriage (as an institution) prohibits pre-marital sex to the detriment of spouses, who experience "unhappiness, misery, distress, and physical suffering ... due to the criminal ignorance in sex matters" (231). Further, marriage does little to protect children, and the law does little to care for children who are harmed by their father's financial neglect or abandonment. By coercing wives into motherhood, marriage disserves children; they would be better off if "free motherhood" allowed women to choose whether to have children. Then, women could raise children born from love. Genuinely attached by true love to their children and committed to their welfare, mothers would challenge political, economic, and religious orthodoxies:

The defenders of authority dread the advent of a free motherhood, lest it will rob them of their prey. Who would fight wars? Who would create wealth? Who would make the policeman, the jailer, if woman were to refuse the indiscriminate breeding of children? The race, the race! shouts the king, the president, the capitalist, the priest.

(237)

Goldman's powerful critique of marriage goes well beyond the earlier arguments about gender essentialism and the subjugation of women; disestablish marriage, she hints, and you will have pulled foundational blocks out from under larger social institutions that systematically contribute to the oppression of the masses. Goldman's opposition to marriage is of a piece with her anarchist orientation.

But love, love! Goldman is keen to praise love for its spontaneity, intensity, and beauty (228). If the anarchist impulse must derail marriage, love will be an aid to the enterprise:

Love, strongest and deepest element in all life, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy; the defier of all laws, of all conventions; love, the freest, the most powerful moulder of human destiny; how can such an all-compelling force be synonymous with that poor little State and Church-begotten weed, marriage?

(236)

Like Wollstonecraft, Fuller, and Mill, Goldman believes that true, edifying love between men and women is possible. She holds that love can bring about "true companionship and oneness" (239). But when love occurs within marriage, this is purely accidental; if anything, it is surprising that love can ever survive the intrinsically hostile environment of marriage.

In his 1929 book *Marriage and Morals*, Bertrand Russell also challenges many social orthodoxies regarding parenthood, sexuality, family life, and marriage. One of the most remarkable features of the book is its handling of the interlocking components of large-scale social institutions, historical practices, individual attitudes and psychological ramifications, moralizing discourses, and possibilities for social reform. For example, since so many men avail themselves of female prostitutes, Russell considers (but rejects) the possibility of instituting male prostitution as a mechanism for equalizing relations between the sexes. In a brilliant and amusing *reductio* argument, he lays out a plan to implement conservative social values that would rein in female sexuality and secure the nuclear family and paternity: It ends with the suggestion that all police and medical doctors, having authority over women and access to their bodies, would have to be castrated. To be on the safe side, he adds that perhaps *all* men should be castrated (91).

On the serious side, Russell advances a positive view of both marriage and love. Unlike Goldman, he thinks that love can be productively tied to marriage and, further, that the welfare of children is the ultimate justification for marriage. But to make marriage successful, to make it compatible with love and individual flourishing, important changes to the practice are required. Like Wollstonecraft, Russell believes an accurate view of love must strip it of the illusions and deceptions that typically surround it. For Russell, love is abetted by a relation that is intimate, affectionate, and realistic, in which partners express themselves with candor and have knowledge and experience of sex (76–77). As profoundly enjoyable as love is, on Russell's view, it is not the main purpose of life, and romantic notions that view love as eclipsing all other pursuits are to be rejected as unreasonable. A love that effects good must be "free, generous, unrestrained, and wholehearted" (125).

However, current marriage does not conduce to this sort of love or happiness. With its emphasis on sexual fidelity, virginity in brides, and its jealous guardedness against interaction

with persons other than one's spouse, marriage imposes restrictions that do not serve love because they constrict one's ability to grow and flourish as a person. Russell's complaints against marriage, though compatible with feminist criticisms, emphasize the way that marriage hampers individual freedom for both partners. He proposes a "mellowing of marriage":

There must be a feeling of complete equality on both sides; there must be no interference with mutual freedom; there must be the most complete physical and mental intimacy; and there must be a certain similarity in regard to standards of values.

(143)

Russell, like Goldman, thinks of love as an "anarchic force" (128). But instead of seeing it as a weapon to overturn problematic social institutions, he thinks it can find a legitimate place in marriage, which is necessitated by the need to care for children. Without marriage, the State would be left to take over the duties of the father, specifically financial support for children. A limitation of Russell's otherwise rather progressive and radical thinking is his inability to imagine that women could, under different social arrangements, provide for the needs of their children or that men, in a world not so deeply harnessed to the gendered division of labor, might prefer to participate in raising their children without requiring the duress of marriage to hold them to it.

Strong Skepticism about Love: de Beauvoir, Firestone, Kipnis

In her landmark 1949 book *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir brings readers up to date on the state of marriage:

Economic evolution in woman's situation is in process of upsetting the institution of marriage: it is becoming a union freely entered upon by the consent of two independent persons; the obligations of the two contracting parties are personal and reciprocal; adultery is for both a breach of contract; divorce is obtainable by the one or the other on the same conditions. Woman is no longer limited to the reproductive function, which has lost in large part its character as natural servitude and has come to be regarded as a function voluntarily assumed.

(425)

Arguably, de Beauvoir is a bit too optimistic about the status of marriage at the time, but her accounting is in itself an indication of the degree to which philosophical thinking about the subject had become organized around key issues of consent, equality, contract, reciprocity, etc.

Whatever the state of change with respect to marital reform, de Beauvoir argues that marriages "are not generally founded upon love" (434). She adheres to many of the arguments we have seen already, but adds new emphases. Whereas Russell challenged the ignorance regarding sexuality that a prohibition on pre-marital sex effected, de Beauvoir considers how eroticism is stultified by the *institution* of marriage: The prohibition on extra- or pre-marital sex means, especially for women, that sexual intercourse has become an "institution, desire and gratification are subordinated to the interest of society for both sexes" (435). Thus, marriage drags sex and eroticism under the regulation of the State.

Most innovative in de Beauvoir's thinking about love and marriage is the psychological and relational insight she brings to the subject (influenced by existentialist and phenomenological

thought). For example, where Wollstonecraft, Fuller, and Mill hold out hope that a companionate relation between intellectual, spiritual, or moral equals can make of marriage an environment conducive to love, de Beauvoir is skeptical that truly erotic love can flourish there. She argues that erotic attraction “dies” in an “atmosphere of esteem and friendship, for two human beings associated in their transcendence, out into the world and through their common projects, no longer need carnal union” (446). Her many observations about styles of erotic engagement in marriage (several drawn from literary examples) are incisive, but none leads toward a sanguine view of the potential for fulfilling eroticism in marriage. Even when a marriage goes well, she claims, it is a matter of living “side by side without too much mutual torment, too much lying to each other”—hardly a ringing endorsement (471)!

But it is not just the sexual aspect of erotic love that de Beauvoir finds distorted in marriage. The difference in the situations (gender positions) of men and women in society profoundly undercuts the possibilities for genuine love in marriage. A man, as a subject, “endeavors to extend his grasp on the world: he is ambitious, he acts” (643). By contrast, de Beauvoir remarks,

Shut up in the sphere of the relative, destined to the male from childhood, habituated to seeing in him a superb being whom she cannot possibly equal, the woman who has not repressed her claim to humanity will dream of transcending her being toward one of these superior beings, of amalgamating herself with the sovereign subject. There is no other way out for her than to lose herself, body and soul, in him who is represented to her as absolute, as the essential.

(643)

Women experience love differently than men because of their different gender position. Women overestimate their husbands, who are, after all, merely human. Woman submerges her interests, values, opinions, and pursuits in those of her husband, renouncing her own desires and capacities, which breeds some combination of emotional and intellectual dependency, resentment, disappointment, jealousy, fear, anxiousness, strife, and even hate. And men, unduly idolized, develop false notions of their own value and are hampered in developing appropriate attitudes of human respect and reciprocity. Despite the pervasively negative effects of gender on marriage and love, de Beauvoir maintains that there is such a thing as “authentic love.” In a hopeful turn, she writes,

Genuine love ought to be founded on the mutual recognition of two liberties; the lovers would then experience themselves both as self and as other: neither would give up transcendence, neither would be mutilated; together they would manifest values and aims in the world. For the one and the other, love would be revelation of self by the gift of self and enrichment of the world.

(667)

De Beauvoir is clear that for authentic heterosexual love to be possible, we must overcome the patriarchal gender relations that comprehensively structure social roles, political and economic opportunities, and interpersonal dynamics. Perhaps, under such circumstances, love and marriage could be reclaimed.

The women’s liberation movement of the mid-twentieth century brought greater freedom to many women through access to contraception and abortion; entry to higher education; the movement of women into the workforce in more professions, at higher levels, and with more

public visibility; and the gradual erosion of the remnants of the laws of coverture. A growing disillusionment with the separate spheres ideology (Friedan 1963) brought about a cultural awakening or feminist consciousness-raising that, if not directly challenging marriage as a social ideal and normative practice, nonetheless instigated social changes that would begin to alter attitudes toward marriage, monogamy, the heteronormative family, and love. Higher divorce rates, serial monogamy, sex before marriage, cohabitation outside of marriage, and even unmarried motherhood became increasingly socially acceptable in the latter half of the twentieth century. But social change is never linear or smooth. Marriage and love have become even more hotly contested since the mid-twentieth century, perhaps as a backlash to the social upheaval created by the changing status of women.

Critics of love continue to surface. Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970) sees "love, perhaps even more than childbearing," as the "pivot of women's oppression today" (126). Firestone argues that women's preoccupation with love has kept them from participating fully in the creation of culture and encouraged them to pour energy into supporting men in their work and creative and political pursuits. For Firestone, love is a vulnerability displayed between two selves, who struggle to merge, to enact a mutual exchange. But the potential benefit of such love is undercut by the "unequal balance of power" between men and women (130). She traces the psychology of love to facts about family structure, including the arrangement by which women are most involved in the day-to-day care for children. As a result of family structure, women develop habits of emotional dependency, while men require separation from the family context. We can think of this as the psychoanalytic complement to the gendered division of labor wrought through the separate spheres ideology. When men return to the family, by falling in love and marrying, they must justify this by extolling the chosen woman as rising above the class of women in general, who are regarded as inferior. This sort of psychodynamic is the root of modern romance, by which men seek to demonstrate the worthiness of the chosen woman through romantic gestures.

With de Beauvoir and Firestone, though their arguments are far-reaching, we can see the development of deeper interest in the psychological aspects of the marital dynamic. By the late twentieth century, marriage counseling and marriage therapy were pervasive cultural phenomena, which represent huge investments in rescuing the practice of marriage by getting inside the heads and hearts, words and behaviors of married couples. The location of marriage criticism has shifted from focus on legal rights, patriarchal social structures, and economic dependency to questions about how marriage and love can be avenues to personal fulfillment, erotic gratification (that is, good sex), and domestic harmony.

A more contemporary polemic, following and yet opposing this trend, is found in Laura Kipnis' *Against Love* (2003). Maintaining the focus on personal fulfillment and erotic gratification, Kipnis argues that all the *work* that goes into sustaining a marriage (including the psychotherapy and counseling) drains relationships of their excitement, passion, spontaneity, and joy. If these are actually features of *love*, as suggested by Russell and Goldman, then Kipnis' argument is actually *for love* and against marriage. Addressing the idea that love involves a merging of selves, Kipnis argues that the picture of selfhood mandated by modern marriage is stagnant: In marriage, desires and interests are supposed to be constant, unchanging, and predictable in order to facilitate the stability of the marriage and domestic life. The demand for sexual exclusivity in marriage turns spouses into police, jealously scrutinizing each other's behavior, guarding the relationship against external influences that might upset the established order, and engaged in surveillance tactics to assure full knowledge of the spouse's whereabouts and activities at all times. The stability upon which modern marriage is premised, Kipnis argues, is a function of bourgeois and capitalist demands. Married couples must not indulge in extramarital affairs

because they are costly and time-consuming, draining resources that should be spent at work—either on the job or on the marriage. For Kipnis, the same anti-hedonic, tedious, and soul-crushing norms of heterosexual marriage are applicable to same-sex relationships that emulate marital commitment.

At the same time that Kipnis was demystifying marriage and challenging the norms of modern love, gay rights activists undertook a campaign to secure marriage for same-sex couples, using two distinct styles of argument. First, same-sex marriage was defended on the grounds of love: Homosexual couples sought social recognition for their love of the sort that is conferred on heterosexual couples through marriage. On this view, same-sex marriage advocates sought to normalize homosexual love by attaching it to the eminent institution of marriage, ignoring all criticisms of the institution or the kind of love and family life it supports. Arguably, since so many of the criticisms of marital love stem from the unequal gender positions of spouses in heterosexual marriage, same-sex couples may have found such criticisms irrelevant. Meanwhile, opponents of same-sex marriage were busy defending the exclusive heterosexuality of marriage by renouncing non-marital sex, reformulating gender essentialism, and resorting to natural law arguments of the sort first framed in the medieval period (Finnis 2008; Sullivan 1997).

Second, same-sex marriage was defended as a matter of justice. Marital status had evolved, through countless legal and social policies, as conferring significant rights and benefits (Card 1996; Sadler 2008; Nussbaum 2009). Advocates of same-sex marriage sought equal access to these rights and benefits, ending unjust discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Again, this advocacy generally ignored criticisms of marriage on the grounds that it unjustly excluded all unmarried people from access to such rights and benefits (not just same-sex couples) (Card 1996; Sadler 2011).

Arguing for same-sex marriage, Cheshire Calhoun remarks, “[Marriage] is *the* normative ideal for how sexuality, companionship, affection, personal economics, and child rearing should be organized” (Calhoun 2000: 110). Allowing that modern marriage functions to sustain gender norms, she argues that there is a “separate axis of oppression” that bars same-sex couples: heterosexism (120). Calhoun’s thinking here takes us all the way back to Locke and other modern social contract theorists who believe marriage is a pre-political institution, a form of natural society upon which the larger social order of the State is built. According to this logic, if marriage is conceptually prior to the State and if the State depends for its existence on marriage, then the exclusion of homosexual persons from marriage constitutes the effective exclusion of homosexual persons from true citizenship. For Calhoun, following this logic means that same-sex marriage would prove gays’ and lesbians’ “fitness” for participation in this foundational, civil institution. However, an alternative tactic is to deny that marriage has any “special, political importance,” endorsing instead a “fully liberal society” that does not distinguish between various kinds of intimate relationships and voluntary associations. Calhoun leaves open which approach is best (Calhoun 2000: 128–131).

In 2015, the United States Supreme Court upheld the right of same-sex couples to marry (*Obergefell v. Hodges*). The rhetoric employed by the Court in its majority opinion maintains that marriage is central to fulfilling love, to the protection and welfare of children and families, and to individual autonomy. The Court also sustains the view that marriage is at the foundation of society and essential to civilization and progress. These claims, accepted by both proponents and opponents of same-sex marriage, have gone largely unchallenged in public discourse; yet the history of philosophical engagement with love and marriage, as I have shown, is full of objections. If nothing else, there is the incontrovertible fact that the laws of coverture, which constituted the substance of marriage law, were designed entirely to *limit* the individual autonomy of women; this historical perspective on marriage is omitted from the Court’s reasoning in favor of

an essentially romantic view of marriage. It also undercuts the possibility that non-marital arrangements might better contribute to individual autonomy, the welfare of children and families, or fulfilling love. In the past twenty years, several other national jurisdictions have also implemented laws and policies to uphold same-sex marriage or civil unions for erotic partners. To my knowledge, none has allowed that the rights and benefits of marriage (or civil partnership) can be bestowed on persons who are not erotically or sexually involved. This fact makes plain that the State has an investment in regulating sexuality, not just domestic life and family.

Concluding Remarks: Reclaiming Love and Rethinking Marriage

By 2018, pre-marital sex is the norm; cohabitation outside of marriage is commonplace; more and more children are born out of wedlock; and same-sex marriage promises to make homosexual love still more socially acceptable. Polyamory, if not yet a household word, is increasingly a recognized lifestyle or sexual identification. Pursuant to Kipnis' critique of the confining aspects of monogamy, room is being made to recognize extramarital affairs with a more humane and compassionate perspective. Marital love, it is argued, may benefit from extramarital affairs, which may be viewed as a potential resource for revitalizing faded marital love and enlivening the self, an idea Russell would have celebrated (Perel 2017). There has been a lot of change in a short period.

Where does this leave love and marriage? Despite so much change, marriage remains entrenched as a normative ideal, clearly linked to erotic love. Marriage is thought to be motivated by and justified by love. Marrying "for money," once an open aspiration for women, is widely viewed with suspicion or contempt. Marital love is supposed to comprise or to carry in its wake a combination of emotional intimacy, sexual satisfaction, shared interests and pursuits, friendship, economic cooperation, material support, and shared family life (with or without children). Thus, more than ever before, marriage is asked to fulfill a large set of disparate objectives.

Perhaps the most pertinent philosophical account of love that reflects this contemporary view of marriage as a deep, long-lasting erotic friendship is Robert Solomon's (1994) view of love as shared identity. Though the idea clearly has predecessors, Solomon's view makes more of the sexual aspect of contemporary love, a necessary update in this age, coming after the so-called "sexual revolution." And though he does not entirely ignore the problematics of gender, he does not endorse the kind of radical critiques offered by thinkers such as Firestone and de Beauvoir, which might undermine the rosy promise of erotic love. For Solomon, love as a shared identity means that lovers engage in a process of self-transformation that involves an openness to discovery and development (82). The centrality of "identity" here should not be missed. It is not obvious that the shared identity of lovers conduces to wisdom or virtue so much as to their own experience of personal development.

Today, marriage without love is viewed by most as morally acceptable grounds for divorce. Marital love is supposed to be a bulwark against the exigencies of life in the public realm—chiefly, the trials of employment or unemployment; but insofar as marriage confers numerous legal and social rights and benefits, it also provides access to important social goods, such as healthcare, membership in social organizations, visitation rights at hospitals and prisons, and much more. Serial monogamy can be seen as disclosing the centrality of marriage to contemporary life and the conviction that marital love must offer personal fulfillment or the kind of personal growth described by Solomon.

Philosophical theorizing about love and marriage continues to probe both their mutual relation and their relation to the State. Some argue that civil marriage must be disestablished in

order to achieve a wider social justice: Legal and social rights and benefits conferred by marital status ought to be obtainable by all, regardless of erotic affiliation (Sadler 2008, 2013; Brake 2012). But even here, views continue to diverge about the moral and epistemic value of love and marriage. Elizabeth Brake argues that marriage must not only be disestablished but its cultural importance should be minimized. She defends the claim that marital love has no special moral status to justify its centrality in guiding social norms and public policies. She argues that (what she terms) amatonormativity “wrongly privileges the central, dyadic, exclusive, enduring amorous relationship associated with, but not limited to, marriage” (Brake 2012: 90).

I have argued elsewhere that marriage can be theorized as an ideal of erotic friendship that views persons as fundamentally non-fungible and respects persons as whole, embodied beings. Replacing the historically problematic idea of “marriage” with a more neutral concept of “commitment,” I argue that we can preserve the best features of this kind of ethical relationship without the unnecessary intrusion of the State in erotic relationships and family life. Like Brake, I believe marriage should not be held up as the only or the best form of personal relationship or as the foundation of civil society. Yet I maintain that a lifelong commitment to respect another person and to promote her or his happiness provides a uniquely comprehensive form of ethical regard that can foster virtue, deepen self-understanding, promote compassion, and form the basis for both passion and moral love. Like the feminist critics of marriage I have discussed here, I am skeptical about individuals’ ability to successfully engage in this sort of relationship where there is systematic, structural gender inequality. I believe that there are many ways to construct flourishing human families and communities, many ways to practice and exhibit genuine love. Marriage, as a social and civil institution, may be limiting our opportunities for exploring these other alternatives. Love and life deserve freer expression.

References

- Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo. (1999) “The Excellence of Marriage” in *The Works of St. Augustine*. New York, NY: New City Press (originally 401).
- Brake, Elizabeth. (2012) *Minimizing Marriage: Marriage, Morality, and the Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Calhoun, Cheshire. (2000) *Feminism, the Family, and the Politics of the Closet: Lesbian and Gay Displacement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Card, Claudia. (1996) “Against Marriage and Motherhood,” *Hypatia*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 1–23.
- Coontz, Stephanie. (2006) *Marriage, A History: How Love Conquered Marriage*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- de Beauvoir, Simone. (1989) *The Second Sex*. Translated by H.M. Parshley. New York, NY: Vintage Books [originally 1949].
- Finnis, John. (2008) “Marriage: A Basic and Exigent Good,” *The Monist*, vol. 91, no. 3/4, pp. 388–406.
- Firestone, Shulamith. (1970) *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Friedan, Betty. (2001) *The Feminine Mystique*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton [originally 1963].
- Fuller, Margaret. (1994) “Woman in the 19th Century” in *The Portable Margaret Fuller*, edited by Mary Kelley. New York, NY: Penguin Books [originally 1845].
- Goldman, Emma. (1969) *Anarchism and Other Essays*. New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc. [first edition 1914 by Mother Earth Publishing Association].
- Hegel, G.W.F. (1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press [originally 1807].
- Hegel, G.W.F. (1991) *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Edited by Allen Wood. Translated by H.B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [originally 1820].
- Herman, Barbara. (2002) “Could It Be Worth Thinking About Kant on Sex and Marriage?” in *A Mind of One’s Own: Feminist Essays on Reason and Objectivity*, 2nd ed., edited by Louise M. Antony and Charlotte E. Witt. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 53–72.

- Hill, Shirley A. (2006) "Marriage Among African American Women: A Gender Perspective," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 421–440.
- Kant, Immanuel. (1797) *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated by Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. (1997) *Lectures on Ethics*, edited by Peter Heath and J.B. Schneewind. Translated by Peter Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kipnis, Laura. (2003) *Against Love*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Locke, John. (1952) *The Second Treatise of Government*. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Company [originally 1690].
- Mill, John Stuart. (1970) *The Subjection of Women*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press [originally 1869].
- Moynihan, Daniel Patrick. (1965) "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," U.S. Office of Policy Planning and Research, Department of Labor.
- Nussbaum, Martha. (2009) "A Right to Marry? Same-Sex Marriage and Constitutional Law," *Dissent*. www.dissentmagazine.org/article/a-right-to-marry-same-sex-marriage-and-constitutional-law.
- Obergefell v. Hodges*, U.S. 2015, 576.
- Okin, Susan Moller. (1979) *Women in Western Political Thought*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Okin, Susan Moller. (1989) *Justice, Gender, and the Family*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Pateman, Carole. (1988) *The Sexual Contract*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Perel, Esther. (2017) *The State of Affairs: Rethinking Infidelity*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Russell, Bertrand. (1970) *Marriage and Morals*. New York, NY: Liveright Publishing Corporation [originally 1929].
- Sadler, Brook J. (2008) "Rethinking Civil Unions and Same-Sex Marriage," *The Monist*, vol. 91, no. 3, 4, pp. 578–605.
- Sadler, Brook J. (2011) "Public or Private Good? The Contested Meaning of Marriage," *Social Philosophy Today*, vol. 26, pp. 23–38.
- Sadler, Brook J. (2013) "Marriage: A Matter of Right or of Virtue? Kant and the Contemporary Debate," *Journal of Social Philosophy*, vol. XLIV, no. 3, pp. 213–232.
- Solomon, Robert. (1994) *About Love*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing.
- Sullivan, Andrew. (1997) *Same-Sex Marriage: Pro and Con: A Reader*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. (1995) *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, edited by Ashley Tauchert. London: Everyman [originally 1792].

13

LOVE, ANGER, AND RACIAL INJUSTICE¹

Myisha Cherry

Luminaries like Martin Luther King, Jr. urge that Black Americans love even those who hate them. This can look like a rejection of anger at racial injustice. We see this rejection, too, in the growing trend of characterizing social justice movements as radical hate groups, and people who get angry at injustice as bitter and unloving. Philosophers like Martha Nussbaum argue that anger is backward-looking, status focused, and retributive. Citing the life of the Prodigal Son, the victims of the Charleston Church shooting, Gandhi, and King, she claims that we should choose love instead of anger—not only in our intimate relationships but also in the political realm. Buddhist monk and scholar, Shantideva, argued that anger is an obstacle to love. Anger leads to suffering. Love frees us from suffering. All this makes an initially compelling case against anger at racial injustice. In addition, although philosophers Jeffrie Murphy and Antti Kauppinen argue that anger communicates self-respect and valuing, respectively, they make no connection between agape love and anger. In this essay I'll show that the love King and others have in mind—agape love—is not only compatible with anger at hateful racists and complicit others, but finds valuable expression in such anger.

Agape Love

I will begin first by providing an account of agape love and show why it is an apt response in a political context.

The ancient Greeks made distinctions between three kinds of love: eros, philia, and agape (May 2011; Lindberg 2008). Eros is sexual love and it is experienced between romantic partners. Philia is brotherly love and it is experienced between friends. Agape love is usually referred to as “divine love” because it is the kind of love that God has for humans. In this essay I use love in the sense of agape. The reason for this may not be, at first, so apparent. One may immediately realize that I have omitted eros from a discussion about racial injustice. The moral relationship that I am interested in is not one between sexual lovers but between community members. Sex and sexual attraction, although a topic worthy of a discussion for reasons beyond the philosophical, is irrelevant to my project. However, what may be more puzzling is why I have chosen to omit brotherly love from a conversation that involves our fellows. In addition, agape love, some may say, is divine love and thus, is a kind of love that only God can give. It is a love that humans can only aspire to but not actually achieve. Therefore, some may claim that through my

use of agape I am focusing on an ideal that humans are incapable of extending to others. Since philia focuses on friendship, philia is the kind of love that humans can give. Such a love, the puzzled may say, is apt for this discussion.

However, I choose to focus on agape love instead of philia for several reasons. First, philia entails mutuality. I cannot have philia for Jason, for example, if he does not have philia for me. Perhaps it is because we have never met or he does not have a desire to be friends with me. I can have philia for Jason only if he also has it for me. I think this will make love impossible for those who choose to love their enemies because they will be unable to love enemies who do not love them back. Second, it is a generally accepted view that philia responds to the good qualities in the beloved (Helm 2013). I can love Jason because he is generous, hardworking, and smart. If Jason does not have these qualities, I may not love him. In a context of injustice, there are agents who express racist attitudes, create unjust policies, and are complicit in unjust treatment. It may be difficult to find good qualities to love in them. Third, as it relates to agape love, we do not have to accept the divine condition. In other words, we can take a secular view toward agape and view it as unconditional love. Agape is not an ideal. It entails loving a person for their own sake and not because certain conditions have been met. Contrary to philia, me loving Jason (extending agape love) does not depend on Jason loving me. It does not depend on Jason having good qualities. I love Jason because of his humanity. This kind of love is possible and appropriate in a political context.

Agape love is also different from eros and philia in that agape is impartial and directed to all. Eros and philia are both partial and directed *only* toward particular people. My philia for Jason aims at Jason and Jason alone. However, agape is universal and impartial. It aims at Jason but not Jason alone. It also aims at Jesús, Jamaal, Jin, and Josefina.

I find Martin Luther King, Jr.'s account of agape love quite persuasive. For King, agape is not an affectionate feeling nor does it require "liking" the beloved. Instead, love is an attitude. The reason for loving the beloved is unmotivated and groundless, therefore agape is not aimed at a selective few but rather all members of the moral community.² It involves understanding, goodwill, respect, and active concern. Agape is not passive or weak but active and tough. It desires the common good, resistance to injustice, and restoration of the beloved community. Although agape is generalized love toward everyone, it is often expressed differently to particular people.

Robert Solomon thinks agape love is another word for compassion, conceived along the lines of Adam Smith's "sympathy," or "affectionate fellow-feeling." For Solomon, then, agape love is a "gut feeling ... an affective response that consists of feeling sorrow or concern for the distressed or needs of others. It also involves distinctive action tendencies, namely, helping." He continues, "It is compassion [or love], this ability to feel for those less fortunate than oneself, that I would argue is the cornerstone passion of our sense of justice" (Solomon 2007: 66). Solomon's reading of Smith is nuanced but, for purposes of this chapter, I choose to take Smith at his word and conclude that sympathy is not compassion, but something closer to the contemporary concept of *empathy*. Smith explicitly makes a distinction between sympathy and compassion.

Pity and compassion are words appropriated to signify our fellow-feeling with the sorrow of others, sympathy, though its meaning was, perhaps, originally the same, may now, however, without much impropriety, be made use of to denote our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever.

(Smith 1976: 49)

Compassion is our fellow-feeling with sorrow. Sympathy, for Smith, is fellow-feeling with any passion. Most importantly, agape love is not *only* compassion or *only* sympathy, but rather incorporates and extends both compassion and sympathy.

For King, at the heart of agape love is creative understanding giving rise to sympathy/empathy, and thereby Smithian compassion. King claims that agape is more than sentimental outpouring. Liking the beloved is not what defines the love. Liking is a sentimental and affectionate activity. He notes this kind of affection is impossible to extend toward an enemy that bombs your home or crushes your soul. Liking is more akin to *philia*. Agape, however, is greater than liking. King defines agape as “understanding and creative, redemptive goodwill for all men” (King and West 2015: 59). Here King differs from Solomon in that he thinks agape involves Smithian sympathy: an empathetic understanding that comes as a result of putting oneself in the shoes of others as if we were them. Agape involves seeking to understand the other from their shoes. King extended agape during the Montgomery bus boycott. After the bombing of his home in 1956, he extended creative understanding. He writes:

I tried to put myself in the place of the three commissioners. I said these men are not bad men ... they have fine reputations in the community.... They say the things they say about us and treat us as they do because they have been taught these things.... The whole cultural tradition under which they have grown ... teaches them that Negroes do not deserve certain things.

(King and West 2015: 11)

Through agape, King was able to understand what it was like to be in the shoes of the commissioners. Understanding the commissioners from his own shoes would have been easy for King. However, understanding the commissioners in their shoes took a creative understanding. He recognized that this understanding was part of loving them. On the basis of this understanding, King was able also to have compassion for commissioners. Agape for King is “(an) attitude of respect and active concern, one that seeks a common good in which all are included” (Nussbaum 2016: 222).

Another important feature of King’s agape love is that it is “spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless.” In particular, and in contrast with *philia*, it does not depend on reciprocity from the beloved. While Smith notes that sympathy is often biased toward those within our close circles, agape for King “makes no distinction between friend and enemy; it is directed towards both.” Agape does not aim at loving only one person; agape seeks to restore the moral community. Instead of seeing people as distant others, “agape means the recognition of the fact that all life is interrelated” (King and West 2015: 51, 52). Through agape, we recognize that harm to our neighbor also harms us.

Agape is also active and reconciling. King notes, “when I am commanded to love, I am commanded to restore community, to resist injustice, and to meet the needs of my brothers.” Agape thus has an *aim*: restoration of the beloved community. A person who has agape love “goes the second mile to restore community” (King and West 2015: 52). This desire for restoration, resistance to injustice, and loving attitude toward an enemy show that agape is not weak or passive. It is rather tough and uncompromising.

A popular criticism of King’s demonstration of agape love through rhetoric and non-violent action is that it is too self-sacrificial and so other-regarding that it compromises self-respect and self-love (Malcolm X and Breitman 1990). In my recast of his account here, there is no mention of the self. The implication could be that the self, particularly when oppressed, is not worth the same as the others they are encouraged to love. However, we ought not to think the self is unimportant in agape.

First, if one has little regard for oneself, one is not likely to have much regard for others. Hence the Christian commandment that one ought to love thy neighbor as one loves oneself.

James Baldwin articulates this idea in *The Fire Next Time* when he writes that the Negro problem would not be solved until white people begin to love themselves. The idea behind Baldwin's claim is that racism exists not because whites have an extreme form of self-love but because they lack it. Assuming that racist attitudes are, among other things, a failure of agape love, we could draw from Baldwin to reason that agape in fact *presupposes* self-love. This does not mean that a person should love themselves *in order to* love others. Rather, it suggests that the person cannot extend agape love until they love themselves.

Second, influenced by the Black Consciousness Movement, the later King often emphasized the importance of blacks being proud of themselves. In his speech "Where Do We Go From Here" he encouraged them to embrace the mantra "I'm black and I'm beautiful." King did not see the encouragement of self-love and self-respect as irrelevant or a contradiction to agape. For this reason, I am inclined to think that agape not only requires self-love but is the playground for it. The practice of agape love helps one avoid both the death trap of self-hatred and the excess of narcissistic self-love.

Third, agape is an attitude concerned with the community—a community where the self *and* others exist. You, too, are a member of the moral community; you owe yourself the same regard, concern, and understanding that you owe anyone else. Thus, concern for the self—or, more directly, *self-care*—enters into agape love along multiple avenues.

Moral Anger

In what follows, I will argue that anger is a judgment that one has been wronged; it is aimed at leveling the wrongdoer's status with one's own by negating the wrongdoer's implicit assertion of superiority; and aimed further at changes to any societal structures that affirm the false notion that the wrongdoer or people of the wrongdoer's social class are superior. One will recognize that some of the themes presented in my aforementioned account of agape reoccur in my account of moral anger. This, I hope, will convince you not only of agape and moral anger's similarities but also their compatibility.

On a cognitive view of the emotions, anger is the judgment that an offense or wrong has occurred. Solomon and others therefore view anger as a judgmental emotion. It is a judgmental emotion in two ways: it is structured by judgments (ways of evaluating the world) and it involves a particularly judgmental stance toward the world (Solomon 2007: 24). When a person is angry about a wrongdoing in which she is the victim, for example, she judges that a wrong has been committed against her. In anger, the offender is put on trial. Moreover, anger, by definition, places the angry person in the position of a magistrate. The offense knocks the victim down but the judgmental stance places the victim in the authoritatively superior role of judge and jury. Through this process, the angry victim "emerges from a situation in which one has been hurt, offended or humiliated, one repositions oneself as superior, even as righteous" (Nussbaum 2016: 28).

Martha Nussbaum claims that anger commits the error of status-focus. Status-focus occurs when the victim sees the events as being all about them and their rank (Nussbaum 2016: 28). They zero in on the fact that the offender has humiliated or disrespected them, and focus on bringing the offender down. However, I think that this criticism of anger is not a proper description of the phenomenon. If an offender has harmed another, surely the offender is brought down. Nussbaum thinks the offender is brought "beneath" the victim. I disagree. Perhaps through anger, the angry agent brings the wrongdoer from a position of superiority—from which the wrongdoing occurs—to a position of equality. This equality is not one of pain but one of status. A wrongdoing communicates that, "You or others do not matter—I may treat

you however I choose.” Anger communicates, “I do not accept this message” (Murphy 2003: 35). Adopting the stance of the authoritatively “superior” magistrate is thus actually a way to assert *equal* status—the offender is brought down to a level of equality in which the angry agent reminds the wrongdoer of their human failure and thus their humanity, but also their equality with others.

Audre Lorde claims that anger’s object “is change.” A person who is angry about racial injustice, for example, does not necessarily have as their goal the desire to pay society back but may rather seek to transform it. An angry protestor who marches against racial injustice is angry and as a result wants to raise awareness and pressure the authorities to enact change. Here we see that their anger is not about revenge but reform. While critics claim that anger is destructive, Lorde claims that it is not our anger that will destroy us, but rather our “refusals to stand still, to listen to its rhythms, to learn within it ... to tap it as an important source of empowerment” (Lorde 2007: 282).

Joseph Butler thinks that what is problematic about anger is not anger but its abuses. Abuses of resentment for Butler include: imagining the injury, being partial, having a resentment that arises without a reason, having a disproportionate resentment, or an out-of-control outrage. Butler believes that moderate resentment is acceptable and has utility. He writes,

When this resentment entirely destroys our natural benevolence towards him, it is excessive and becomes malice and revenge ... resentment should be used in order to produce some greater good ... and must not be indulged or gratified for itself.

(Butler: Sermon IX)

Here Butler is making a distinction between two different types of anger: sudden anger and deliberate anger. The only anger he argues against is sudden anger. On Butler’s account, deliberate anger can be a rational and appropriate response to racial injustice.

Thus characterized, moral anger is a virtue—that is, in Aristotle’s terms, anger at the right time, about the right thing, toward the right people, and for the right end. There are thus several vectors along which anger can fail to be virtuous. The most worrisome failures of this virtue are that it can aim at the wrong end; not correcting false claims of superiority; or not changing societal structures that affirm false claims.

The Compatibility Argument

Given that moral anger is a virtue and therefore not conceptually about destruction, I will show, following Joseph Butler and James Baldwin, that love and anger are compatible. I will first describe two versions of the incompatibility arguments. I will then respond to them by explicating Butler’s and Baldwin’s compatibility arguments with the aim of showing that moral anger and agape are compatible because both have the same aims and anger can even further agape’s end.

Aristotle notes, “Let anger be a desire accompanied by pain for a noticeable revenge ... and always accompanying anger is a certain pleasure for the hope of revenge” (Aristotle 2004: 1378a37–b15). Here Aristotle explicitly makes a connection between resentment and revenge. For him, anger does not just lead to revenge; it entails a hope for revenge. Influenced by Aristotle, Nussbaum thinks we should opt for love instead of anger because love does not conceptually have this hope for or pleasure in revenge. On her view, this desire for retribution helps us to see “the irrationality and stupidity of anger.” She recommends, “When there is a great injustice ... (the) end goal must remain ... agape” (Nussbaum 2016: 249). Nussbaum does not admit

of anger and love's compatibility and thus claims that anger involves desires that are contrary to the love ethic.

This incompatibility argument is also present in the Buddhist tradition (Flannigan 2018). Typical Buddhist moral pharmacology suggests that anger is produced by self-ego, self-ego is part of an illusion, and this illusion contributes to suffering. If the aim of ethics is to overcome suffering, anger is the opposite of ethics because it produces suffering. However, love is unselfish and it aims for the happiness of others. Thus, anger and love cannot go together. Anger is an obstacle to love. It causes harm, is fueled by hate, and prevents us from seeing others.

However, Baldwin and Butler argue that love and anger are compatible. In doing so, they not only provide new insights into the compatibility but they also respond to the revenge and self-ego concerns raised in the incompatibility arguments.

Joseph Butler writes:

Resentment is not inconsistent with goodwill; for we often see both together in very high degrees, not only in parents towards their children, but in cases of friendship and dependence, where there is no natural relation. These contrary passions, though they may lessen, do not necessarily destroy each other. We may therefore love our enemy, and yet have resentment against him for his injurious behavior towards us.

(Butler 1827: Sermon IX)

If anger's goal, according to Butler, is to recognize a moral injury, prevent it, and have a desire that the injury be punished, then it is consistent with agape love because the anger contributes to goodwill. How can an agent have resentment toward her fellow and still love him unconditionally? It is because her anger can serve as a way to prevent the fellow from harming others; for in harming others he also harms himself. The anger in the passage above is not concerned with revenge. Rather it aims for reform. If agape is an attitude that also aims for reform, we can begin to see how anger and agape are compatible.

Given the historical and present-day injustices that blacks experience in the U.S., Baldwin recognized that "to be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in rage almost all the time." He continues:

There is not a Negro alive who does not have this rage in his blood—one has the choice, merely, of living with it consciously or surrendering to it. As for me, this fever has recurred in me, and does, and will until the day I die.

(Baldwin 1984: 94)

Lorde echoes this phenomenon when she notes that "every black woman in America lives her life somewhere along a wide curve of ancient and unexpressed angers" (Lorde 2007: 146).

However, for Baldwin, blacks are not only angry with their American fellows for their perpetuation of injustice. Blacks also have love for them.³

No one in the world—in the entire world—knows more—knows Americans better or, odd as this may sound, loves them more than the American Negro. This is because he has had to watch you, outwit you, bear you, and sometimes even bleed and die with you ever since we got here, that is since both of us, black and white, got here—and this is a wedding.

(Baldwin 1998: 243)

When Baldwin pens “A Letter for my Nephew,” he instructs his nephew to accept white fellows “in love” and that this love “shall force our *brothers* to see themselves as they are” (Baldwin 1993: 8, 10). Baldwin’s use of “brother” is not alluding to *philia*. It is rather a familial term. As Douglas Fields puts it, Baldwin’s love was “not sentimentality,” it was “explicitly active and political” (Fields 2015: 95, 96). Baldwin was intent on loving the family for whom his affection lies: his American family, but this does not mean that agape love should only be extended to Americans. On the contrary, it was extended not because they were Americans but in spite of that fact.

How can blacks have anger toward their white fellows and still love them? As Lorde argues, anger used does not destroy. Anger’s object is change. Similarly, agape desires resistance to injustice and restoration, not destruction of a better future for us all. Anger and love are also active and not passive. In this sense, anger can be used in the service of agape; for in desiring resistance to injustice through agape, anger can help achieve that goal. They both oppose the message of racial superiority and social structures supporting the message.

Lastly, agape and moral anger are compatible in that they have the same aim: to drive out hate. To that end, love and anger are not incompatible. To the contrary, moral anger at racial injustice and racial *hatred* are incompatible. Solomon hints at this when he notes that Nussbaum’s and Aristotle’s criticisms are actually targeted at “protracted anger,” which tends “towards hatred and manifested in schemes of retaliation and vengeance” (Solomon 2007: 18). This is also why, for Baldwin, blacks are able to have rage and yet love their white fellows. Throughout his essays, Baldwin criticizes anger only when it is tied to hate. This is because moral anger is distinct from the racial hatred that “protracted anger” tends toward. Lorde notes that hatred and anger are very different. “Hatred is the fury of those who do not share our goals, and its object is death and destruction. Anger is the grief of distortions between peers, and its object is change” (Lorde 1997: 282). She makes a further distinction in “Eye to Eye.”

Anger—a passion of displeasure that may be excessive or misplaced but not necessarily harmful. Hatred—an emotional habit or attitude of mind in which aversion is coupled with ill will. Anger, used, does not destroy. Hatred is a death wish for the hated, not a life wish for anything else.

(Lorde 2007: 152)

Also, hate is more passive because it does not believe it can change anything. On the other hand, anger is active and it makes the agent believe it can change the situation (Aarts et al. 2010). The crucial contrast between hatred and moral anger is the end or aim of the attitude. Hate seeks to eliminate the hated person rather than opposing their message of racial superiority or the social structures supporting that message. Moral anger at racial injustice instead aims for political reconciliation and change.

Agape love, too, is the enemy of hate. In his sermon, “Love Your Enemies,” King admonishes his listeners to fight hate with love. He recommends that they do not return hate with hate. Only love can drive out the hate of their enemies. King believed that hate scars the soul and is injurious to the person who hates. Believing that agape love was the opposite of racial hatred, he recognized that hate divides the personality but love unites it. King was emphatic about eliminating hate because he understood that racial hatred is the negation of agape love. Hate’s presence will prevent them from achieving justice and political reconciliation.

While agape love seeks understanding, hate does not want to understand. Hate’s global evaluation of the hated object focuses on the negative aspects of the object’s personality. While doing so, other traits are rendered insignificant (Ben-Ze’ev 2001: 382). In the case of King and

the commissioners, instead of seeking to understand racists through agape love, racial hatred would have led him to focus only on racists' negative actions and view racists only in light of them. Hate often feeds off false information and ignores the person's whole character. Those who hate an object think the object possesses some inherent traits that warrant their hatred. However, through agape love, we apply an empathetic understanding to our enemies. King believed that circumstances and culture had an impact on his enemies' racist behavior. He believed that the person was not inherently evil. Because they are not inherently or absolutely evil, King believed they still had a conscience that could be persuaded through love.

Agape love aims for community. However, hate involves a wish to eliminate the object. The object of hate is not change or reconciliation. The person who hates believes the only solution is elimination. "To hate someone is to feel irritated by his mere existence. The only thing that would bring satisfaction would be his total disappearance" (Ben-Ze'ev 2001: 379). Such hate leaves no room for agape love.

Thus, agape and anger both aim to drive out hate, while hate aims only to eliminate others. Hatred is thus incompatible with agape love. It is also destructive of agape love *and* moral anger's ends.

Moral Anger as an Expression of Agape Love

Having argued that virtuous, moral anger is not only compatible with agape love, but can also further its ends, I will now argue further that moral anger is an expression of agape love. By "expression," I mean that moral anger communicates or demonstrates agape love.

Jeffrie Murphy thinks that anger expresses respect for the wronged party. He notes that wrongdoing conveys a message to the victim that they do not matter. Resentment of the wrongdoer communicates that one does not endorse that message. When a person too willingly gives up their resentment, Murphy believes they are not practicing the virtue of forgiveness but instead are practicing the vice of servility (Murphy 2003: 77). He thinks that indignation at the injury of others is an emotional testimony that you care about them. Resentment at the injustice one experiences is an emotional testimony that one cares about oneself.

Antti Kauppinen argues that anger demonstrates that we care for each other and care about caring. On his view, to value a personal relationship is to care for it, be emotionally vulnerable to its fortunes, and to care for the other person in the relationship. Such valuing involves other-directed expectations such as the expectation that our friends will be attentive to our needs and that they will refrain from hurting the relationship. It also involves us paying attention to how they fare and holding them accountable. He writes, "When what we value is genuinely valuable, these normative expectations are appropriate and anger [at their violation] fitting" (Kauppinen 2018: 42). While I find these philosophers' insights illuminating, I do not think that anger only communicates self-respect or valuing; this view tells only part of the story.⁴ While Kauppinen's concern for valuing is closer to the domain of love, his argument is directed toward personal relationships. He does not account for valuing other relationships such as civic and political relationships. I think my account does.

In this section, I will argue that anger at racial injustice expresses agape love for all and this includes: (1) those who perpetrate racial injustice—even those who do so out of hatred and who, therefore, themselves are incapable of holding Black Americans in agape love; (2) the hated; and (3) the moral community in general. This does not mean that agape love moves from the universal into the particular and thus becomes *philia*. Rather, it means that agape love manifests in different varieties, but the ends of agape are always the same. Most of my argument will motivate the first claim but we need not think that it is *the* most important claim.

If I aim to have the agape love that King describes, this will express itself through moral anger at those who hate as well as those who create unjust policies and are complicit in racial injustice. This is because moral anger expresses active concern for the moral improvement of those not only who are resistant to racial injustice, but also those who perpetuate it, or are complicit in it.

Love is tough and uncompromising. There is nothing tougher than our angry feelings. This is because wrongdoers are incentivized to repent and reform in confronting resentment. In being morally angry, we contribute to the wrongdoer's moral perfection by proclaiming that the moral injury is not OK. We also contribute to their moral improvement by using our anger as a way to incentivize others to not harm. Out of a desire for racists' moral perfection, the moral anger can serve as a preventative method that motivates the potential wrongdoer.

Through anger, we show those we love that we are not only concerned about their treatment of others and ourselves but that we are also concerned for their moral well-being. If we often learn or are deterred by anger, blame, and punishment, it is in the racist's best interest that we respond with anger when they perform moral wrongs. Moreover, the more we love the offender, the more we can get angry with them. This anger does not mean we want to destroy them or make them suffer but it means we want them to do better. It is, as Butler notes, only when this anger "entirely destroys our natural benevolence towards him, it is excessive, and becomes malice or revenge" that we should not have it or endorse it (Butler 1827: Sermon IX). That is why Baldwin warns us about this kind of anger. He notes: "One of the necessities of being black and knowing it, is to accept the hard discipline of learning to avoid useless anger" (Baldwin 1998: 562). But useful moral anger is concerned with and contributes to a wrongdoer's moral well-being.

Moral anger at injustice is a form of criticism. This criticism is not destructive but constructive. It shows that the object of anger has work to do. Baldwin had no problem criticizing America (with anger) because he knew it was out of love. Love is about truth telling. The tradition of black letters is filled with stories, essays, and plays "telling it like it is." As much as black letters paint a picture of black life, they put a mirror to the faces of white Americans. It is this criticism (often expressed in an angry tone) that is essential to love. Those who love you are willing to tell you the truth about yourself. Baldwin knew that criticism fused with truth and accountability was an act of agape love. He writes: "I love America more than any other country in the world, and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually" (Baldwin 1984: 9). This anger is truth-telling.

Whether I like it or not, or whether you like it or not, we are bound together forever. We are a part of each other. What is happening to every Negro in the country at any time is also happening to you. There is no way around this. I am suggesting that these walls—these artificial walls—which have been up so long to protect us from something we fear, must come down.

(Baldwin 1998: 234)

Baldwin's angry criticism was because Americans did not understand how interrelated they were with the oppressed. What we do to one group, we do to all. He aimed his anger at white Americans in order to get them to see how they were hurting themselves through hate. If we love, then we will express anger. Baldwin loved and as a result he expressed anger.

Moral anger also expresses agape love when it communicates respect. As King notes, agape love is an attitude of respect. The respect that King describes is recognition-respect. Having this kind of respect is to recognize that the other has equal moral standing. The respect one accords

to another is not because they have certain qualities but because of their humanity. If respect is a form of recognition, then moral anger expresses respect by recognizing that the racist and complicit others' actions matter in the world. As Robert Brandom notes, "To recognize someone is to take her to be the subject of normative statuses, that is, of commitments and entitlements, as capable of undertaking responsibilities and exercising authority" (Brandom 2007: 136). When we hold people to account (which anger aims to do), we recognize them as moral agents; as humans who have commitments and responsibilities and who act in the world. In addition, because moral anger is not only a form of protest but also a moral argument, such anger expresses the respectful element of agape by showing that despite what anyone has done, they are still human. It expresses that they should not be humiliated but rather challenged or persuaded as humans with equal moral standing.

Not only does moral anger express agape for those who hate; it also expresses love for the hated. As mentioned earlier, anger at a wrongdoing communicates that a victim matters. My anger shows that I do not endorse that message. Thus, in being angry, I show or express respect to the victim and I express self-respect when I am the victim.

Also, if agape love recognizes that life is interrelated, as Baldwin argues above, then by sharing in fellow-feeling through moral anger, the angry expresses agape love. Butler writes:

It is resentment against vice and wickedness: it is one of the common bonds, by which society is held together; a fellow feeling which each individual has on behalf of the whole species, as well as of himself.

(Butler 1827: *Sermon VIII*)

Here Butler appears to think that resentment is a fellow-feeling that holds a society together. His use of fellow-feeling is similar to Smithian sympathy. Through sympathy, we imagine what it would feel like to experience the moral injury and we get angry. We feel the anger that we also see in the victim (although not to the same degree) or the anger that the injured would or should feel given the moral injury that was committed. This fellow-feeling bonds society-members because it connects them to each other's experiences of harm. In this way, no one suffers alone. Through fellow-feeling the morally angry expresses the interrelatedness of their lives. Their anger displays that when one is injured, "we all feel it." In addition, the victim's victimhood is validated by the united indignation raised by the injustice. We express our active concern, respect, and solidarity for injured members of the community when we express anger in response to their experiences of injustice. We also confirm their right to be angry through the sharing in the fellow-feeling of indignation. The validation of both victimhood and the victim's emotional response to it, as well as fellow-feeling, expresses agape in ways that unite the moral community.

Lastly, moral anger at racial injustice committed against another also expresses love in that it shows that we have the moral community's best interest in mind. This is because moral anger aims for justice. When one is angry at the injustice experienced by another, one desires and is motivated to seek justice on the person's behalf. This is what agape love is. On King's account, love is resisting injustice. While reason may be important to creating laws, moral anger is what motivates us to bring the offender to justice. When I am angry at the moral injury done to you, not only have I judged that a moral injury has occurred but also I am often motivated to pursue justice. I display the attitude of respect and active concern that makes agape love. In demanding and seeking justice on behalf of the individual, my moral anger also has other members of the moral community in mind. Agape love seeks the common good in which *all* are included.

Racial wrongs not only humiliate and harm certain groups but also prevent the formation of community; a community that racists and complicit others would be a part of. If the object of

moral anger is change, then anger is never just a call to “leave me alone.” More importantly, it asks, “How might we live together?” Moral anger at any political injustice sounds the alarm that a disruption in the community has occurred and expresses the need for repairing the damage. This captures Baldwin’s interrelatedness point. Moreover, this is why King noted, “Our slogan must not be ‘Burn, baby, burn.’ It must be, ‘build, baby, build.’ Let us keep going toward ... the realization of the dream of brotherhood and toward the realization of the dream of understanding good will” (King and West 2015: 69). Moral anger at racists and complicit others expresses love by articulating this community message.

Conclusion

My aim in this essay has been to convince you that moral anger is not only compatible with love but it is also an expression of love. Moreover, while it may be easy to see why moral anger is an expression of self-love, I have hoped to show how it is an expression of *agape* love. I have done this not only so that we can make proper distinctions and understand the interrelatedness of emotions. More importantly, I hope that my claim can aid us all in evaluating the actions and motives of moral agents who respond to injustices with moral anger. When anger does not show concern for the moral improvement of others, refuses to respect others, and excludes them from the moral community it communicates at best self-love and, at worst, hatred, including self-hatred. Then we have reasons to view such anger as morally suspect. However, truly moral anger in fact shows concern for the moral improvement of others, respects those others, and aims to reform and repair the moral community. We thus have strong reasons to view moral anger as an expression of *agape* love—a love that this world so desperately needs.

Notes

- 1 These ideas have benefited from audiences at Wesleyan University, Princeton University, University of California, Riverside, and Hofstra University. I am also grateful for the insightful feedback of Alice MacLachlan, Axelle Karera, Jesse Prinz, Berrett Emerick, and Adrienne Martin.
- 2 The only grounds for loving is because they are human.
- 3 I do not take Baldwin to speak for all blacks.
- 4 I do not downplay Murphy’s emphasis on “care” here or Margaret Walker’s claim in *Moral Repair* (2006) that anger also expresses confirmation that others value our dignity. However, I want to move from claims only about dignity and respect and offer a more robust account.

References

- Aarts, H. et al. (2010) “The Art of Anger: Reward Context Turns Avoidance Responses to Anger-Related Objects into Approach,” *Psychological Science*, 21(10): 1406–1410.
- Aristotle. (2004) *Rhetoric*, Jenny Bak (ed.), Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.
- Baldwin, J. (1984) *Notes of a Native Son*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Baldwin, J. (1993) *The Fire Next Time*, New York: Vintage International.
- Baldwin, J. (1998) *The Price of the Ticket*, New York: St. Martin’s Press.
- Ben-Ze’ev, A. (2001) *The Subtlety of Emotions*, Cambridge, MA: A Bradford Books.
- Brandom, R. (2007) “The Structure of Desire and Recognition. Self-Consciousness and Self-Constitution,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 33: 127–150.
- Butler, J. (1827) *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*, Cambridge: Hilliard and Brown. <http://anglicanhistory.org/butler/rolls>.
- Fields, D. (2015) *All Those Strangers: The Art and Lives of James Baldwin*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Flannigan, O. (2018) “Introduction” in M. Cherry and O. Flannigan (eds), *The Moral Psychology of Anger*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

- Helm, B. (2013) "Love" in E. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/love>.
- Kauppinen, A. (2018) "Valuing Anger" in M. Cherry and O. Flannigan (eds), *The Moral Psychology of Anger*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- King, M.L. Jr. and West, C. (2015) *The Radical King*, New York: Beacon Press.
- Lindberg, C. (2008) *A Brief History Through Western Christianity*, New York: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Lorde, A. (2007) *Sister Outsider*, New York: Ted Speed Press.
- Lorde, A. (1997) "The Uses of Anger," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 25(1/2): 278–285.
- May, S. (2011) *Love: A History*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Moseley, A. "Philosophy of Love," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. www.iep.utm.edu/love.
- Murphy, J.G. (2003) *Getting Even: Forgiveness and Its Limits*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (2016) *Anger and Forgiveness*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, A. (1976) *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund.
- Solomon, R. (2007) *True to Our Feelings*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Walker, Margaret Urban (2006) *Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations after Wrongdoing*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- X, Malcolm and Breitman, George (1990) "Message to the Grassroots" in *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*, New York: Grove Weidenfeld.

14

LOVE AND POLITICAL RECONCILIATION

Colleen Murphy

It is the ordinary people who appear before the Truth Commission. People you meet daily in the street, on the bus and train—people with the signs of poverty and hard work on their bodies and their clothes. In their faces, you can read astonishment, bewilderment, sown by the callousness of the security police and the unfairness of the justice system. “We were treated like garbage: worse than dogs. Even ants were treated better than us.” And everyone wants to know: Who? Why? Out of the sighing arises more than the need for facts or the longing to get closure on someone’s life. The victims ask the hardest of all the questions: How is it possible that the person I loved so much lit no spark of humanity in you?

(Krog 1998: 59–60)

Introduction

In this chapter I examine the relationship between love and political reconciliation. In the first section I provide an overview of political reconciliation, focusing in particular on the sense of reconciliation as the repairing of damaged relationships. My discussion highlights the silence in the literature on political reconciliation about love, and possible reasons for this silence. The second section turns to love, arguing that we can reinterpret many of the requirements for political reconciliation recognized in the literature as requirements to cultivate love.

Reconciliation

This section provides an overview of different ways of understanding what is meant by political reconciliation. My discussion here sets the stage for the next section, in which I take up the question of the relationship between love and political reconciliation.

I begin with ‘reconciliation.’ The term reconciliation has a variety of different meanings (Radzik and Murphy 2015). It can denote an accounting exercise of sorts, as when ledgers are reconciled and so any discrepancies between accounts are rendered compatible. Not only may balances be reconciled, histories can too. On a different notion of reconciliation, accounts of wrongdoing that are incompatible may through a process of reconciliation be made congruent. Accounts of wrongdoing may be incompatible in a number of different respects. The cause of a

particular wrongdoing may be in dispute, as well as the significance of that wrongdoing, whether an action was in fact wrong, and whatever the subsequent consequences came to be. In interpersonal relationships, two friends may have incommensurable recollections of a conversation that took place. One may recall a commitment made by the other friend to get together on a specific date, while the other friend has no such recollection. When the putative date for a meeting arrives and the first friend finds herself waiting for the second friend, the occasion may arise in the future where the different recollections of the promise made (or not) in the previous conversation may need to be reconciled. In contexts of protracted conflict and ongoing political repression, narratives of the history of a community may also be in need of reconciliation. In deeply divided societies, basic facts about whether the government was implicated in violations of human rights may be in dispute. So too may be the appropriate characterization of events that are in fact acknowledged; a common refrain that 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter' captures the diverging ways individuals and actions can be described. Thus, on some arguments, the aim of processes of reconciliation is to develop a coherent narrative about a community's past (Dwyer 1999). Reconciliation can also be more demanding, where what is called for is not simply making compatible what seems incompatible or in dispute. Rather, reconciliation refers to the idea of 'reconciling oneself to' events. In this sense reconciliation entails coming to accept an event or situation so that one may live better.

Discussions of political reconciliation characteristically concentrate on a different sense of reconciliation, a sense bound up with relationships. Reconciliation understood in relational terms refers to the process of repairing relationships that are damaged (Murphy 2010). Accounts of reconciliation offer an analysis of the source(s) of damage to the relationship in question, the contour(s) of relationships that are repaired, and the process through which repair is achieved. In terms of the contours of relationships that are repaired, it is common to define this as a return to the relationship that existed prior to the rupture at issue (Griswold 2007; Braithwaite 2000; Radzik 2009). However, accounts of political reconciliation are characteristically predicated on a recognition that there may not be in many cases of interest a relationship the terms of which are normatively defensible to return. In these cases, reconciliation is repairing damaged relationships so that normatively defensible terms for interaction are in place for the first time (Philpott 2012).

There are various relationships which may be damaged or ruptured in ways that generate a need for reconciliation, and scholars differ as to whether a single unified account of reconciliation can cover these various cases (Govier 2006; Murphy 2010; May 2011). Spouses, partners, parents, and children or friends may be in need of reconciliation. More impersonal relationships among employees and employers or among members of a religious organization and its clergy may also need to be rebuilt following wrongdoing or scandal. Political reconciliation concentrates on relationships among citizens as well as between citizens and government officials. Even if not theoretically connected, a single event or series of events may rupture various kinds of relationships, all of which subsequently become in need of repair. In contexts of serious civil strife and conflict as well as government repression, marriages may be strained by periods of separation or the trauma following the detention and torture of a single spouse. Family ties can be severed over political disagreement, a phenomenon that can also occur in contexts where political upheaval and divisions are less severe.

Accounts of reconciliation also provide an explanation of the conditions under which it is justified to pursue reconciliation and the value in having it achieved. Calls for reconciliation in the political context generate skepticism and concern when seen as demands for impunity, or as placing unjustifiable burdens on victims (Rotberg and Thompson 2000). Analyses of reconciliation provide resources for distinguishing reconciliation from capitulation to injustice. Bound

up with skepticism about reconciliation is contestation over its value. Accounts of reconciliation specify whether the repairing of relationships is valuable inherently, in virtue of the value that a given relationship has; and/or whether it is valuable instrumentally, in virtue of what the repair of relationships causes, such as stability or an end to violence.

Political Reconciliation

Certain features of political reconciliation were referenced in the previous part, but I concentrate here exclusively on the relationships of interest in this chapter. As noted, political reconciliation focuses on the repair of relationships among citizens and between citizens and officials. The scope of concern can be quite broad, encompassing the general repair of civic relationships. Or it can be narrower, focusing on the repair of the relationships of particular groups of citizens and/or officials. In this latter category, we can find emphasis on reconciliation between victims and perpetrators where the wrongs that occurred were political, targeting citizens and inflicted by officials.

Sometimes processes of reconciliation focus on multiple layers of relationship at once. The direct repair of one type of relationship through a process of reconciliation may also be taken to impact the repair of relationships of a different type. When South Africa transitioned from decades of institutionalized racism under the system of apartheid to democracy in 1994 it instituted a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to deal with past wrongs of torture, abduction, killing, and severe ill-treatment (South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission 1998; Dyzenhaus 2000). The overarching purpose of the TRC was to promote national reconciliation through the acquisition of knowledge about the extent, nature and causes of wrongdoing during the course of apartheid; the relationships among black and white South African citizens and between citizens and government officials needed to be repaired following decades of armed conflict as well as systematic repression and oppression. During the proceedings, which were widely covered in multiple forms of media including radio, television, and newspapers, great emphasis was placed on the interactions among victims and perpetrators. Cases where perpetrators expressed remorse, apologized and asked forgiveness from their victims, and victims in turn forgave, were lauded as models for the new South Africa (Tutu 1999). In lauding these examples as models, the assumption was that national reconciliation among citizens and between citizens and officials would be facilitated by witnessing the reconciliation among particular victims and particular perpetrators.

The example of South Africa above is representative of the kinds of contexts in which calls for political reconciliation typically take place. Discussion of political reconciliation most frequently occurs in the literature on transitional justice (Zalaquett 1995; Minow 1998; Teitel 2002; Eisikovits 2017; Murphy 2017). This literature focuses on societies dealing with atrocities that took place during the course of protracted periods of conflict and/or repression. Societies around the globe have confronted questions of transitional justice, ranging from countries in Eastern Europe following the fall of communist dictatorships to countries in South America following the end of periods of military rule. Other sites of transitional justice include countries emerging from civil wars, such as Sierra Leone and Liberia on the African continent; societies dealing with atrocities committed during regimes of occupation such as East Timor; and societies following the overthrowing of dictatorships, such as in North Africa during what came to be called the Arab Spring.

The context of discussion of political reconciliation shapes the ways in which the challenges of relational repair are framed (Murphy 2017). The rupture to political relationships that processes of reconciliation aim to address is wide and deep. It is a product of wrongdoing that has

become normalized, a basic fact of life around which citizens must orient their conduct. When deliberating about whether to publicly criticize a government, citizens must take into account the anticipation of being arrested if you speak out against the government, even if there is nominal protection of rights to free speech, and the anticipation of being tortured if arrested. As this example indicates, wrongdoing in transitional contexts is widespread; victims number in the hundreds, thousands, tens, or even hundreds of thousands. In some cases, there are victims in the millions. There is a political dimension to the wrongdoing that is an important source of damage to relationships in contexts where calls for reconciliation are made. Wrongdoing is political in the reasons why it happens; it occurs to protect and defend a government under threat or contest a government. It is political also in the fact that it implicates state agents or groups acting with the consent and at times support of the state; it may also implicate groups organized in conflict against the state. It is moreover collective, targeting groups of citizens and committed by groups of citizens.

Sources of rupture to relationships are not only a product of wrongdoing. Relationships are also damaged in virtue of the basic terms for interaction themselves, which are characteristically unjust and pervasively unequal. In other work, I have called this the circumstance of pervasive structural inequality (Murphy 2017). There are two main dimensions along which political relationships among citizens and between citizens and officials are unequal. They are unequal first in the effective freedom, or genuine opportunities, open to different groups of citizens to do and become things of value, such as being educated, being employed, or being recognized as a member of a political community. Differences in levels of education, rights recognized by law and respected in practice, and income do not track differences in levels of effort. Rather, they reflect the ways certain identities along lines of race, ethnicity, religion, or ideology shape what citizens can do and become. Apartheid South Africa structured opportunities on the basis of race, and justified a regime of legal segregation by appeal to the differential respect owed and membership status of racially defined groups of citizens. Inequality can be less explicit by law but clear in practice. Inequalities in opportunities to avoid poverty, participate in political institutions, and be respected and recognized as a member of one's political community are possible in part because of inequality in the opportunities available to shape the terms for interaction themselves. The ability of citizens to shape the institutional rules and norms for interaction may be legally restricted, such as when the right to vote and run for office is denied to a group of citizens, as well as informally restricted by social norms shaping who may permissibly hold office or participate in the electoral process.

Against this background of normalized wrongdoing and pervasive structural inequality, there is a pressing normative need to alter the structure of interaction among citizens and between citizens and officials. Yet achieving this need is highly precarious given what has been called the justice gap that war, conflict, and repression leave in their wake; the resources available to a community emerging from war and repression to deal with past wrongs and transform interaction are low, at the very time when calls for accountability are at their strongest (Gray 2010). Accounts vary in how demanding political reconciliation is, where such variation is in part a reflection of what it seems reasonable to demand in the context of deeply flawed structures of interaction. Minimal accounts emphasize the basic conditions needed for violence to cease and peaceful coexistence to obtain (Crocker 1999). Maximal versions concentrate on more demanding conditions to be satisfied so that violence does not merely cease but more robust, justified forms of interaction are fostered (Walker 2006; Moellendorf 2007). I draw on my own substantive account of political reconciliation (Murphy 2010, 2017) in the next section when identifying ways of linking political reconciliation with love.

Before turning to love, I want to note that discussion of political reconciliation focuses quite extensively on the emotions of citizens and officials toward each other, a focus which aligns with

the subject of this Handbook. Interestingly, however, discussion concentrates almost exclusively on negative emotions, which must be managed or in some accounts overcome. Undergirding this focus is recognition of the fact that negative reactive attitudes and emotions are a prominent feature of societies in which political reconciliation is needed. There is often widespread anger, resentment, hatred, and desires for revenge toward former oppressors and perpetrators (Mihai 2016), as well as shame and guilt among those responsible for wrongdoing (Lu 2008). The normalization of wrongdoing both reflected and produced indifference toward the suffering of members of certain groups. Deep divisions, profound distrust, and lack of sympathy toward members of the group with which one has been in conflict are frequently present (Eisikovits 2009). Distrust is not just a reflection of a reasonable stance to take toward those responsible for the infliction of egregious harm, but also a product of trauma that follows the violence which war brings and which in many contexts touches the lives of all citizens directly or indirectly (Hamber 2009).

Against this background of pervasive negative attitudes and perspectives on fellow citizens and officials like those expressed in distrust, debates have focused on whether political reconciliation requires managing and/or overcoming negative emotions. As Linda Radzik and I (2015: 1) noted in our entry on 'Reconciliation' for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,

While the outcome of reconciliation is oriented toward a future marked by peaceful and just relations, the processes of reconciliation are typically oriented toward the continuing bad feelings, suspicions, or harms that were created by the conflicts and injustices of the past.

Proponents of restorative justice frequently endorse forgiveness, which itself is generally taken to entail the overcoming of negative reactive attitudes. I have argued against emphasizing overcoming resentment and anger, because of the ways in which it risks placing the burden for relational repair on victims and risks overlooking the broader structural change in interaction which must occur (Murphy 2010).

Settling on the necessity of managing or overcoming negative emotions does not settle the way in which this should be pursued. The standard 'toolkit' of transitional justice typically includes criminal trials, truth commissions, reparations, and apologies. Each of these processes has been evaluated as a mechanism for either encouraging forgiveness or serving as an outlet for resentment and anger. As noted above, Desmond Tutu particularly lauded the participants in the TRC who were able to achieve the aspirations of restorative justice through forgiveness by victims. Starting from the assumption that governments should acknowledge and socialize the emotions of its citizens, Mihaela Mihai (2016) argues that courts in particular can play a critical role in the appropriate socialization of these negative emotions. She takes resentment and indignation to express judgments of injustice, and, as such, they constitute legitimate reactions to injustice. She argues that resentment and indignation should be acknowledged for their own sake, and for instrumental reasons (left unattended stability is threatened). She argues that democratic norms and democratic legitimacy depend upon government institutions recognizing the valid claims often at the core of such emotions and, at the same, channeling these emotions so that they are expressed in democratically legitimate ways. Mihai examines the role that courts may play (through processes of judicial review and in criminal trials), as engines for the appropriate socialization of negative emotions. The way that courts justify their decision can crucially impact the prevalence and modes of expression of such emotions. By recognizing the legitimacy of resentment when it is legitimate, and challenging it when not, courts can engage citizens in understanding what equal respect and concern require.

What is striking about discussions of political reconciliation in the literature on transitional justice is the almost complete absence of appeals to love. In part, this may be out of the sense of the practical impossibility of calling for love in the midst of so much anger and hate. Against the background of disagreement regarding how much we can reasonably demand of change in political relationships, appealing to love may seem beyond what even the most demanding account of political reconciliation can reasonably require. In part, the omission of discussion of love may also reflect a sense of the inappropriateness of the calls for love in the midst of such much wrongdoing. Aspiring to overcome resentment and anger over having been wronged via a process of forgiveness is controversial enough; to replace the absence of anger with a positive emotion like love is more controversial still. Finally, wariness about love may stem from discomfort in appealing to what one political analogue of love, patriotism, looks like. In many contexts, xenophobic and racially or ethnically defined nationalism undergirded and motivated ethnic cleansing, genocide, and/or apartheid. To call for love of fellow citizens against the background of this history is to risk evoking precisely the emotions that unleashed widespread wrongdoing and suffering in the very recent past.

Despite the silence about love and reasons for caution in making this link, the relationship between love and political reconciliation is worth considering in greater detail. As I discuss in the next section, appeals to love are made in protests against injustice. Unpacking what such appeals might suggest for political reconciliation is important.

Love

What might the place of love be in the pursuit of political reconciliation? In this part, I identify a place for love in political reconciliation by drawing on Martha Nussbaum's analysis of love and my account of political reconciliation (Murphy 2010, 2017).

In her recent book, Nussbaum (2013) discusses what love in political relationships should look like. Love for Nussbaum is an emotion; it goes beyond a particular way of valuing another individual (Helm 2017). She defines the emotion of love in the following way (Nussbaum 2013: 176):

what do I mean, by love? ... a delighted recognition of the other as valuable, special and fascinating; a drive to understand the point of view of the other; fun and reciprocal play; exchange, and what Winnicott calls 'subtle interplay'; gratitude and affectionate treatment, and guilt at one's own aggressive wishes or actions; and, finally and centrally, trust and a suspension of anxious demands for control.... It is only through trust in an uncertain world and the people in it that one ever finds the way out from a smothering narcissism, if one does. But trust cannot be generated out of rules of fairness alone; it really has little to do with such rules.... This, in essence, is the idea behind Tagore's religion of humanity.

There are a number of elements to highlight in this quotation. First, love is particularistic in its orientation. Its object is specific individuals or specific groups (Nussbaum 2013; Tasioulas 2019). Second, love involves a certain vulnerability, both in terms of a letting go of control over another person and in the recognition that the attachment that is constitutive of our love cannot be fully subject to our will either. Third, love involves a kind of attachment to another, an attachment which means we are impacted by how our actions affect others and responsive to that fact when they do. Guilt at one's aggressive actions is one such instance. Fourth, love is reflected in our interaction, in our "gratitude and affectionate treatment" as well as our "fun and

reciprocal play.” Finally, love carries with it a recognition of the value of the one who is loved, as for example “special and fascinating.”

Nussbaum argues that love has both instrumental and inherent value for liberal societies (Nussbaum 2013; Tasioulas 2019). Instrumentally, love of a certain kind is essential for the stability of just institutions. Institutions cannot be endorsed in ways that John Stuart Mill worried that certain doctrines come to be; institutions and principles that evoke no emotion in us will fail to generate the support and work needed for their maintenance. A commitment to liberal principles and institutions requires refraining from efforts to subordinate others and from efforts to unilaterally pursue our maximal self-interest. If we care about just institutions and a just society we will put in the work to protect them in the face of countervailing temptations. Love can counter and mitigate the anxiety we might otherwise feel navigating in the social and political world with others. It blunts conflict and provides stability. In Nussbaum’s own words (2013: 176–177),

Why does a political project need to think about these personal matters? My suggestion will be that the political culture needs to tap these sources of early trust and generosity, the erotic outward movement of the mind and heart toward the lovable, if decent institutions are to be stably sustained.

Inherently, there is value in caring about people and a nation. This is why “we still should admire and prefer the citizen whose imagination and emotions are alive to the situation of the nation, and of its other citizens” (Nussbaum 2013: 395).

Nussbaum’s primary focus is on liberal societies, and the background conditions she presumes as being present in the beginning of her book are characteristically absent or present in a very diminished sense in the societies pursuing political reconciliation and transitional justice.

For example, Nussbaum (2013: 23) writes:

My question is how to render political principles and institutions stable, and thus the inquiry presupposes that basically good institutions exist, or can be rather shortly realized, albeit in a form that will require ongoing work to improve and perfect.

By contrast, transitional societies in which political reconciliation is urged confront what I call serious existential uncertainty, in which it is profoundly unclear whether liberal democratic institutions will indeed be established (Murphy 2017). Despite these differences, I will argue in this section that if we define love in the manner that Nussbaum provides, it can be linked to dimensions of political reconciliation already recognized though not framed in these terms. We can also make sense of complaints which appeal to love in the face of gross injustice, as drawing attention to conditions for interaction that are absent and facilitate wrongdoing and systematic injustice.

The view of political reconciliation I develop takes as its starting point a diagnosis of sources of moral concern in the structure of relationships among citizens and between citizens and officials articulated by members and scholars of societies enduring protracted conflict and/or repression (Murphy 2010). At its most general and abstract level, there is an erosion or absence of reciprocity and respect for agency among citizens. This is reflected in both institutions and the character of interpersonal interaction. Institutionally, the rule of law breaks down or is absent. When the rule of law is present, law governs conduct (Fuller 1969). Citizens can look to declared rules to identify what standard of conduct government officials respect; this is the standard that government officials enforce in practice. The rule of law treats citizens as agents,

as officials treat citizens on the basis of whether citizens have or have not obeyed legal rules which they were in a genuine position to follow. By contrast, legal rules during repression and periods of conflict may fail to be made public, or may fail to be enforced. Deep distrust is also present, reflective of the pessimistic attitude citizens and officials take toward one another. There is pessimism regarding the competence of officials to fulfill role-related responsibilities that is reflective of an anticipation of ill-will, including a desire to harm or to exploit, on the part of officials or fellow citizens. Moreover, there are absent genuine opportunities, or capabilities, for certain groups of citizens to be respected, to be recognized as equal members of their political community, to participate in political institutions, and to avoid poverty. The absence of such opportunities is reflected in denial of rights legally recognized or protected in fact. Underpinning these failures is a general failure to recognize and respect the agency of members of certain groups of citizens, who are on the basis of that agency entitled to be treated with dignity.

To foster the rule of law, reasonable trust, and relational capabilities, I argue it is necessary to cultivate conditions on which these dimensions of political relationship depend (Murphy 2010). There are a number of such general conditions. Acknowledgment of the need to repair relationships is necessary, and characteristically entails countering widespread denial (often official in nature) about the fact that wrongdoing occurred, as well as about the source and scope of wrongdoing that took place during conflict and repression. Trust depends on countering obstacles to the possibility of viewing certain citizens as agents acting for reasons, rather than what stereotypes or dehumanizing characterizations of members of certain groups would otherwise suggest. These obstacles both block recognition of the competence of members of certain groups and can lead to a failure to understand the motivations and reasons behind violent actions, attributing unalterable ill-will toward those with whom one is in conflict.

To repair relationships damaged in these ways and to do so in a manner that properly acknowledges the resentment of victims and indignation of citizens that is justified, as discussed in the previous section, three further capacities must be cultivated (Murphy 2010: chapter 4). These are what David Shoemaker (2007) labels the capacities for interpersonal relationships. The first is the capacity to recognize second-personal moral reasons from others, reasons that derive their authority from the person expressing them. In expressing our resentment to the person who wronged us, we are communicating a judgment that we have been wronged and inviting the person who is the object of our resentment to respond to this judgment and our effort, to hold them to account for what they have done. The second is the capacity to be vulnerable to the emotional address and appeal of others, a vulnerability which depends on our capacity for empathy. Through the emotions and reactive attitudes that are constitutive of interpersonal relationships, we call on the object of our emotion to respond with emotion, to be moved by what we are expressing and not merely stating. The final capacity is the capacity to be motivated to respond to the emotional address of others, which in Shoemaker's (2007: 83) view presupposes an ability to care, a "disposition to experience mature, complex emotions corresponding to the up-and-down fortunes of X." Normally, Shoemaker argues, we connect caring with motivation; to know what would facilitate the good of someone and fail to act is *prima facie* an indication of lack of care for that person. Absent care, another's demands will "simply have no motivational grip on him" (Shoemaker 2007: 91).

A number of the conditions for political reconciliation I articulate can be reframed as dimensions of Nussbaum's conception of love. First, countering stereotypes and dehumanizing characterizations of individuals and groups is a way of generating recognition of the particularity of such individuals and groups. Rather than seeing an individual as part of an undifferentiated mass, the aim is to generate recognition of the specificity of individuals, who have distinct ties and

aims. Second, cultivating trust is a way of countering a certain kind of refusal to be vulnerable found in transitional societies. The presumption of ill-will characterizing attitudes toward and by (groups of) citizens and officials is itself an important source of anxiety in interaction. Decades of conflict and repression undermine a willingness to be vulnerable to others in a certain way, by allowing political matters to be decided by democratic processes other than by the forceful imposition of one's own will. The denial of agency of members of certain groups coupled with stereotypes and dehumanizing characterizations further undermines prospects for resolving conflicts non-violently; if you are not interacting with groups that are responsive to reason then dialogue seems futile. Such denial also refuses to acknowledge the fact that individuals and groups have a will. Responsiveness to reason, let alone responsiveness to second-personal reasons, seems unlikely. There is consequently also a failure to recognize the authority of certain individuals and groups to make demands on others. Moral agents have the standing to give others second-personal reasons for action, including demands related to how they should be treated by others. Moral agents have the standing to hold others accountable for their failure or success in meeting these demands, as do the reactive attitudes individuals form and express in response to treatment by others.

Third, cultivating care and recognition of the value of others is a way of repairing distrust. Deep distrust reflects the unreasonableness of presuming a lack of ill-will toward oneself on the part of other individuals and groups. There is no assumption of the absence of a desire to harm oneself or members of one's group. There is an assumption of a lack of care: an assumption that those who are distrusted will not be moved by pain that their actions may cause to oneself or members of one's group. There is also an assumption of the absence of recognition of the value of oneself or members of one's group being targeted by violence. The absence of any assumption of trust-responsiveness also indicates an absence of care: there is no assumption that one trusted will act in ways that are consistent with that reliance. Respect for moral agency will succeed only when individuals are motivated to treat others with such respect, which the absence of care and absence of recognition of the value of others erode.

I have suggested that we can link love with political reconciliation by interpreting conditions for the possibility of reconciliation as conditions for the possibility of love. Framing these conditions for political reconciliation as conditions for the possibility of a certain kind of love of fellow citizens and officials provides further insight into complaints made by those subjected to injustice and wrongdoing during the course of conflict and repression. For example, Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel famously stated, the "opposite of love is not hate; it is indifference." The argument above underscores the insights behind this statement. Indifference to the suffering of others is a reflection of the undermining or absence of love, and specifically of love's capacity to care about and be responsive to certain individuals or members of certain groups. Indifference is frequently a core complaint and concern expressed among those who are targeted by oppression or wrongdoing. It is objection to indifference and absence of concern that are at the core of the story with which this chapter began. Ordinary South Africans appearing before the TRC struggled to understand how it was possible that their loved ones should suffer in the way that they did. Not only direct victims, but also citizens, officials, and observers following the work of the TRC asked these same questions. South African journalist Antjie Krog (1998: 59), in the passage right before the one I cite to begin this chapter, writes of the following conversation she had with a colleague reflecting on the testimony being given at the TRC:

"How could we lose our humanity like that? The word 'apartheid' suddenly sounds like a euphemism!" I battle with my voice. "Whites," says Kondlo, throwing back the last of his drink with a grimace, "have no *ubuntu* ... they choke on all their rights, but

they have no human compassion.” Wordless, lost. While Afrikaner surnames like Barnard, Nieuwoudt, Van Zyl, Van Wyk, peel off victims’ lips. The question they keep asking: What kind of person, what kind of human being, keeps another’s hand in a fruit jar on his desk? What kind of hatred makes animals of people?

It is Krog’s own inability to explain or understand the absence of certain capacities at the core of interpersonal relationships, and in particular a failure to care about those whose lives were impacted by the institutional structure of apartheid as well as its more targeted extraordinary violence. It is the same set of questions asked by victims, as they demand to know “How is it possible that the person I loved so much lit no spark of humanity in you?” (Krog 1998: 60).

Framing conditions of political reconciliation as conditions of love of fellow citizens and officials resonates with Martin Luther King, Jr.’s view that anger and love are not mutually exclusive (King 1963; LeBron 2018). Indeed, far from being mutually exclusive, a certain kind of love may be a condition for anger. For anger as a form of interpersonal engagement presupposes that those with whom one is engaging share the kind of attachment to the individual who is angry constitutive of love, an attachment which leads addressees to be affected by and responsive to the anger being expressed. It is also in keeping with King’s view that the need for violence will only be overcome by civic love. In civic love, there is a willingness to be vulnerable to others, including those in transitional contexts with whom one was previously in serious conflict. This vulnerability can be framed as above to be understood to include a willingness to be exposed to and bound by the political decisions on which others will have a say, but in which one has a say too. With civic love, there is recognition of and an emotional response to the suffering by others, recognition which can motivate efforts for institutional reform without relying upon the use of violence to achieve reform-oriented ends.

Conclusion

There is very little discussion of love within discussions of what political reconciliation looks like within societies emerging from extended periods of conflict and repression and confronting deep and wide damage to the relationships among citizens and officials. This omission is not surprising given the pervasiveness of negative emotions and enormity of repair that needs to occur, which may seem to make love hopelessly utopian and perhaps even disrespectful to those who have suffered. However, I have suggested in this chapter that there is indeed a place for love in the pursuit of political reconciliation, a place which some victims of oppression and other forms of extraordinary violence have already called to our attention.

References

- Braithwaite, J. (2000) “Repentance Rituals and Restorative Justice,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 8 (1): 115–131.
- Crocker, D. (1999) “Reckoning with Past Wrongs: A Normative Framework,” *Ethics and International Affairs* 13 (1): 43–64.
- Dwyer, S. (1999) “Reconciliation for Realists,” *Ethics and International Affairs* 13: 81–98.
- Dyzenhaus, D. (2000) “Justifying the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 8 (4): 470–496.
- Eisikovits, N. (2009) *Sympathizing with the Enemy: Reconciliation, Transitional Justice, Negotiation*, Dordrecht: Republic of Letters.
- Eisikovits, N. (Fall 2017) “Transitional Justice,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/justice-transitional>.
- Fuller, L. (1969) *Morality of Law*, rev. ed., New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

- Hamber, B. (2009) *Transforming Societies after Political Violence, Truth, Reconciliation, and Mental Health*, Dordrecht: Springer.
- Helm, B. (Fall 2017) "Love," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/love>.
- Govier, T. (2006) *Taking Wrongs Seriously: Acknowledgment, Reconciliation and the Politics of Sustainable Peace*, Amherst, NY: Humanity Books.
- Gray, D. (2010) "Extraordinary Justice," *Alabama Law Review* 62 (1): 55–109.
- Griswold, C. (2007) *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- King, M. (1963) "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Letter_Birmingham_Jail.pdf.
- Krog, A. (1998) *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa*, New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Lebron, C. (2018) "Who First Showed Us that Black Lives Matter?" *New York Times*, February 5, 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/02/05/opinion/black-lives-matter-philosophy.html.
- Lu, C. (2008) "Shame, Guilt and Reconciliation After War," *European Journal of Social Theory* 11 (3): 367–383.
- May, S. (2011) "Moral Compromise, Civic Friendship, and Political Reconciliation," *CRISPP: Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 14 (5): 581–602.
- Mihai, M. (2016) *Negative Emotions and Transitional Justice*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Minow, M. (1998) *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Moellendorf, D. (2007) "Reconciliation as a Political Value," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38 (2): 205–221.
- Murphy, C. (2010) *A Moral Theory of Political Reconciliation*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Murphy, C. (2017) *The Conceptual Foundations of Transitional Justice*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (2013) *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Philpott, D. (2012) *Just and Unjust Peace: An Ethic of Political Reconciliation*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Radzik, L. (2009) *Making Amends: Atonement in Morality, Law, and Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Radzik, L. and Murphy, C. (Summer 2015) "Reconciliation," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/reconciliation>.
- Rotberg, R. and Thompson, D. (eds.) (2000) *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Shoemaker, D. (2007) "Moral Address, Moral Responsibility, and the Boundaries of the Moral Community," *Ethics* 118: 70–108.
- South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report*, 1998. Available online: www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/index.htm.
- Tasioulas, J. (2019) "The Liberalism of Love," *Political Emotions: Towards a Decent Public Sphere*, Thom Brooks (ed.), London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Teitel, R. (2002) *Transitional Justice*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tutu, D. (1999) *No Future without Forgiveness*, New York: Image/Doubleday.
- Walker, M. (2006) *Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations after Wrongdoing*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Zalaquett, J. (1995) "Confronting Human Rights Violations Committed by Former Governments: Principles Applicable and Political Constraints," *Transitional Justice*, Neil J. Kritz (ed.), Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, pp. 3–31.

15

THE MORNING STARS WILL SING TOGETHER

Compassion, Nonviolence, and the Revolution of the Heart

Cheyney Ryan

“Our world is sick with war,” Martin Luther King, Jr. exclaimed. Everywhere he turned he saw its ominous possibilities. Its spiritual affliction was not just a matter of violence abroad, the half-million Americans and millions more Vietnamese dead and dying. African-Americans bore a disproportionate burden of the fighting and dying while their communities were subject to police violence at home. King spoke from a place of grief. “Yes, I am personally the victim of deferred dreams, of blasted hopes.” Still, “If you lose hope, somehow you lose that vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of all.” For him, the fate of hope and nonviolence were linked. “We maintain the hope while transforming the hate of traditional revolutions into positive nonviolent power.” What we need is a *revolution*—a revolution of values. “I am convinced that if we are to get on to the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values.” So he still had a dream,

a dream that with this faith we will be able to adjourn the councils of *despair* and bring new light into the dark chambers of pessimism. With this faith we will be able to speed up the day when there will be peace on earth and good will toward men. It will be a glorious day, the morning stars will sing together, and the sons of God will shout for joy.

(King 2003: 231, 253, 289)

“Dreams,” “despair,” “grief,” “hope”: I want to ask what it means to take words like these seriously, especially talk of a “revolution of the heart.” And in so doing, I want to consider what it means to regard nonviolence as a politics of *love*.

There are two ways of placing King’s nonviolent politics of love. Its main source is the prophetic strain of African-American Christianity and its stress on compassion as the social face of love (Ryan 2016). Central to compassion is the capacity for hope, the key political virtue for King. Love is seen as always having a creative element, i.e., an element of beginning anew. So too, a politics of compassion as a politics of hope aims to be transformative by radically re-envisioning human possibilities. A second main source of King’s politics is the “dialogic” tradition of philosophy most identified with Martin Buber. For Buber, “Love is responsibility of an

I for a Thou” (Buber 1958: 61). King invoked this picture constantly: “Too long,” he wrote in his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,”

has our beloved Southland been bogged down in the tragic attempt to live in monologue rather than dialogue. To use the words of Martin Buber, the great Jewish philosopher, segregation substitutes an “I—it” relationship for the “I—thou” relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things.

Nonviolence seeks to awaken a dialogue even with the oppressor that will lead to relations of “mutuality,” King’s term also taken from Buber for what a politics of love hopes to achieve.

Despite its importance, King’s politics of nonviolence has been largely ignored in mainstream philosophy. The discussion that follows makes no claims to thoroughness; quite the contrary, it only suggests where further discussion might go. I set the stage by contrasting the differences between political liberalism of the Rawlsian sort and nonviolence on the value of reasonableness. This introduces nonviolence’s notion of responsibility as responsiveness, leading in section II to the notions of conscience and conviction, so central to King’s politics, that I unpack via the notion of dialogue. Section III reflects on how nonviolence as refusal to kill embodies its response to the sacredness of life. I relate this to the views of Thomas Nagel and Gabriel Marcel, the latter an important thinker in the dialogic tradition. I suggest how a further account might draw on King’s notion of mutuality. I conclude with some remarks on the importance and difficulties of appropriating King’s legacy today.

I. Reasonableness, Responsiveness, Asymmetry

But if such deep sensitivity to evil is to be called hysterical, what name should be given to the abysmal indifference to evil which the prophet bewails?

(Abraham Joshua Heschel, The Prophets)

King’s talk of a “revolution of values” fits uneasily with the philosophical temperament today as influenced by the basically conservative impulses of John Rawls’s political liberalism. The contrast I have in mind is the differing perspectives on “reasonableness.” For Rawls, it is a central philosophical/political virtue, while King constantly chastised “so-called calm and reasonable moderates” for their timidity toward change. Critical discussions of pacifism focus *ad nauseam* on its unreasonableness, but the question pacifism poses is best construed as the *status* of reasonableness.

The issue is addressed head on by Andre Trocme’s *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, a seminal text in 20th-century pacifism. Trocme puts it in terms of the pacifist ethic of Jesus being “asymmetrical,” in ways that the perspectives of “Greek rationalism” or “Roman law” find “scandalous.” This evokes Matthew Arnold’s famous distinction between “Hebraism” and “Hellenism,” where he claimed there was something fundamentally unbalanced about the former. But what Arnold saw as a vice, Trocme takes as a virtue. Yes, the Jesus/nonviolent orientation is “asymmetrical”—he also speaks of it as “imbalanced”—but that is what makes for its practical force. “Greek and Roman ideals were simply too well balanced, too symmetrical to inspire action.” By contrast, “precisely because of its scandalous character and the disequilibrium it inspires, it generates *movement* and energy” (Trocme 2014: 38). For Trocme, the asymmetry of the pacifist ethic rests on its being a response to the “prophetic call.” Its actions are not the consequence of impersonal principles but embody a response to the claims of particular others.

There are intriguing parallels here with the views of Bernard Williams (Williams 1973). His critique of impersonal moralities highlights the conflict between what they oblige us to do and what we feel called to do, to the point of being compelled to do. The latter too can seem unreasonable. Some of his examples involve deeply personal claims like those of love. He sees a necessity in responding to a beloved that evokes Franz Rosenzweig's description in the *Star of Redemption* of how we are "seized" by love, commanded "with no law" (Rosenzweig 2005). Another example involves someone's resistance to implicating themselves in politically heinous activities, specifically weapons manufacturing, a moral compulsion that Williams identifies with the claims of moral integrity. We might characterize what both Trocme and Williams identify as the moral response, "Me before others." It has three aspects. One is that the moral resistance one feels neither presumes nor requires that others experience it, or do so in the same way. On the contrary, the urgency may reflect the awareness that others do *not* feel so called, so one's acting aims to move them toward this. This leads to a second point: "Me before others" involves being witnessed by others, i.e., the act as bearing witness to my experience of responsibility in ways that constitute a call toward others, initiating a kind of dialogue with them. It does this, in part, by the exorbitant nature of my action. Finally, it means my experiencing oneself as claimed *more* than others, specifically as called to make greater sacrifices than others.

Where they differ is that Williams and the discussion he inspired tend to construe the claims here as referencing one's own particular identity, such that to be alienated from these responses is principally to be alienated from oneself. Trocme would stress that refusals to engage in violent endeavors is a response to the claims of others, involving non-alienation from them. As I shall construe things, the claims of others are embodied in our convictions, hence the alienation from others, being an alienation from one's own convictions, is also an alienation from oneself. But I shall first need to say some things about the notion of conscience.

II. The Journey of Conviction

There comes a time when one must take the position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him it is right. I believe today that there is a need for all people of goodwill to come with a massive act of conscience and say in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "We ain't goin' study war no more." This is the challenge facing modern man.

(Martin Luther King, Jr., *"Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution"*)

Occasionally in life one develops a conviction so precious and meaningful that he will stand on it till the end. This is what I have found in nonviolence.

(Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here?*)

Moral revolution means transforming what we do, but in so doing it involves a deeper change in our relation *to* morality. This is a thought from the Hebrew prophets—that the fundamental problem lies not in whether people act morally or not, which they can do just by going through the motions, but in whether they truly *care* about morality.

For King, that the politics of nonviolence was a politics of conscience was central to the moral revolution he saw it achieving, or at least enabling, or at least anticipating. I turn, then, to some words on conscience.

Most people would think that morality is importantly about one's conscience, yet there is surprisingly little philosophical discussion of what is meant by conscience (Brownlee 2012;

Velleman 2005). I have yet to encounter any discussion of what it might for someone like King. So here, as elsewhere, my remarks suggest where further discussions might go.

There is a minimal sense in which we might identify the conscience with that which gives us moral direction, hence something that every moral agent *qua* agent possesses. But I think conscience generally means more than this; certainly King has a deeper sense in mind. The starting point is its *dialogic* character. King speaks of what our conscience “tells” us. We often speak of “listening” to our conscience, or “answering” to our conscience, or “wrestling” with it, even being “nagged” or “haunted” by it. Thus construed, conscience involves a relation to ourselves, bespeaking of the depth we associate with having a conscience. But our conscience is not just something that talks to us. Talk of “wrestling” with it, even more its “nagging” (at) us, evokes a prophetic type voice: challenging us, even humbling us, specifically by reminding us of our responsibilities.

King speaks of the politics of conscience interchangeably as a politics of conviction. Convictions, I’d suggest, may be understood as that which speaks to us *in* our conscience. Abiding by one’s conscience, then, is abiding by one’s convictions; ignoring one’s conscience is ignoring one’s convictions.

Moral convictions may be approached by contrasting them with moral *principles*. By the latter I mean the sorts of things that we typically reflect on as philosophers when we reflect on what directs our actions. A paradigm case is the principle, “Keep your promises.” It functions like a law subsuming individual instances of promise keeping; failure to keep one’s promises, then, constitutes “violating” the principle. Now while I regard this principle as important, perhaps vitally so for social purposes, I don’t particularly *care* about it. I *could* care about it, perhaps if social circumstances were different. But that’s just to say that what one cares about is partly a reflection of such circumstances. By contrast, a moral conviction is something one *does* care about. And one’s caring about it seems a matter of regarding it as both precious and fragile, such that it needs caring for, including speaking for—as one does when one acts on it.

Is a moral conviction just a moral principle one deeply cares about? To leave matters there would be to overlook what strike me as important differences in how we articulate the two. Moral principles can be stated straightforwardly (e.g., “Keep your promises”), though they may be complex. But moral convictions seem a different matter. Consider how one characterizes another type of commitment—interpersonal love. How does one characterize one’s commitment to a beloved? This sort of thing is resistant to what I’ve termed “straightforward” statement, a fact I’d explain by saying that in characterizing such a commitment one is not saying what that commitment *is* so much as saying what it *means*. And saying what it means is saying how it *speaks* to us and how we are moved or touched thereby. This is not just a matter of saying what my beloved means to *me*, it is also a matter of saying what we mean to each *other*. So characterizing a commitment has a strong interpretive element insofar as what the relationship means is constituted by how the parties understand it, which needn’t require that they agree on it; on the contrary, to be committed to another means being part an ongoing dialogue about what it means, a dialogue that is itself a way of sharing the commitment. All of which implies an openness to its meaning, the condition of its deepening. The same holds, I’d suggest, for characterizing moral convictions. Articulating them is a matter of saying what they mean, i.e., how they speak to us; and this is not a private matter, but one of ongoing dialogue among those who share the conviction, itself constituting a way of sharing it.

That moral convictions are something we care about is essential to explaining their special force. Again, I’d contrast them with moral principles. The latter pertain to how we are *motivated* to act; they engage, in that regard, our status as rational moral agents (our personhood). By contrast, moral convictions pertain to how we are *moved* to act; they do this by speaking to our

status as caring beings (our humanity). Buber describes the engagement in the first case (being motivated) as in the realm of the I-It, to which notions of cause-and-effect are applicable and our personhood identified with *what* we are. The engagement in the second case (being moved) as in the realm of the I-Thou, or dialogic, and our humanity identified with *who* we are. What motivates us and what moves us both involve reasons, but while the reasons that moral principles provide us are a kind of cause for action, the reasons involved in what we are moved to do are embodied in the action.

Acting, then, is answering to your convictions. Whether or not your convictions *dictate* your actions is a further question. Being spoken to always allows for a range of responses, so the dialogue over the meaning of convictions will include what it means to answer to them. In any event, acting as a form of answering is also a form of speaking. In acting, we bear *witness* to our convictions, i.e., we speak of how we are spoken to, lending acting on convictions a prophetic dimension. In so doing, we *stand* on our convictions; thus the association of moral integrity with uprightness, and its absence with a certain flaccidity, crawling around on one's belly. It is a theme of the prophetic tradition that our moral convictions give us a place to stand in a world in which we are otherwise exiles, lacking no natural home. A fuller account would consider how deliberating about convictions goes both ways—how assessing them means determining whether they in fact *provide* a stable place to stand, if in standing on our convictions they truly stand with us. Our oneness with our convictions is thus a dialogic one. This speaks to the problem of dogmatism in convictions, especially raised by the link with the unthinkable. This is what the avatars of reasonableness worry about. But I would propose a contrast between being *welded* to one convictions and being *wedded* to them. The former does involve the dogmatism of collapsing any distinction between oneself and one's convictions. But dialogue presumes a certain distance: to be wedded to one's convictions involves being married to them as one is married to another person, i.e., via an ongoing conversation.

I began by noting the dialogic nature of conscience as something that speaks to us. I then characterized moral convictions as that which speaks to us *in* our conscience. What are the grounds of conviction? They are what speaks to us *through* our convictions, what is embodied in them in that sense. What speaks to the pacifist is the sacredness of human life, or more precisely the experience of that sacredness. I approach this in two steps. First, I want to consider what it means that the grounds of convictions are an *experience*. In the next section, I will consider the *specific* experience to which nonviolence convictions are a response: the experience of life's sacredness.

The privileging of experience is implicit in the notion of moral convictions as something acquired over time, as something acquired *through* experience. Moral convictions are a matter of maturity. Teenagers do not possess them, not because they are morally flawed but because their experiences are still limited. But it is crucial to this picture that such achievement is not guaranteed. Individuals can fail to develop convictions, thus remaining morally adolescent, just as societies can remain morally adolescent by failing to develop convictions. The dominant image in this tradition is of convictions achieved through a kind of *journey*. Thoreau concluded his essay on civil disobedience, "My neighbors did not thus salute me, but first looked at me, and then at one another, as if I had returned from a long journey. The journey is one of awakening, or of rebirth" (Thoreau 2012: 251). And the journey is one of suffering: "experience," then, also evokes that which is endured as a trial. This was not a prominent feature of Thoreau's narrative, but one cannot help but be struck by the fact that so much of the literature of conviction involves a journey through imprisonment. King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" is but one instance; another is Dorothy Day's *The Long Loneliness*. One is also struck by the pervasive metaphor of imprisonment, as in King's characterization of African-American poverty as an "airtight

cage,” or his reference in the opening remarks to the “dark chambers of pessimism.” Finally, there is the suggestion that such suffering is a necessary prolegomenon to conviction or at least the true depth of conviction.

All of which brings us to the centrality of hope, noted at the start. Marcel suggests that all hope involves escape from or at least resistance to a kind of imprisonment. It marks the fact that hope is a creative act, seeing possibilities not obviously present, or to what immediate experience delivers. The suggestion here is that all moral convictions, hence the moral conscience as dependent on them, are engaged in the act of hope, starting with the fact that the journey of conviction is also a journey of hope. But this remains abstract until we consider the specific type of experience involved, so let me turn to the sacredness of human life.

III. Life as Sacred and as Gift

For you, O brittle-hearted, we bring offering
Remembering how your wrists were thin and your delicate bones
Not yet braced for conquering.

(Muriel Rukeyser, “Song for Dead Children”)

I shall approach this through reflecting on the views of two philosophers on the moral resistance to taking human life, Thomas Nagel and Gabriel Marcel. These are not figures commonly lumped together, plus Marcel is little read today. But I am struck by some of their similarities in how they relate the moral resistance that concerns them to fundamentally different orientations in morality—ones that relate to Buber’s distinction between dialogue and monologue. I conclude by suggesting that the claims here might be developed by exploring further the notion that life’s sacredness is intimately involved with its status as a gift, a conception at the heart of King’s/ Buber’s notion of *mutuality*.

Several writings appeared in the twilight of the Vietnam War that echoed King’s deep anxieties about the fate of morality itself. The one I want to highlight is Thomas Nagel’s “War and Massacre.”

From the apathetic reaction to atrocities committed in Vietnam by the United States and its allies, one may conclude that moral restrictions, on the conduct of war command almost as little sympathy among the general public as they do among those charged with the formation of U.S. military policy.

(Nagel 1972: 123)

The Vietnam War, it seems, has awakened us to facts about ourselves as a community, unsettling facts, ones we should labor not to forget when the crisis is over. The key is apathy: it’s not enough that we violate moral restrictions, of the type proscribing atrocity; we don’t especially *care* that we violate them, meaning we never especially cared about those restrictions; we don’t take them to heart. What happened to our consciences, specifically our sense of shame? Nagel’s alarm is mixed with annoyance, even impatience, that addressing these facts should even be necessary. This is augmented by a certain frustration at what is involved in reclaiming these moral restrictions, involving their apparent inscrutability. Nagel speaks of them as “obscure” and “poorly understood”; he speaks of his account as “tentative,” mainly “suggestions.” One way to take this is that our understanding of them is still in the provisional stage. But another way to take it is that the matters at hand resist flat exposition, that their inherent fragility is an expression of this fact, so the project of understanding necessarily tasks us in ways other than simply

unraveling a difficult puzzle. I think the challenges here relate to the fact that the moral restrictions involve the status of the sacred, which has always been understood as encircled by a kind of silence. The experience that delivers it to us involves a distinct orientation requiring proper preparation, one not without suffering. It is not the sort of thing delivered to us in “intuitions” that can be called up at will, the kind of thing that Rawls takes as “fixed,” meaning easily pinned down.

Nagel terms the restrictions he has in mind “absolutist” constraints. His premise is that we access them through a kind of moral experience, specifically one of moral resistance at the doing of certain actions, one he characterizes as “swimming against the moral current.” But this experience is not one we inevitably experience, for otherwise our current moral predicament would not be what it is. Hence its status *as* an experience is part of what needs addressing. If this sounds rather mysterious I don’t think the experience here is all that different from ones associated with other deeply human concerns, like love; there, too, there’s something absurd about trying to capture it in talk of “intuitions.”

In later writings, Nagel replaces talk of “absolutist” with talk of “deontological” constraints, and gives them a straightforward Kantian account. But it seems to me that “War and Massacre” suggests these are different types of things, in ways related to the point about inscrutability. Absolutist constraints seem to demarcate the realm of the morally *impossible* as reflected in what is/should be morally *unthinkable*. By contrast, deontological constraints pertain to the morally *impermissible*, which is decidedly not a domain of the morally unthinkable. We can certainly deliberate whether to violate the rights of persons in cases where they conflict with the general good; indeed moral philosophers do this all the time—and the readiness to do so is presumed to be a hallmark of the rational autonomy Kantians so champion. The morally impossible, though, seems to preclude rational deliberation; indeed it recommends itself on those grounds. In any event, I want to proceed by seeing what can be learned by keeping “absolutist” constraints and “deontological” constraints distinct, by pursuing the connection between the former and what I’ve called moral convictions (hence, the connection between the latter and what I’ve called moral principles).

At the heart of Nagel’s account is that absolutist constraints find their home in the interpersonal; it is there that we experience the moral resistance they embody. Holding onto absolutist constraints, we might say, is part of holding on to the interpersonal more generally against the threat of the impersonal, a task, apparently tantamount to holding onto our humanity. It will be no surprise, though, that characterizing the “interpersonal” and the “impersonal” is itself a significant challenge. Nagel prefers spectral terms, i.e., they define certain “viewpoints” or ways of “looking” at things. I prefer to speak of them as different “orientations” in being different ways of responding to things, leaving open the question of how much this is a matter of looking rather than, say, listening (which is Buber’s preferred perspective).

Nagel’s discussion is like some others of the Vietnam War era in associating the impersonal perspective quite graphically with that of bombers wreaking damage from on high, in acts of atrocities like those noted at the start. This is, as it were, the “view from up here,” or “up there” (depending on whether you’re bombing or being bombed). It is the epistemology of the B-52 which he will contrast with the “view from down here,” and interestingly identifies with an aspect of war—interpersonal combat, starting with the hand-to-hand variety. The epistemology of the B-52 is partly a matter of what you see, or how you see; mainly that you *don’t* see particularities, details, especially those defining the distinctness of those you kill—you see only generalities, agglomerations, etc. But it is also a matter of what you cannot *hear*, the cries of those you are killing; even if they weren’t so far away they’d be drowned out by the blast. Finally, it is a standpoint of *invulnerability* contrasted with the total vulnerability of one’s victims. In interpersonal

combat, my attacking the enemy at the same time exposes me to the enemy; the face-to-face dimension means that each of us reveals our most vulnerable feature, our face. The impersonal orientation involves no shared vulnerability, hence assuming it involves no willingness to render oneself vulnerable, no risk.

Nagel proceeds to identify the interpersonal and the impersonal orientations with different metaphysical pictures. The impersonal orientation conceives us as basically bureaucrats distributing benefits to anonymous others; pilots distributing bombs would be a cruder version of this. The interpersonal orientation conceives us as “small beings in a large world,” in Nagel’s words, interacting with other small beings. A first thing to note is that what this picture describes is a *predicament*, of a condition to which we are fated, as it would not be if we were, say, *large* beings in a small world. The predicament is one of shared vulnerability in which apparently all we have is each other to lighten the predicament through what we share.

It is a metaphysical picture, then, linked with the problem of “moral luck” as marking the ultimate contingencies to which our actions are subject, even in matters of moral appraisal (Nagel 2012). Michael Walzer speaks of the moral constraints on soldiers in combat as grounded in a sense of their shared predicament, even when enemies. He speaks of soldiers viewing each other as “poor sods, like me.” We are equally, as it were, dirt, if not mud (Walzer 1977). One way to take this is that soldiers are all enslaved to forces beyond our control. But another way to take it is that soldiers are all radically unlucky in being those destined to bear the burden of fighting. Someone once said that the overwhelming sentiment of soldiers in the trenches is: “Why me?” On Nagel’s account, the soldier’s fate serves to exemplify the fate of us all. Recognizing the role that moral luck plays in our lives is the precondition for a larger perspective on morality generally, one grounded in compassion.

For King, the nonviolent ethic is ultimately grounded in the fact that we are all children of God. The emphasis here, I think, is best placed on the fact that we are *children* rather than who in particular we are children of; this references our status as in Nagel’s words “small beings in a large world.” What I should like to do is pursue the moral resistance to killing with particular reference to the killing of children. The claim is not that all killing is the killing of children, but that all killing is enough like the killing of children as to illuminate why all killing may be construed as swimming against the moral tide.

To illustrate, let me quote at length a remark from Gabriel Marcel that I’ve always felt is provocative in its conception of the claim that the child can have upon us. He writes,

In the course of a recent conversation on this topic, I brought up the example of the mysterious character that attaches to the presence near one of a sleeping person, especially of a sleeping child. From the point of view of physical activity, or at least in so far as the notion of physical activity is defined in relation to the possible grasping of things, the sleeping child is completely unprotected and appears to be utterly in our power; from that point of view, it is permissible for us to do what we like with the child. But from the point of view of mystery, we might say that it is just because this being is completely unprotected, that it is utterly at our mercy, that it is also invulnerable or sacred. And there can be no doubt at all that the strongest and most irrefutable mark of sheer barbarism that we could imagine would consist in the refusal to recognize this mysterious invulnerability. This sacredness of the unprotected lies also at the roots of what we might call a metaphysics of hospitality. In all civilizations of a certain type (not, of course, by any means merely in Christian civilizations), the guest has been regarded as all the more sacred, the more feeble and defenceless he is. In civilizations of a certain type, I say: not, I might have added, of the type dominated by the ideas of

efficiency and output. We are touching here, once again, on certain social topics to which we referred at the beginning of this volume. The more, it might be said, the ideas of efficiency and output assert their supreme authority, the more this attitude of reverence towards the guest, towards the wounded, towards the sick, will appear at first incomprehensible, and later absurd: and in fact, in the world around us, we know that this assertion of the absurdity of forbearance and generosity is taking very practical shape.

(Marcel 2001: 216–217)

These remarks center around a contrast in viewpoints similar to that in Nagel and the suggestion that the moral claims in question only become available by assuming a particular standpoint—what Marcel terms the standpoint of “mystery.” He introduces it through its opposite, that of “physical activity,” of “efficiency” and “output,” and the “grasping” of things, all identified with “barbarism” if allowed to hide the mysterious from us. It is the element of *grasping* I wish to highlight: the standpoint of mystery orients us toward what cannot be fully possessed. Let us say it is an orientation toward that which cannot be our private property, or anyone’s, suggesting an intimate link between an impersonal orientation and a *commodified* orientation. I’ll relate this shortly with the claims of mutuality.

Marcel suggests that the resistance to full possession, or as I would say commodification, reveals a distinct *kind* of power. Some of what he says repeats the primacy of the dialogic. The notion of mystery can be unpacked by distinguishing an “object” from what he terms a “presence” as that which is capable of speaking with us, or (in my terms) moving us. Mystery thus construed is the orientation toward that which we care or could care about. Marcel insists that this status is linked to a kind of vulnerability, embodying its own *kind* of power. How should that “power” be understood? He likens it to the power of hope, which, as he puts it, is not a power in the “ordinary sense of the word,” indeed something whose effectiveness is itself a mystery. But the parallels are fitting: children are paradigmatic figures of hope, suggesting they share the same kind of preciousness. The resistance to killing a child involves an unforgivability related to the crime of killing hope insofar as forgiveness is itself an act of hope, hence by killing hope we undermine the very conditions of forgiveness. The religious overtones are clear. Jesus was a figure of hope, his resurrection signifying that henceforth hope cannot be killed; the victory over death it symbolizes is ultimately the victory of hope.

Strikingly, for our purposes, Marcel’s main example of the kind of power at work here is the power of *nonviolence*. I assume he is referencing Gandhi, though without mention. (My interest in Marcel is partly that he is one of the few philosophers to devote serious attention to nonviolence, another being William James (James 1982: Lectures X–XV).) Both hope and nonviolence are “weapons of the unarmed,” in his words; weapons whose power lies in their ability to *disarm*, a power he characterizes as not fighting forces head on but by transcending them. One way to understand this transcendence, I think, is as revealing new possibilities. The picture seems to be that violence in particular, or the kind of power to which mystery stands opposed, is premised on a foreclosing of possibilities that lets it understand itself as always somehow necessary. The power of both hope and nonviolence is in holding forth new possibilities—not unlike the impact of the young child as a figure of promise.

I recognize this is all more evocative than descriptive. Further elucidation might be achieved by pursuing the link between the possibility of killing and commodification. This allows us to conclude with the importance of *mutuality*.

Mutuality is also a notion for which King is heavily indebted to Martin Buber. King’s talk of the “web of mutuality” draws explicitly on Buber’s talk of the “streaming mutual life of the

universe.” For Buber, mutuality just is the I-Thou relationship, or dialogic relationship. And that relationship is conceived specifically in the language of the gift. Writes Buber, “Between you and me there here is mutual giving: you say Thou to me and give yourself to me, I say Thou to you and give myself to you” (Buber 1958: 20, 43).

The resistance to killing, from this perspective, rests on the fact that life is a gift. It is this fact that the child most exemplifies, or awakens us to. The connection with talk of what cannot be grasped, or fully possessed, lies in the notion of killing as “taking” life. The sense of “taking” here has dimensions of stealing; we may think of taking another’s life as akin to stealing their life from them. But left there, it’s hard to make sense of talk of taking one’s *own* life. The “taking” of life is best construed I think as the removing of life from the cycle of giving and receiving—from the web of mutuality—in which it is properly inscribed. This would explain the parallels between killing someone and enslaving them. The latter imposes a kind of social death, of removing persons from the cycle of giving and receiving/mutuality of which they are properly a part, as children, spouses, and ancestors. It removes them, that is, from the bonds of caring that are the conditions of a fully human life. A further point draws on the relation between mystery and the sacred. The sacred is commonly regarded as that which speaks to the mysteries of life, as marked by life’s deepest transitions: birth, marriage, and death. The sacred, that is, finds its place partly in the fact that life itself is a journey. Acknowledging it at any moment, then, has an element of situating ourselves between the past and the future, which is just to say that a life for which nothing is sacred exists in a kind of stasis. The moral resistance to killing, as an acknowledgment of the sacred, may not just be an act in time but one that orients us in a deeper sense. I have already suggested seeing it as an act of hope, as orienting us to the future. But life in its newness also embodies a relation to the past, hence one that we honor in acknowledging the gift of life.

IV. Nonviolence and Memory

A theme in the prophetic tradition is the contradiction between compassion and oppressive political structures, identified with “empire.” The contradiction lies in part on the inability of such political structures to acknowledge grief, conceived as the precondition of any true compassion. Walter Brueggemann writes, “As long as the empire can keep the pretense alive that things are all right, there will be no real grieving and no serious criticism” (Brueggemann 2001: 11). It fears grief as something that cannot be controlled, possessed, owned. Hence it has no place for real tears, the sharing of which provides the model for alternative types of solidarity. We all know these things from our experience with interpersonal love. The politics of nonviolence and its critique of empire begins with exploring their social significance.

King’s Vietnam War speech began with exclamations of grief, the starting point of his call for renewal. I wonder if America has ever really grieved the Vietnam War. America basically forgot it, staggering shell-shocked through the 1970s, then numbed in the 1980s by the nostalgic Hollywood flag-waving of Ronald Reagan, which eventually morphed into what we have now—“thanking” Vietnam veterans for their “service” while avoiding any questions about the war in which they served. My own feeling is that too much of political philosophy, I am thinking of Rawlsian political liberalism, has done nothing to help us address the legacy of this experience, and that we shall only begin to do it by reclaiming figures like King.

But I wonder if America has ever grieved Martin Luther King, Jr. in ways that might allow us to hear the newness of his nonviolent ethic. The prophetic perspective from which he drew is one that is deeply skeptical if not dismissive of monuments, which people mainly build to celebrate themselves, but even when they honor others serve to turn their message into stone.

If people doubt that our society is capable of such forgetfulness, I would remind them of what happened after the American Civil War and Reconstruction. These were the most politically volatile decades of the country's history, in which race was front and center. It was followed by movements in political philosophy, even of the most progressive sort, that completely ignored the problem of race and pretended that the Civil War and especially Reconstruction had never happened. But this just mirrored the larger political culture that reversed the achievements of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and reinstituted legalized racism for another 100 years. I think something of the same reaction to the political struggles of the 1950s–1960s explains the problematic status of King and his politics of love today.

A politics of compassion, of the kind I identify with that nonviolence, might ask if America has ever really grieved *anything*. I see the philosophers I've referenced in this essay as all aspiring, albeit from different perspectives, not just to bring things down to earth but to look things in the face, or to find a philosophical perspective capable of doing this. What every type of love teaches us is both the necessity and difficulty of facing each other, if only because it means the constant quest for a new voice, capable of achieving the constant renewal that facing each other promises. A philosophy that helps us do this may move us somewhat along the way toward facing ourselves.

References

- Brownlee, K. (2012) *Conscience and Conviction: The Case for Civil Disobedience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brueggemann, W. (2001) *The Prophetic Imagination*, Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.
- Buber, M. (1958) *I and Thou*, New York: Scribners.
- Heschel, A. (2001) *The Prophets*, New York: Harpers.
- James, W. (1982) *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, New York: Penguin.
- King, M.L.K. (2003) *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches*, New York: HarperOne.
- King, M.L.K. (2010a) *Where Do We Go From Here?* Boston: Beacon.
- King, M.L.K. (2010b) *Stride Towards Freedom*, Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Marcel, G. (2001) *The Mystery of Being*, South Bend, IN: St Augustine Press.
- Nagel, T. (1972) "War and Massacre," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1 (Winter): 123–144.
- Nagel, T. (2012) *Mortal Questions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosenzweig, F. (2005) *The Star of Redemption*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Rukeyser, M. (2006) *Collected Poems of Muriel Rukeyser*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Ryan, C. (2016) "Bearers of Hope: On the Paradox of Non-Violent Action," in Gross, M. and Meisels, T., eds., *The Ethics of Soft War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thoreau, H. (2012) *Walden and Civil Disobedience*, New York: Signet.
- Trocme, A. (2014) *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, Robertsbridge, UK: Plough Publishing House.
- Velleman, D. (2005) "The Voice of Conscience," in *Self to Self*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walzer, M. (1977) *Just and Unjust Wars*, New York: Basic Books.
- Williams, B. (1973) *Utilitarianism for and Against*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

PART IV

Animals, Nature, and the Environment



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

16

LOVE AND ANIMALS

Simone Weil, Iris Murdoch and Attention as Love

Elisa Aaltola

Introduction

Love is a notion relatively rarely discussed in animal ethics. In its contemporary form, animal ethics has been largely based on the rationalist tradition, according to which the moral value and treatment of other animals is a matter of reasoned reflection rather than emotion, and even when emotions have been brought forward, phenomena such as empathy and compassion have gained more attention than love (Gruen 2007, 2015; Acampora 2006; Aaltola 2018). One exception to this is feminist research on animal philosophy, which has also mentioned love, for instance via referring to the works of Iris Murdoch and Simone Weil (Donovan 2007). Yet such mentions have been scarce and short. Thus, paradoxically, in an era when love of animals (particularly of companion animals, but to some extent also farmed and wild animals) has become more commonplace, philosophy has remained largely silent on what such love could consist of. This chapter seeks to take part in remedying this lack by going back to Murdoch's and Weil's philosophy on "attentive love". What would attentive love towards nonhuman animals include and entail?

Before continuing, it should be noted that Murdoch's and Weil's philosophy on attention and love unreservedly follows the tradition of moral realism. They suggest that morality requires understanding the reality of others, and that such gaining of a realist perception will reveal to us the "truth" of others, and ultimately what is objectively "good", independent of human construction. Both make extensive use of Plato's philosophy, and particularly his Cave allegory, claiming that we can become confused and deluded by our own interpretations, thus becoming prisoners staring at the shadows of our own making on the Cave's wall. Within this allegory, attentive love is the effort to look towards the sun at the cave's entrance, thereby finally perceiving truth, beauty, goodness and thus reality.¹ These are bold words when read in the light of relativist thinking, which tends to see the idea of objective truths as unattainable. Yet, one does not have to embrace Weil's and Murdoch's strong moral realism in order to recognize the significance of many of their claims. Even if one is to believe that there is no access to realistic truths concerning others, one can still accept that there is a scale of "truths", for our depictions of others are more or less coloured by our own presumptions, and thereby more and less attuned to what those others are, independent of such conjectures. Also within this milder approach, attentive love remains a potentially important and indeed vital method of understanding others—including when those "others" are nonhuman.

Love as Attention

According to Murdoch, much of Western philosophy, with its emphasis on rational will, centralizes movement instead of vision: it is the movements of the rational will which define morality, not vision as a form of attention towards the world. This emphasis detaches the agent from the world: she simply surveys facts and then acts as if in position of authority over and disconnected from that which surrounds her. It has led to the isolation of humanity, as we have often depicted ourselves as the movers of reality, as something utterly noble and striking, as creatures who stride above the rest of the world via the powers of will and reason. Ultimately, even the notion of ethics as a practice entwined with the concept of inherent value may become suspect—there is no need for such ethics, for no other norms than those related to a utilitarian, optimizing rational calculus are required. Within this rather desolate scenario, we stand as insulated individuals, sure of our unique rational ability and guided by a utilitarian logic, yet separated from the world which we seek to govern. Vision as attention fades into the background (Murdoch 1971: 34, 46, 48).

The relevance of this to our dealings with and imagery concerning nonhuman animals is evident. Following the legacy of Rene Descartes, it is often assumed that precisely the use of reason separates and frees humans from the rest of the animal realm: whereas animals are presupposed to be tied to their predetermined “instinct” and biology, human beings are thought to have freed themselves from such constraints by their use of rationality. As a consequence, humanity becomes depicted as somehow “above” and thereby disconnected from the animal world. Concurrently, moral issues in regard to other animals are often marginalized or ignored, as the aim is to utilize pigs, cows, hens, salmon and deer in the optimal fashion. If humans have, via their presumed rational will, become the detached movers of the world, they have also (and perhaps especially) become the aloof movers of nonhuman animals, leaving moral considerations all too often aside due to the assumption that having inherent value requires the faculty of reason.

There are grounds to be critical of the Cartesian presumptions. As research has manifested, humans may be far more tied down to their emotional, instinctual and socially constituted responses in decision-making than is traditionally acknowledged (Haidt 2001; Greene and Haidt 2002), and on the other hand nonhuman animals possess a wide variety of surprising cognitive and mental abilities, making many of them also reasoning, feeling and intending creatures.² However, what is significant in Murdoch’s critique is her suggestion that we ought to favour vision as attentive love, and thereby return, as it were, back into the world. In the context of animal ethics, this implies that, rather than prioritize what type of reasoned capacities other animals have to master in order to be considered subjects of serious moral consideration, focus ought to be placed on how humans approach them—our potential ability to relate to squirrels and elks via attention and love.

In a state of attention, one perceives with clarity, and it emerges as nothing less than a tool of realism, as its aim is “to come to see the world as it is” (Murdoch 1971: 89).³ Such attention *is* love, for we come to truly love others—in all love’s varieties, from altruistic agape to romantic eros—only after we perceive them as they are, without pre-judgement, as realistically as we can. Indeed, attentive vision or gaze is synonymous with a loving gaze, as the intent is to pay lucid, truthful focus on what others are like, in themselves (ibid.: 33). When faced with nonhuman animals, the aim would be simple: we should seek to become less affected by misleading preconceptions or stereotypes concerning them, and instead focus on how they manifest themselves, and what they are beyond pre-fixed definitions. In other words, we ought to approach them with attentive lucidity, and strive towards perceiving their specific, unique realities.

Yet, attentive love is not a skill that one simply has, but instead a way of relating to others that needs to be practised and cultivated. Following Plato, Murdoch posits that often both discipline and patience are required (Murdoch 1971, 2003). We are to purify our take on the world from various prejudices, and this is not a task easily achieved. But how is attentive love cultivated? Answering this question illuminates the possibilities of extending love to the nonhuman realm.

Un-Selfing

According to Murdoch, it is our ego—the tendency to focus only on our self-directed needs and define also others via them—which forms the greatest challenge to love. Using Plato’s Cave Allegory, Murdoch argues that ego-orientation renders it exceedingly difficult to turn towards the metaphoric sun, because we sculpt the ego into a false sun, comfortable and enticing to peer into. Consequently, self-directedness is the source of illusionary preconceptions concerning ourselves, others and the world, for we begin to define existence on the grounds of how it best serves our interests. The ego or the self (Murdoch uses both words concomitantly) is “a place of illusion” (Murdoch 1971: 91) which “veils the world” (Murdoch 2003: 175) and thereby something that easily misleads us from “the good”. When focused solely on our own interests, we begin to lose grasp of the realities of others, and replace them with our own interpretations. The results of egoism are costly for ourselves, because our reality, when governed solely by self-made constructions or illusions, becomes highly restricted, as if compressed into an enclosed dot without horizons, or a “small world” (Murdoch 2003: 175). The results are particularly costly for others, for in such a restricted space, the capacity for truly acknowledging others is under jeopardy, and others are at risk of being reduced into mere products of how we wish to envision and utilize them. The self and its illusions become overbearing, and the external world fades from a realistic view: “Fantasy (self) can prevent us from seeing a blade of grass just as it can prevent us from seeing another person” (Murdoch 1971: 68). Preoccupation with the self, then, forms an obstacle to understanding others, and thereby stands on the way of love, for “Love is knowledge of the individual” (ibid.: 27).

Murdoch is careful to highlight that such self-directedness can gain subtle nuances, as its aims may not always be material, but can also arise from fantasies that we construct in order to avoid those things which cause discomfort, apprehension, stress or suffering (such as the ungovernable, chancy vastness of reality). Hence, misleading depictions of others can be a method of consolation, based on one’s need for security. This latter dimension of egoism can have surprising implications from the viewpoint of love, for even what we falsely presume to be “love” can be a form of self-soothing solace, wherein we for instance hope to possess another so as to feel in control and thereby safe (Murdoch 1971: 77).

Here, Murdoch makes references to Buddhist thought, and indeed her suggestions echo those presented in Zen Buddhist philosophy. It is the preoccupation with one’s desires and self, together with a need to seek control, which spur false fantasies. Also Weil walks along such Buddhist theses. She accentuates how many are determined to manifest their excellences and strengths, to a point where they (or social institutions) may even seek approximate omnipotency, as they strive to be more than they are. The ego is incessantly keen on bending and interpreting things in ways that suit its purposes, which again makes it difficult for those with self-directed lenses to note reality. This thwarts our self-perception and sparks pressures to be something magnificent, and is particularly worrisome in its ability to alter one’s understanding of others. We construct imageries continuously, so as to serve our own worldviews, interests, desires and other factors that render reality seemingly governable and “safe”. In the process, we

make sense of others on grounds of our own needs and aims, and thus reduce those others into similes serving our own benefit (Weil 2002: 14). The consequences can be catastrophic. The ego not only deprives itself of understanding reality, but also partakes of destruction, both material and immaterial, as it refuses the authenticity and independence of others, and forces them to fit its own schemes to a point of concretely doing them violence. Weil is quite clear on the harmfulness of self-directedness: “There is no trace of the ‘I’ in the act of preserving. There is in that of destroying. The ‘I’ leaves its mark on the world as it destroys” (ibid.: 70).

Self-directedness is often evident and indeed exemplified in how humans approach other animals. Simply stated, both normative and ontological definitions of pigs, dogs, bees and elks are frequently motivated by humans’ interest in using them. Animals are traditionally defined on the grounds of their use-value, and thus we speak of “farmed animals”, “pets”, “prey animals” and so forth, depicting even their mental abilities and moral status solely on the grounds of what category of use they belong to (hence, many tend to see least cognitive ability in the animals they use the most for food). Human interests and desires stand at the root of how nonhuman animals are defined and valued: pigs are depicted as mentally dull sources of bacon with only instrumental value, if doing so enhances utilization (on such phenomena, Loughnan *et al.* 2014). If self-directedness restricts one’s reality into a dot ignorant of the rest of existence, the same logic applies to anthropocentrism, which places the human species as the focal point, in comparison to which other species are described as serving a secondary role, and which severely limits one’s capacity to acknowledge non-human perspectives. Other animals are “veiled” by misrepresentative imagery, which stems from human-directed objectives, and the “truth” of the animals is all too easily lost. As a result, the world becomes narrow, as if we were in a rainforest surrounded by an astounding variety of species, and yet wished to only focus on human footprints.

Simultaneously, within the anthropocentric logic, one achieves a sense of security and consolation, as the utterly varied animal realm with almost countless forms of agency and ways of being is reduced into simple schema grounded on use-value. Therefore, via references to self-aim and utility, one can ignore the various forms of animal agency and potency, which may seem unmanageable or even chaotic and threatening. Doing so condenses nonhuman realities into use-based classifications and ways of explaining, and thereby transforms these realities into something controllable and safe—what was heterogenic, diverse and independent is now prototypic and governable. This, again, can be argued to be something akin to illusions and shadows, as animals are replaced with utility imageries. It becomes “natural” that animals are meat, milk, vermin, pets or prey.

Such false safety also provides intriguing insight into the varieties of contemporary “animal love”, wherein many love dogs and eat cows: perhaps the pets Westerners love, too, are at risk of being reductively defined by human ego in the more nuanced manner mentioned by Murdoch, whereby they can act as a form of consolation. Here, “love” towards companion animals can offer solace from the disconcerting and uncomfortable awareness of how other animals are treated—they become a token of human love towards nonhumans, a way of manifesting one’s ability to be gentle, whilst the violent, coercive treatment of vast numbers of other nonhumans goes ignored. In short, when loving companions, we become secure in our belief that we have virtue and kindness towards other creatures, and this again may enable one to enter into states of denial over the less fortunate fates of those, whom are reduced to meat and milk. In loving token animals, moral worries are appeased, and human–nonhuman relations are thereby made “safe”.

Therefore, Weil’s and Murdoch’s critique of ego-orientation helps to highlight and explain some of the more problematic aspects of human–nonhuman relations. Moreover, it also serves

to explicate the troubling tenets in anthropocentric attitudes, for such attitudes can partly be traced back to an inflated, grandiose understanding of the “human self”, within which humans are defined by their ever-developing and nearly omnipotent rational and technical abilities, as “pinnacles” of evolution, or as “images of God” (often these elements interlink, as the scientific celebration of human ability exhibits itself as the belief that we are progressing so as to master even our own biology and mortality, thus achieving omnipotency akin to that of gods; see Midgley 2002). These conceptions of humanity are also used to justify how other animals are treated primarily as resources, as it is frequently suggested that as “images of god” or “pinnacles of evolution” human beings have the “right” to reduce other animals into sheer objects of utility.⁴ Such self-directedness can have detrimental and violent consequences on a very tangible level, such as animal industries and their obstinate refusal to take animal experiences and welfare seriously (or even minimally) into account. Globally at least 65 billion farmed animals are killed annually within animal industries, and the estimate is rapidly rising. Animal industries and the willingness of many to follow self-directed misconceptions whilst ignoring nonhuman realities can even be argued to stand as a concrete manifestation of Weil’s warnings concerning the links between egoism, illusions and destructiveness.

How to break free from this self-directed, ego-driven pattern of approaching animality, and how to evoke love? To solution is found from what Murdoch calls “un-selfing”—a notion familiar also from Zen Buddhist philosophy. First, one is to question why one’s own desires and interests should determine one’s definitions of others, and in order to do so, one is to critically examine what it is to be “I”.

Weil offers one map for such un-selfing. In regard to the first of the above tasks, it is crucial to remember that others may be wholly different from what we assume them to be. Indeed, we should presuppose them to always be distinct from our preconfigured definitions. Thereby, she suggests that:

Justice. To be ever ready to admit that another person is something quite different from what we read when he is there (or when we think about him). Or rather, to read in him that he is certainly something different, perhaps something completely different, from what we read in him. Every being cries out silently to be read differently.

(Weil 2002: 135)

In the end, any form of rational “reading” of another is bound to be limited and misleading, and Weil proposes that instead of prioritizing such readings, we should prioritize attention. As Emmanuel Levinas does slightly later (Levinas 1961), Weil posits that instead of using preconfigured descriptions to explain a stranger one meets on the street, she should be met with an attentive outlook, stripped bare of lingual stereotypes. This is linked to the second task concerning our self-image. Weil argues that when self-directed, we become far removed not only from the realities of others, but also from those of our own, for in our effort to weave imageries, we also invent and construct an image of what it is to be “I”. Thereby, when seeking to become lovingly attentive towards others, the task is to first become lovingly attentive towards oneself, to note the illusions we construe around that self, and to forgive ourselves for not being exactly as we would wish to be: “I am also other than what I imagine myself to be. To know this is forgiveness” (Weil 2002: 9).

Un-selfing thereby consists of acknowledging that others may be utterly dissimilar from the definitions we have created, and from recognizing that we ourselves may be quite distinct from our inflated self-image. Again, these claims apply well to human–nonhuman relations. Other animals differ radically from anthropocentric stereotypes, and accepting this is paramount for a

more attentive, loving outlook capable of noticing nonhuman realities. Moreover, perhaps human beings are radically different, too, and ought to forgive themselves for being so. We are not “pinnacles of evolution”, nor are we “images of God”, perfect in our intellect and nearly omnipotent in our ability, but frail, often irrational and incapable, vulnerable and in many ways limited creatures, one animal among many, who have no objective reason to depict themselves as the centre of existence. Love requires letting go of self-grandeur, and replacing anthropocentrism with love requires letting go of grandiose beliefs concerning humanity. This leads to the next step of attentive love—that of humility.

Human Humility

According to Murdoch, attention and love require humility. Yet, humility is rare, as one seldom meets someone in whom “the anxious avaricious tentacles of the self” are not predominant (Murdoch 1971: 101). Because of this rarity, Murdoch places practising humility as the goal of education and advises: “Teach it to children” (Murdoch 2003: 73).

Humility is advocated with particular expressiveness by Weil, who argues that un-selfing requires complete humility, wherein we are to recognize our mediocrity, detach from our interests, desires and judgements, and become, in a sense, insignificant. She claims that the biggest fear of human beings is becoming “nothing”, and that doing so is, in fact, the only hope. We should empty ourselves to a point where we become “voids”—entities wholly lacking an ego.⁵ Hence, Weil insists that: “‘I’ has to be passive. Attention alone—that attention which is so full that the ‘I’ disappears—is required of me” (Weil 2002: 118). Despite the tortuousness of this process (for Weil, it requires experiences of sorrowful affliction), we are to acceptingly recognize that from the viewpoint of the universe, we really are nothing. Only such humility will cancel out the damaging consequences of self-directedness, as it presents the latter’s opposite by rendering one restorative rather than destructive. Perhaps most importantly, ego-eradication inspires attentive love, and Weil even posits that humility is synonymous with the latter (ibid.: 128).

Humility is an attribute sorely missing from the anthropocentric viewpoints that tend to govern attitudes towards other animals. As already suggested, instead of humility, a grandiose self-image of humanity dominates, whilst other animals are frequently defined as “less” in most arenas: less developed, less cognitively capable, less valuable. Being “nothing” in relation to cows and pigs is a rare conception, and perhaps the greatest challenge to our self-conception as “human beings”. Yet, it is precisely adopting the attitude of humility—rather than that of arrogance—in comparison to animals that is needed for love towards them to flow and become possible. One cannot love a dog, nor a pig, as long as one holds oneself superior, and thus one ought to become empty of stereotypes of human superiority, and simultaneously emptier of assuming that the contents of human minds, language and cultures are the epicentre of existence. Such humility could spark vision, which—instead of categorizing other animals into dull, prototypic, uninteresting boxes based on their use-value—seeks to imagine what it is like to be a seagull, a bear, or (to use examples familiar from philosophy) Wittgenstein’s lion or Nagel’s bat. Challenging human arrogance could do away with the veils and stereotypes that govern animal imagery, and enable a freer outlook on nonhuman animality.

Humility also holds promise of rendering human actions towards other animals less coercive and destructive, and significantly more restorative. On a planet witnessing not only wide-scale animal industries, but also the sixth species extinction, this is not a small benefit: humility (and the love it invites) could guide us towards a more respectful approach to other species, capable of supporting rather than destroying their existence. Here, following Murdoch, education is

vital. Re-thinking our “human self” in relation to nonhuman species is something that needs constant cultivation, and indeed ought to be taught already to children.

However, there are also some critical remarks to be made. Both Weil and Murdoch seem to conflate “ego” and “self”, although there are significant differences. In light of their philosophy, “ego” can be taken to refer to the epistemic prioritization of self-directed wants, intentions and interests to a point where one’s beliefs are governed by them. “Self” can be something quite distinct, and as already argued by John Locke, refer to nothing more than our constantly changing yet unified experience of existence. From the perspective of basic psychological wellbeing and continuity, one needs a sense of self, and for this reason “un-selfing” as a term should perhaps be “un-egoing”. In fact, as posited by Max Scheler, it is our existence as unique beings or “selves” that marks the birth of also love: we cannot escape our “selfhood”, nor should we, for knowing ourselves as particular sorts of creatures opens the doorway to also loving others (Scheler 1979).

This means that we are to note our specific, contingent, yet continuous selves as the very foundations of attentive love, and instead of them, abandon the egoistic tendencies. There is a vast difference between acknowledging one’s specificity and prioritizing oneself at the cost of others. Indeed, attentive love towards animals is possible only when grounded on the uniqueness of one’s own experiences and sense of self, and thus should never require the abolition of appreciation of one’s human self. The aim is to cease defining pigs on account of what humans have to gain from them, not to abandon a sense of being a human animal.

Letting Go

According to both Weil and Murdoch, Western traditions have much to learn from Zen philosophy and the practice of meditation: whereas in the former, the mind is busy with constantly doing something, in the latter, the emphasis is on simply being, and letting observations flow. They support the Zen belief that attention requires rupturing habitual thought-processes, i.e. the type of presumptions, stereotypes and schema which tend to guide us, but which we rarely notice. Set patterns of defining oneself and others are to be relinquished, and as a consequence one may begin to perceive others more realistically. The aim, according to Weil, is simple: “Not to try to interpret them, but to look at them till the light suddenly dawns” (Weil 2002: 120).

One way of achieving such a state of “letting go” is noting the small things surrounding us that we often overlook as disinteresting or insignificant, such as trees, rocks or birds flying past. We are to observe beings, things and events that are usually discounted. An integral part of this is the forsaking of the subject-object distinction, within which we name ourselves as subjects and the surrounding world as objects to be utilized, and which thereby rests on the assumption that others are instruments for our own benefit. That is, in paying attention to the usually inconsequential matters, the aim is to approach them without positioning them as objects with use-value.⁶ Here, the notion of “letting be” emerges as significant, as we are to leave others as they are, without agendas, expectations or demands. It is in such a state that one can truly recognize the reality of others: “I really see the face of my friend, the playing dog, Piero’s picture” (Murdoch 2003: 301).

It is precisely the ability to observe the seemingly irrelevant beings and aspects of life which educates and sparks “letting go”, and hence ultimately love: “[The particular] teaches us love, we understand it, we *see* it” (Murdoch 2003: 497). Murdoch emphasizes the act of observing non-utilizable nature and nonhuman animals as a method of learning attentive love, for here there is appreciation that is not focused on optimization or any other goals.⁷ Therefore, other animals, when not objects of self-interested pursuits, can be the sort of “small things” that teach attentive love. She describes witnessing a bird:

Then suddenly I observe a hovering kestrel. In a moment everything is altered. The brooding self with its hurt vanity has disappeared. There is nothing now but kestrel ... [we ought to] give attention to nature in order to clear our minds of selfish care.

(Murdoch 1971: 82)

In such situations, we pay attention to things and beings without egoistic pursuits—when observing a bird from our window, we wish nothing from her (not her flesh, her species written down in our bird-watcher's catalogue, nor even her photograph), and if we truly pay attention instead of merely lazily spotting her, we may begin to witness her afresh.⁸

Also art acts as an important guide. Murdoch accentuates the role of art as a method of “letting go”, for it too invites disinterested observation. In particular, it can render manifest that which is utterly close and intuitively present, but usually not discussed and thereby invisible (for instance, unnamed feelings or ideas). Also Weil refers to art as a tool of learning love, for when witnessing art, we have no wish to utilize it, or to bend it to serve our ends. What suffices is the fact that it exists. Indeed, according to Weil, those whom we love ought to be approached as art (Weil 2002: 65).

Following suit, learning love towards other animals requires setting aside stereotypes, agendas of use and the subject-object distinction, and simply letting go: we should just breathe, detach from presumptions and let the animal be. Fittingly, in order to become more attentively loving towards other animals, one should first notice those animals who exist outside of use-value—the aim is to pay attention to the very creatures whom the culture usually deems as uninteresting. Learning to look at a seagull or a pigeon, from whom one has nothing to gain, and doing so without the standard preconceptions, simply sitting still and letting her emerge, can teach us to notice similarly also dogs, hares and cows (the sort of creatures one can gain something from). Doing so may sound like a minor act, but in fact it constitutes a radical challenge to the anthropocentric worldview, which insists on defining other animals via utility, and which thereby arguably constantly discourages love towards them in any other than egoistic terms. Noting the pigeon, focusing on her, can cultivate a wholly new outlook.

Concurrently, perhaps other animals should also be approached as their own form of art: instead of labelling them with standard definitions, one could awe at their peculiarity, and pay attention to their various, often unnoted facets, simultaneously remembering that one is observing nothing less than a different life form. Other animals all too rarely spark wonder precisely because we tend to approach them as uninteresting and even mundane, and in so doing we miss out on witnessing the spectacular variety of animal life, in all its oddity and multiplicity. The pigeon can be a grey, dreary bird, or she can be a creature invested with surprising cognitive ability, mastering many capacities lacking in humans, and spending time observing her—marvelling her as one would marvel at a piece of art created by evolution—can teach attention. Approaching other animals as one does art could make more manifest the animality, which is already close and intuitively known, but culturally blocked off and undiscussed (surely we know, on some level, that birds are intelligent creatures worthy of attention, even when we culturally learn to bypass them as insignificant). Witnessing a flock of pigeons or a pack of wolves as art could cultivate the ability to relate to other animals beyond notions of use-value, and thereby teach love.⁹

Letting go is not based on intellectual effort. Quite literally, it spurs from passivity. Here, we come back to rational will: according to Weil, attention is its opposite, and does not seek anything, as it is only when one steps away from seeking that the world can make itself apparent. Attention should therefore not be conflated with effort, as if one was to try harder. Rather, it consists of *not* trying to make sense. Weil clarifies: “There is nothing analogues [in attention] to

muscular effort; there is only waiting, attention, silence, immobility” (Weil 2009: 126). Also loving animals is passive, for instead of doing, it rests on relinquishing old habits of the mind. It is not an effort, as if we ought to try and feel more, but instead an attitude of openness, grounded on setting aside old schema. When coming across a crow in a park, one is to simply sit still, pay attention without hurry or expectation, and participate in such acts as often as possible, and finally both the crow’s own way of being, and love as attention, may surface.

This facilitates a radical alteration in how animals are perceived, for it enables them to become real for us. Weil uses the metaphor, in which we on a dark road see a stooping person in the distance, only to suddenly realize it is a tree: “We see the same colours; we hear the same sound, but not in the same way” (Weil 2009: 100). Similarly, when approaching a crow, a dog or a cow with attention, we hear and see the same things—the black wings, the exuberant canine gestures, or the quiet bovine features—but afresh, from a wholly new angle. From this angle, previously insignificant beings become meaningful, real agents. Murdoch describes how breaking through preconceptions reveals “a natural way of experiencing the interconnectedness of things, their beauty and strangeness, their liveliness in and to our consciousness as ‘ours’, and yet also as independent witnesses to reality” (Murdoch 2003: 342). In other words, it manifests how we are interrelated to other beings, how they impact our psyches and how they yet remain their own creatures, filled with awe-inspiring distinctness. It is this that focusing on hitherto “insignificant” animals can achieve, as the pig alters from a dull prototype to a being of independent agency and uniqueness, interlinked with our own existence, and worthy of awe and love.

Conclusion: Animal Ethics, Difference and Holism

Both Weil and Murdoch emphasize how we come to perceive values in the world via attention. They shy away from moral theory—the detailed, rational and often laborious construction of moral principles—and rather position morality as something that spurs directly from attentive focus. When paying attention to the realities of others, we also by necessity come to note their value. Weil suggests that love reveals the state of the other, and moral concern immediately ensues: “To know that this man who is hungry and thirsty really exists as much as I do—that is enough, the rest follows of itself” (Weil 2002: 119). According to her, morality is a “necessity”, for it follows attentive love, and after the latter, we are impelled to do what is “good”. Morality is connected to attentive love also on the level of practice, for it is directed at eradicating those aspects of our society that practice violence. “After death, love” (ibid.: 85), states Weil, thus epitomizing the moral epitome of attention. Indeed, Weil correlates attention and thereby love with goodness, and argues that even such moral notions as “justice” require an attentive, loving approach to others (ibid., 2009). The same stance is advocated by Murdoch. According to her, one of the key mistakes of modern philosophy has been the misplacement and sidelining of both love and its inherent links to morality. She maintains that love is at the epicentre of moral ability, and that the entwinement of the two needs to be acknowledged in philosophy (Murdoch 1971: 45, 2003: 343).

Simply stated, love enables one to note value—it is an experience via which “the good” manifests. Under an egoistic gaze, we depict others as instruments for our own purposes, as beings whom can be reduced into resources or ignored if even our trivial interests so require, but under a loving gaze, we notice their inherent value, and begin to define them via what is “good”. Therefore, love is normatively charged. In the context of animal ethics, this would mean that the anthropocentric worldview, which historically and culturally has tended to define nonhuman creatures via utility, could be radically questioned via love: when approached through love, perhaps also other animals surface as having value in themselves, and as beings whose treatment ought to be

grounded on what is “good” or “just” rather than what is optimal for human purposes. Moreover, perhaps such a state cannot be achieved as long as the ties between love and morality go unnoted—that is, perhaps next to philosophy in general, also animal ethics in particular ought to notice the entwinement of love and moral ability.

Indeed, perhaps downplaying the significance of attention and love is precisely the reason for why—despite many elaborate, rational moral arguments in favour of being more inclusive towards nonhuman animals—animals still remain morally marginalized. Of course, also rational thought is required. Weil and Murdoch go too far in suggesting that attentive love suffices, for it alone does not offer precise guidance on how to act, nor solve the conflicts between the many loves we can have for different beings. Yet, even if reason is needed, without love, such reason risks remaining distorting, demotivating and hollow. Following the above, it is attention and love that are required for the abolishment of violent institutions, including those enforced on nonhuman animals.

It is important to note that this should not be taken to mean that other animals are to be treated anthropomorphically as “little humans”. Indeed, attention requires that the difference of others is continuously noted. As pointed out earlier, Weil is careful to posit that love does not equal assimilation, within which we feel “oneness” with the loved one, but instead rests on recognition of her specificity and uniqueness. Perhaps paradoxically, attentive love requires distance, as we are to constantly remember the gulfs there are between ourselves and those whom we love (Weil 2002: 118). There are sound reasons to highlight difference. Other animals become real only when their heterogeneity and distinctness are acknowledged: if they are assimilated into a unison with the human self, they cannot be their own, authentic, particular and thereby real creatures, but remain anthropogenic extensions, projections or illusions. Therefore, loving animals does not equal Disneyfied cuteness, but is grounded on both noting similarities (of which there are many between species) *and* respecting the peculiarities of pikes, bees, vipers, elephants and raccoons.

Cultivating attentive love towards nonhuman animals is not always easy, for cultural beliefs, social institutions from law and economy to media and marketing, and our self-directed aims will always to some extent impact our grasp of animality, and often highlight utility and instrumentalism. Yet, via replacing anthropocentric preconceptions with humility and letting go, and placing unprejudiced focus on those animals one usually ignores, such love will come more fluently. “Try again. *Wait*” (Murdoch 2003: 506), advises Murdoch, and these words are vital also for loving animals.

Yet, perhaps the type of morally thick attention underlined by Murdoch and Weil would benefit from placing more emphasis on a holistic outlook. When observing an individual seagull from up close, something normatively elemental may take place, but it may also be the observation of flocks of seagulls from afar, as part of wider ecosystems where species co-exist and entangle, that is equally relevant.

Baruch Spinoza spoke of the notion of being under the category of eternity (*Sub Specie Aeternitatis*). Within such a viewpoint, one observes reality as a whole, from within its entirety. Here, we embrace the perspective of universe observing itself, as we proceed to “adequate knowledge of the essence of things” (Spinoza 1994: 57). The resulting state is pure rational joy and love, which spark radical epistemic and normative changes in our orientation. Also Wittgenstein spoke of *Sub Specie Aeternitatis*, arguing that when witnessing the world as a “limited whole”, ethics comes into existence (*Tractatus* 6.45). This notion of love and joy as a reasoned, intuitive perspective of eternity highlights the relevance of a holistic view. Under its gaze, one does indeed notice flocks of seagulls next to fishes, waters and trees, and the benefit here is that one may begin to observe also the manner in which they influence and construct us as human

beings. Nonhuman creatures do not exist separately from us, but constantly impact and live in us. As argued by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the body exists in relation to other bodies, and thus what we perceive to be “ourselves” are actually the myriad interconnections with the world (Merleau-Ponty 1968). *Sub Specie Aeternitatis* can, with its holistic perspective, spark awareness of such entanglements, as one knows wolves from afar, in their wider networks, and as simultaneously we may know ourselves as a part of these networks, wherein the wolf lives in the human, and human in the wolf.

A holistic perspective *Sub Specie Aeternitatis* may spark love and joy as forms of knowledge. As such it can complement Murdoch’s and Weil’s attentive vision towards the nonhuman realm, capable of sparking regard for animals as both individual, inherently valuable agents and members of ecological wholes, all deserving of our moral regard.

Notes

- 1 There are strong metaphysical underpinnings to Murdoch’s and Weil’s philosophy, as both follow Plato’s metaphysics, and as in addition both endorse a mystic interpretation of Plato. For them, “good”, “truth”, “attention” and “love” are all entwined. Murdoch summarizes the stance by claiming that: “Life is a spiritual pilgrimage inspired by the disturbing magnetism of *truth*, involving ipso facto a purification of energy and desire in the light of a vision of what is *good*. The good and just life is thus a process of clarification, a movement toward selfless lucidity, guided by ideas of perfection which are objects of *love*” (Murdoch 2003: 14).
- 2 One of the latest discoveries is that fishes are also cognitively and emotionally capable creatures. See Balcombe 2016.
- 3 Truth forms a central concept for Murdoch, as it is truth which attentiveness reveals. Indeed, truth is nothing less than love, and our moral ability directly related to my loving/truthful capacity to perceive: “Love is truth, truth is love. My moral energy is a function of how I understand, see, the world” (Murdoch 2003: 293).
- 4 Such suggestions trace back to Aristotle, in whose teleological system less perfect beings were to serve the interests of more perfect beings, and where humans belonged to the latter groups whilst other animals remained in the former.
- 5 Weil argues that such voids are brought about particularly by “affliction”, a deep, self-aware process of suffering that highlights the irrelevance and limitations of self-preoccupation. Affliction—albeit highly important for Weil’s philosophy—will be left beyond the scope of this chapter.
- 6 Our own wellbeing depends on doing so, for the quality of our lives is determined by how well we can note that, which lies beyond us: “The good life becomes increasingly selfless through an increased awareness of, sensibility to, the world beyond the self” (Murdoch 2003: 53).
- 7 Quoting also Wittgenstein, she argues that: “We take a self-forgetful pleasure in the sheer alien point-less independent existence of animals, birds, stones and trees. ‘Not how the world is, but that it is, is the mystical’” (Murdoch 1971: 83).
- 8 Murdoch mentions nonhuman animals frequently also elsewhere, and particularly endorses Schopenhauer’s positive views on them as beings, who ought to be treated with compassion—she also suggests that following Plato’s *Timaeus*, we ought to pay moral attention to the consciousness of all creatures.
- 9 Weil and Murdoch also discuss Zenian paradoxes as a way of learning “letting go”. Also this may be relevant in the context of nonhuman animals. For attentive love to emerge, it is beneficial to cause ruptures to standard ways of approaching them, and thereby question the dominant, stereotypic animal imageries ranging from animals as commodities to Disneyfied anthropomorphism. One way to do this is bringing out the contradictions in such imageries, and in so doing inviting Zenian incongruities as a method—here, precisely contraposing pigs as pork and pigs as speaking “Babes” could reveal how stereotypes of animals are constructions rather than reality, and could thereby evoke the willingness to explore what lies underneath.

References

- Aaltola, E. (2018) *Varieties of Empathy: Moral Psychology and Animal Ethics*, London: Rowman & Littlefields Int.
- Acampora, R. (2006) *Corporal Compassion: Animal Ethics and Philosophy of Body*, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Balcombe, J. (2016) *What a Fish Knows*, London: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Donovan, J. (2007) "Attention to Suffering: Sympathy as a Basis for Ethical Treatment of Animals" in J. Donovan and C. Adams (eds) *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Greene, J. and Haidt, J. (2002) "How (and Where) Does Moral Judgment Work?", *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 6 (12): 517–523.
- Gruen, L. (2007) "Empathy and Vegetarian Commitments" in Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan (eds) *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gruen, L. (2015) *Entangled Empathy: An Alternative Ethic for Our Relationships with Animals*, Herndon, VA: Lantern Books.
- Haidt, J. (2001) "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment", *Psychological Review* 108: 814–834.
- Levinas, E. (1961) *Totality and Infinity*, Alphonso Lingis (trans.), Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- Loughnan, S., Bastian, B. and Haslam, N. (2014) "The Psychology of Eating Animals", *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 23: 104–108.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968) *The Visible and the Invisible*, Alphonso Lingis (trans.), Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Midgley, M. (2002) *Evolution as Religion*, London: Routledge.
- Murdoch, I. (1971) *The Sovereignty of Good*, London: Routledge.
- Murdoch, I. (2003) *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, London: Vintage.
- Scheler, M. (1979) *The Nature of Sympathy*, London: Routledge.
- Spinoza, B. (1994) *Ethics*, London: Penguin.
- Weil, S. (2002) *Gravity and Grace*, London: Routledge.
- Weil, S. (2009) *Waiting for God*, London: Harper Collins.

ON THE LOVE OF NATURE

Rick Anthony Furtak

Introduction

Henry David Thoreau comments that he has always found it remarkable “that I should have been born into the most estimable place in all the world, and in the very nick of time, too” (Thoreau 1962: 12/5/1856). His tone here is ironic, since what he has just been describing in the paragraphs leading up to this statement is a plain afternoon under a “perfectly cloudless and simple winter sky.” Yet he is moved on this very day to write, “I love the winter,” even for depriving him of outdoor activities which he will appreciate all the more during other seasons, once the water has thawed. As he routinely admits elsewhere, there is nothing especially grand or spectacular in the scenery of the area where he was born—nothing that would *compel* either love or wonder, we might say. In the above journal passage, his point is about the beauty he was nonetheless able to discover within his natural surroundings—as much as if he had literally been privileged with the best of all possible spatiotemporal situations. He is expressing what might be called *amor fati*, or the love of fate (see Nietzsche 2001: §276), defined as the capacity to find beauty and meaning in one’s circumstances, whatever they happen to be. As we shall see, the ability to appreciate and be moved by the best qualities of a place requires a loving awareness of this place in its particularity. In what follows, I will seek to explain first why it is that, by taking a fair yet charitable view of what we love, we become better acquainted with it *as it actually is*,¹ perceiving much that is lost on the dispassionate or unloving observer. Then I will focus in greater depth upon Thoreau’s exemplary account of how the natural world can be loved.

Love, Otherness, and the Apprehension of Reality

It has been argued, recently by Harry Frankfurt for instance, that to love is essentially to care about the life and well-being of whatever we love—in his terms, about its very “existence” as well as “what is good for it” (Frankfurt 2004: 41–42). I find this claim compelling, and will build upon it throughout the rest of this section. The notion of being concerned about the beloved’s life for its own sake, and wishing that this life is going well, may be most readily intelligible in cases where the beloved is another human being. What is most crucial, however, is that what is loved must have a life that can be going well or not so well. For, as Aristotle notes, it is impossible to wish good on behalf of anything that is *only* to be used and enjoyed, whereas love in an

unqualified sense means wanting the beloved's life to be flourishing—on its own terms and in its own right.² Of course, any biotic entity has a life of its own, so rabbits and aspen trees can be loved for their own sakes just as human beings can. But concrete individuals of other types, such as specific lakes, forests, mountains, species, and ecosystems, may also be construed as having something like lives of their own. A lake that has been poisoned by toxic chemicals is not doing well, and if *this particular* lake is one that we love (say, one that we grew up nearby) then, by virtue of our personal attachment to it, we wish for it to be thriving and are therefore upset to hear about its contamination—more so than we would be about just *any* lake.

The fact that we are loving or caring beings structures how the world appears to us: what seems real and significant, as well as what arouses our attention and concern. The reason why we “cannot dispense with love,” as Kierkegaard says (Kierkegaard 1995: 5–7), in order to apprehend what is around us, is that this affective disposition offers an enhanced mode of awareness. It is the detached observer who is comparatively blind, since it is generally the case that whatever is loved becomes more fully manifest to the one who views it with loving eyes. When we love, our appreciative regard “flows in a warm affirmation of the beloved,” as Ortega points out. “To love art or your country,” he adds, amounts to “recognizing and confirming at every moment that they are worthy of existence” (Ortega 1957: 16–17). As I mentioned above, this emotionally felt appreciation of the very existence of something in its own right, whose life and well-being are important to us for their own sakes, can be directed toward anything that has (strictly or metaphorically speaking) a life of its own—one that we can affirm, and wish to be going well. It is in this way that love brings what is loved emphatically into our awareness, so that its reality and value are strikingly evident to us. The kind of attention the lover brings to bear on the beloved allows more subtle good qualities “to be seen and appreciated,” leading to “acuteness of perception” by enabling us to recognize “less obvious aspects of what is really there” (Armstrong 2003: 94–97),³ rather than to a distortion of what is viewed in this manner. Love thus functions as a source of illumination, bringing aspects of our environment into the light of our charitable gaze.

Viewed from the perspective of someone without loves or cares, the surrounding world would be deprived of its usual axiological salience. Our capacity to love performs a revelatory role because it enables us to experience aspects of our surrounding environment as meaningful, thereby shaping the way we view the world. It determines what comes into focus as significant out of the entirety of everything that is in principle available for our attention, much of which inevitably escapes our notice. Hence, it is love that specifies the “axiological nuance[s]” of reality for each person, in Max Scheler's terms, establishing what falls within “the value realm accessible to a being” (Scheler 1973: 17–18, 261). Whenever we are fascinated by what is *other* than ourselves, we open ourselves up to caring about it as an end in itself. Moreover, the fact that love makes us aware of the significance of things does not necessarily entail that this significance is *projected* onto the world by our own minds. Rather, our capacity for love could work in a similar manner to the aperture in a camera, opening the eye of the beholder so that he or she has access to what is truly “out there” in the world, however frequently we fail to see it. The perception of value can therefore depend upon love, even though love does not involve the *bestowal* of value.

This is how, by loving, we develop a multifaceted interest in our human and nonhuman environment. Our capacity to love lets a meaningful world come to light around each person who is emotionally receptive. And this illustrates why it is that we cannot dispense with love without losing access to truthful insights. To love another being, or anything that has a life of its own in a strict or broader sense, is “to will to exist” for that being or thing, wanting it to be flourishing (Kierkegaard 1995: 83–84). As a loving subject, I discover that there is a significance

in the world which is not simply of my making, yet which can be revealed only through my attentive and appreciative regard. My heightened awareness of what I love and care about allows me to appreciate things that I would not otherwise have been able to perceive, however much they might have been “there to be seen.” Although love does not have a magic power to create value that simply is *not* there, the gaze of a loving person who views what *is* there in the most favorable light may uncover what is not apparent to anyone else. Through a loving disposition, I can appreciate the best qualities of whatever it is that I love, which would not have been obvious to me from an unloving standpoint. The intricacies of a thawing sandbank, an overnight frost, or a flowering shrub, are best observed through this mode of affective attention.

Admittedly, in speaking of the value or significance of things, we are dealing with an aspect of our environment that depends on our subjective outlook in a way that other features of the world arguably do not. The meaningful, lovable properties of a hometown or a sunset are not like the volume and mass of a solid object, which can easily be confirmed by any and every observer. Instead, they are phenomena that *can* be well founded, since after all we are capable of describing them and pointing them out to others (to some degree, and to some others) but which are *not* evident from all perspectives. When we succeed at explaining to another person some qualities that we find moving in the sound of a bird’s song, we hope to prompt them to notice and hear these also, and to find them emotionally moving in *something* like the way that we do. In appreciating music versus hearing mere noise, we differ more widely in our capacities, for in the former case, we rely on what is more personal and specific to our constitution. Our loving subjectivity nonetheless reveals aspects of the world and lies at the heart of who we are as human beings. By enabling us to find meaning in the world, love brings to light the axiological dimension of reality, or the inherent value in our surroundings. Through this affective mode of experience, we can discern things that dispassionate reason is blind to, as the sense of hearing is blind to colors. The emotional responses of a loving subject embody a mode of vision, even though what they allow us to see would remain invisible to a person without the necessary sort of affective attunement. Some things must be loved in order to be known and understood, and when we see the world with this emotional orientation we find that it is not bare and featureless but permeated with tangible meaning. Loving attention enables us to discover the “beauty and significance” of a natural place or thing, Mary Austin writes, by forming what she refers to as “a fine appreciation” of such aspects of that place as the twining vines of desert plants, turning their foliage “edgewise” away from the sun, or the “pure bleak beauty” of a faintly illuminated rock canyon (Austin 2003: 67–73).

Thoreau, the Loving Naturalist

In this section, I will suggest that we can learn much from Thoreau about why the love of nature is philosophically significant. Loving attention to the natural world, he claims, enables us to apprehend emotionally the values inherent in our surroundings, values available to us through our sensory experience if we are suitably attuned to them. Rejecting the fact–value distinction, and claiming that it is not grounded in the nature of things, he implores his readers to awaken to the beauty of nature by transforming their subjective orientation—and this is accomplished by becoming loving subjects who are receptive to beauty and meaning. In what follows, I will draw heavily on Thoreau’s writings, attempting along the way to tease out these inter-related claims.

Now, a prevalent philosophical bias holds that the material world is devoid of value: such axiological qualities as the beauty of a bird’s song must lie only in the eye (or in the ear) of the beholder. On this view, the color and scent of autumn leaves and the radiance of the sun are

false properties that do not actually reside in objective reality. If the world of appearance were stripped of its illusory tints, it would be “a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colorless: merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly” (Whitehead 1967: 54).⁴ No one philosopher or school of thought holds sole responsibility for defending this position, but it generally arises from the desire to separate the properties of things that belong to objective reality from those that depend on features of an observer’s constitution. From the observation that natural beauty would go unnoticed if not for the appreciative perceiver who is moved upon witnessing it, a believer in this way of thinking would conclude that it must therefore be classified as illusory. His tacit premise would be that the vantage point of any sentient being must be left behind in order to arrive at an undistorted view of the world. But this assumption entails that a more poetic or appreciative description presents “things as they appear, not as they *are*”; that is to say, “not in their bare and natural lineaments” but rather in the “exaggerated colors” that appear to someone whose emotions are aroused by what he or she sees (Mill 1897: 206–207). Thoreau, however, reports that he struggles to maintain this distinction, noting: “I have a commonplace book for facts and another for poetry—but I find it difficult always to preserve the vague distinction which I had in my mind,” because “the most interesting and beautiful facts are so much the more poetry” (Thoreau 1962: 2/18/1852). This passage demonstrates Thoreau’s realism about the values we encounter in the external world.

Elsewhere in his journal, Thoreau mentions that the facts he records should not be “dry” and “stated barely,” but “warm, moist, incarnated,” and charged with meaning: “A man has not seen a thing who has not felt it” (Thoreau 1962: 2/23/1860). Clearly, he does not accept that whatever we register through our affective responses ought to be viewed as unreal. In fact, he suggests that the person who is never affected by the beauty of things is the one who has an inadequate conception of reality, since it is the neutral observer who is less well aware of the world as it is. In other words, affectionate and naturalistic accounts of reality need not be incompatible with one another. Rather than imposing a sharp division between facts and values, Thoreau urges his reader not to “underrate the value of a fact,” adding that the true scientist will “know nature better” by virtue of having refined her way of making observations, resulting in a “deeper and finer experience” of seeing, hearing, and feeling (Thoreau 2001: 41). “How indispensable to a correct study of nature is a perception of her true meaning,” he adds (Thoreau 1962: 12/16/1837). This is a task which will occupy him throughout his life; namely, to develop a method of attending to objects so that they will be experienced as elements of a meaningful world. Nature is rich with value that is not of our making, as we can best understand when we view it as existing in its own right, instead of viewing it as a means of serving our own ends. Therefore, “whatever we have perceived to be in the slightest degree beautiful is of infinitely more value to us than what we have only as yet discovered to be useful and to serve our purpose” (Thoreau 1993: 144). What is needed is not willful assertion of our own purposes, but appreciative receptivity toward the values in our environment.

A central aim of Thoreau’s philosophical writing is hence to articulate a loving outlook in which all of existence—and in particular the natural world—is regarded with wonder, reverence, and awe. This “piety toward the actual,” as John Dewey calls it, is an orientation toward phenomena that allows us to experience “moments of intense emotional appreciation” in which the beauty of the universe is apparent (Dewey 1960: 302–306).⁵ “How sweet is the perception of a new natural fact!” Thoreau exclaims. It suggests “what worlds remain to be unveiled,” and reminds us that the disclosure of things around us depends partly upon us (Thoreau 1962: 4/19/1852). Because different “intentions of the eye and of the mind” are required to attend to different aspects of reality, it is unhelpful to speak of “significant facts” without explaining the habits of loving attention that enable a person to perceive them (Thoreau 1962: 9/8/1858).

"We need pray for no higher heaven than the pure senses can furnish," Thoreau writes, intimating that we can realize the value of being only by cultivating our perceptual faculties (Thoreau 1980: 382). So even his essay on colorful autumn leaves must incorporate a theory of perception: as he states, it "requires a particular alertness, if not devotion to these phenomena," in order for a person to apprehend their distinctive beauty (Thoreau 2001: 390). Because any change in our way of experiencing things will bring about a transformation in our understanding and an alteration in the quality of our world, the task of learning to see with loving eyes has an importance that cannot be exaggerated.

He argues that the red color of an autumn leaf is a natural fact that is out there in the world to be met with by an appreciative perceiver, and he views the activity of encountering it as an end in itself. Someone who observes the Scarlet Oak in this manner on a fall afternoon is likely to note that it appears to possess a "more brilliant redness" than at other times, and also to notice that this "partly borrowed fire" is due to the angle of the low sun (Thoreau 2001: 391). As this phenomenon shows, we need not escape into a realm of fantasy in order to find our surroundings animated with dazzling radiance. Rather, we need only adjust the lens through which we are perceiving things, to shape our way of seeing, in order to become less oblivious and more alert to the intricate world that surrounds us (see Blakemore 2000; see also Wynn 2013). The apprehension of value in our environment *can* be a well-founded phenomenon: nature is always more than we have yet appreciated, and will continually reveal new wonders for those with eyes to see. Moreover, what it harbors will never be exhausted by our best efforts to search for beauty in natural places: when we perceive our environment as loving subjects, we can develop a clarified vantage point and come to discover that "reality is fabulous" (Thoreau 2004: 94). Some of the most striking features of our world are at risk of being missed due to avoidable limitations in our mode of vision. The human being's capacity to love, properly understood, is a faculty that gives us access to the fullness of the nonhuman world—not a means of distorting it. Displaying a spirit of *amor fati* again, Thoreau remarks that he would like to count himself among those who cherish "precisely the present condition of things" with "the fondness and enthusiasm of lovers" (Thoreau 2004: 15). The great poet is simply a writer who is entirely occupied with "giving an exact description of things as they appeared to him, and their effect upon him." Thoreau continues by claiming, "we can never safely exceed the actual facts in our narratives.... A true account of the actual is the rarest poetry" (Thoreau 1980: 325–326). Just as adopting a skeptical stance condemns us to experience uncanny doubts, a loving attentiveness toward the wondrous realities of the world allows us to perceive much that we would otherwise overlook. An unloving—that is, emotionally neutral or disinterested—outlook might convince us that a landscape is objectively barren. For Thoreau, however, its beauty is there to be seen, if we have eyes to see. "All things are significant," he writes (Thoreau 1962: 11/1/51)—however, we are not aware of this significance from an apathetic or disengaged perspective. It is as "friends" of nature that we must regard it, therefore, for a friendly or loving point of view gives us a "clearer perception" and allows us to encounter an object "with a zest and vividness of imagery as if [we] saw it for the first time" (Thoreau 1962: 10/13/60). This emotionally renewed personal acquaintance is a type of empirical knowledge that allows us to provide a vividly lyrical account, one that evokes what it is like to experience the world in this manner.

If our emotions are "as revelatory of the world" as other modes of experience (Cavell 1992: 104),⁶ then any substantial change in our affective receptivity will transform our sense of reality. Whereas the Greeks "with their gorgons, sphinxes," and so forth "could imagine more than existed," in our disenchanting era we have trouble imagining "so much as exists" (Thoreau 1962: 2/18/1860). Thus, in order to defend nature's intrinsic value, as Thoreau wishes to do, he must write in such a way as to amplify his readers' emotional awareness. So he describes the way a

pond's colors vary under different atmospheric conditions, which he describes at length in intricate detail (Thoreau 2004: 171–172). And he suggests that “the truest description, and that by which another living man can most readily recognize a flower, is the unmeasured and eloquent one which the sight of it inspires” (Thoreau 1962: 10/13/1860). What we “meet with,” as Thoreau might say, depends in part on our subjective comportment toward the world. The “objects which one person will see from a particular hilltop are just as different from those which another will see as the persons are different,” since things are concealed from us “not so much because they are out of the course of our visual ray as because we do not bring our minds and eyes to bear on them” (Thoreau 2001: 393). Taking notice of another person's suffering, for instance, involves more than having the requisite physiological equipment and facing in the right direction: it also requires a loving outlook, a kind of emotional receptivity. We are wrong to speak “as if seeing were all in the eyes, and a man could sufficiently report what he stood bodily before,” when in fact what we see depends partially on us (Thoreau 1962: 1/12/1852). The question of whether or not one perceives “the significance of phenomena” is decided not only by “what you look at,” but also by “how you look and whether you see” (Thoreau 1962: 8/5/1851). Accordingly, there will be “as much beauty visible to us in the landscape as we are prepared to appreciate,” but “not a grain more” (Thoreau 2001: 393–394). An alert observer who is emotionally attuned to the place where she is situated will find herself “in a living and beautiful world” (Thoreau 1962: 12/31/1859). The human effort of loving attention orients us toward the nonhuman world in such a way as to experience its value. Nature's beauty, its sublimity, and its myriad other meanings are what we become aware of “through its emotional impact on us” (Milton 2002: 46–47, 100). In a moment when we are delighted to discover that “suddenly the sky is all one rainbow,” it is a happy “marriage of the soul with Nature” (Thoreau 1962: 8/21/1851). Mind and world are happily married in the sense that, by virtue of where we are situated *and* our method of attending, the rainbow's brilliant colors constitute a well-grounded phenomenon that we are in a good position to see.

Venturing a more speculative claim, Thoreau indicates that a person who loves nature is likely to find herself loved in return, thereby intimating the existence of something akin to personhood in the natural world. For the unhappy lover who sorrows under a cold moon, he says that “the natural remedy would be to fall in love with the moon and the night, and find our love requited” (Thoreau 1962: 1/19/1841). Partially sheltered from rainfall as he looks out from the open door of his small cabin, he is startled to discover a “sweet and beneficent society in Nature, in the very patterning of the drops, and in every sound and sight around.” He remarks on feeling aware at such a moment of “an infinite and unaccountable friendliness ... like an atmosphere sustaining me,” and on finding “the presence of something kindred” even in “scenes which we are accustomed to call wild and dreary” (Thoreau 2004: 127–128). He reports finding this in the awesome, terrifying sublime on Mount Ktaadn in *The Maine Woods* and on the sometimes horrifying sea coast in *Cape Cod*, no less than in the startling appearance of the rainbow. Each of these cases is a reminder that the natural world has an autonomous existence, independent of us and not subject to our control. The love of nonhuman nature can serve to illustrate the general truth articulated by Murdoch when she characterizes love as the “apprehension” that “something other than oneself is real” (Murdoch 1999: 215). The separate reality of a beloved “other” such as Walden Pond with its “humble” and understated beauty (Thoreau 2004: 170) persists when it does not immediately shock or surprise us but has a peaceful, calm presence instead.

This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rain storm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood-thrush sang around, and was

On the Love of Nature

heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself.

(Thoreau 2004: 84–85)

In his quest to find ground for affirmation of self and cosmos, Thoreau ends up identifying love as the inward source of human inspiration and as the sustaining basis of nonhuman nature. He writes,

I know of no redeeming qualities in me but a sincere love for some things, and when I am reproved I have to fall back onto this ground. This is my argument in reserve for all cases. My love is invulnerable. Meet me on that ground and you will find me strong.... Therein I am whole and entire. Therein I am God-propped.

(Thoreau 1962: 12/15/1841)

The capacity to love thus gets interpreted as his own foundation, and—once again—as what allows the surrounding world to be revealed in its beauty.

Conclusion

As we have seen, it is not only sentient creatures, human beings, and other animals that have their own life and well-being. Nor is it a stretch to speak of the “perspective” of anything else that has its own life: for individual plants or species of flora, ponds and woods, hillsides and planets, we can meaningfully refer to how (for instance) a climatic event might affect *them*, or how it seems from *their* perspective—how their life is impacted by it, for better or worse. Here is how a rainstorm might appear from other points of view besides that of any human being or nonhuman animal:

The gentle rain which waters my beans and keeps me in the house to-day is not drear and melancholy, but good for me too. Though it prevents my hoeing them, it is of far more worth than my hoeing. If it should continue so long as to cause the seeds to rot in the ground and destroy the potatoes in the low lands, it would still be good for the grass on the uplands, and, being good for the grass, it would be good for me.

(Thoreau 2004: 127)

Valuing this place where he lives includes caring about the life of the grass, no fewer than seven other varieties of plants and trees that he claims to have kept from withering in dry seasons, and which he helps to be alive and thriving. My point right now is that the natural world includes multifarious centers of value, any of which are susceptible to being loved in this sense. It may be for love of an endangered bird species that one cares about the groves of trees in which it nests; on the other hand, the birdsong audible in this forest may be just one of its aesthetically moving features, and *this* may be what moves a person to love the woods and lakes in the area, becoming conscious of their inherent value also. Alternatively, one’s love for the planet Earth and concern for its climate may be the primary factor in light of which one sees and appreciates the trees due to their role in the carbon cycle.

I have argued that the stance of the loving observer, who is vulnerable to being struck by the natural world’s beauty, is rationally justified. This is because it is only through such an affective sensibility that actual features of our surrounding environment can be disclosed to us. Now I

wish to say that, in addition to wanting what one loves to be doing well, another property of love is that we are drawn to what we love and want to remain close to it, to have more of it and its distinct value in our life. Or, in Aristotle's terms, we want to *live* together with it.⁷ This aspect of loving is also relevant to the way that we love a *place*. Now, if the natural place one loves most is a sandstone canyon threatened by damming, then living nearby or frequently revisiting this place may not be feasible. For those fortunate enough to live with their beloved "other" for some time, and to see them almost daily, it is wondrous to find oneself impressed by them anew after twenty years or more, with a sense of what "they" have gone through. Speaking of Walden Pond, his own most loved place, Thoreau calls it the best "of all the characters I have known," even after "the railroad has infringed on its border, and the ice-men have skimmed it"; indeed, "where a forest was cut down last winter another is springing up by its shore," and it is very much "the same woodland lake that I discovered so many years ago," with "the same water which my youthful eyes fell on" then (Thoreau 2004: 186–187). At the end of this passage, which is itself in the midst of tens of pages filled with appreciative literary depiction—as well as careful quantitative measurement—of the pond, he remarks: "I can almost say, Walden, is it you?" The "almost" here is important, since it would be going a bit too far to claim that a beloved lake can literally *be* a person, with a perspective and a character and a capacity for recognizing us. That this body of water in these particular woods is a concrete individual with something like a life of its own, which a loving and appreciative friend can care about, ought to be less controversial. Furthermore, to those who know it best it does *seem* to have a kind of individual personality—and its qualities can be most accurately captured by someone who loves it, who can tell you the exact date on which its icy surface had completely melted each spring for the past decade (Thoreau 2004: 292) and can provide the following account of its variously colored waters:

Viewed from a hill-top it reflects the color of the sky, but near at hand it is of a yellowish tint next the shore where you can see the sand, then a light green, which gradually deepens to a uniform dark green in the body of the pond.... When much agitated, in clear weather, so that the surface of the waves may reflect the sky at the right angle, or because there is more light mixed with it, it appears at a little distance of a darker blue than the sky itself; and at such a time, being on its surface ... I have discerned a matchless and indescribable light blue, such as watered or changeable silks and sword blades suggest, more cerulean than the sky itself, alternating with the original dark green on the opposite sides of the waves, which last appeared but muddy in comparison. It is a vitreous greenish blue ... like those patches of the winter sky seen through cloud vistas in the west before sundown. Yet a single glass of its water held up to the light is as colorless as an equal quantity of air.

(Thoreau 2004: 171–172)

A similar intricacy of description can be given for other natural places, including specific deserts and mountains, rainforests and prairies. The sun and moon can likewise be viewed as particular individuals with distinguishing traits and characteristic types of agency, as can times of day and year—morning, autumn, and so forth. "Many of the phenomena of Winter are suggestive of an inexpressible tenderness and fragile delicacy" (Thoreau 2004: 299). All of these natural things can therefore be loved in a manner that is comparable to the way in which we love persons. To some, these personifications will seem less persuasive; nevertheless, if they are grounded in discernible features of the world, then they cannot easily be dismissed as human impositions or projections merely. Whatever aspects of the natural world we happen

to love, we can point out *some* of what it is that we love about them, noting properties that are in principle available for others to detect, as if we were describing a favorite author or a dearly loved friend. As in these other cases, we cannot expect universal agreement, but those with similar affinities may be able to share our appreciation to some extent. If love is indeed a way of seeing and appreciating the beloved, then an account of the best qualities that one has discerned through careful attention to a natural place ought to qualify as evidence of having truly loved.

Notes

- 1 In speaking of a fair yet charitable view, I deliberately echo Iris Murdoch's notion of the "just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality" (Murdoch 2001: 33–34).
- 2 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155b, 1156b, and 1159a. Martha C. Nussbaum reminds us that Aristotelian *philia* or friendship is a form of love that can include our most passionate and intimate attachments (see Nussbaum 2001: 348–354).
- 3 As Troy Jollimore writes: "If the lover is blind" to unflattering interpretations, then a "detached observer is blind" toward "sympathetic" interpretations; frequently, it is "the detached observer's blind spot" that proves to be "more epistemically disabling" (Jollimore 2011: 62–64).
- 4 Whitehead is characterizing, not necessarily defending, this view. For a fuller exploration of themes discussed more briefly here, see Furtak 2012.
- 5 John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1960), 302–306.
- 6 See also McDowell 1998: 130, where he writes: "How can a mere *feeling* constitute an experience in which the world reveals itself to us?"
- 7 See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1157b–1158a and 1171a–1172a.

References

- Armstrong, J. (2003) *Conditions of Love*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Austin, M. (2003) *The Land of Little Rain*, New York: Modern Library.
- Blakemore, P. (2000) "Reading Home: Thoreau, Literature, and the Phenomenon of Inhabitation," in R. J. Schneider (ed.), *Thoreau's Sense of Place*, Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 115–132.
- Cavell, S. (1992) *The Senses of Walden*, expanded edition, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Dewey, J. (1960) *The Quest for Certainty*, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Frankfurt, H. G. (2004) *The Reasons of Love*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Furtak, R. A. (2012) "The Value of Being," in R. A. Furtak, J. Ellsworth, and J. D. Reid (eds.), *Thoreau's Importance for Philosophy*, New York: Fordham University Press, 112–126.
- Jollimore, T. (2011) *Love's Vision*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1995) *Works of Love*, trans. by H. V. Hong and E. Hong, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- McDowell, J. (1998) *Mind, Value, and Reality*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mill, J. S. (1897) *Early Essays*, London: George Bell & Sons.
- Milton, K. (2002) *Loving Nature: Towards an Ecology of Emotion*, New York: Routledge.
- Murdoch, I. (1999) "The Sublime and the Good," in *Existentialists and Mystics*, P. Conradi (ed.), New York: Penguin Books, 205–220.
- Murdoch, I. (2001) *The Sovereignty of Good*, London: Routledge Classics.
- Nietzsche, F. (2001) *The Gay Science*, trans. by J. Nauckhoff, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2001) *The Fragility of Goodness*, revised edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ortega y Gasset, J. (1957) *On Love*, trans. by T. Talbot, New York: Meridian Books.
- Scheler, M. (1973) *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, trans. by M. S. Frings and R. L. Funk, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Thoreau, H. D. (1962) *The Journal of Henry D. Thoreau*, 14 vols., B. Torrey and F. H. Allen (eds.), New York: Dover Publications.
- Thoreau, H. D. (1980) *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Thoreau, H. D. (1993) *Faith in a Seed*, B. Dean (ed.), Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Thoreau, H. D. (2001) *Collected Essays and Poems*, E. Witherell (ed.), New York: Library of America.
- Thoreau, H. D. (2004) *Walden*, J. S. Cramer (ed.), New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Whitehead, A. N. (1967) *Science and the Modern World*, New York: Free Press.
- Wynn, M. (2013) *Renewing the Senses*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

18

CARING TO BE GREEN

The Importance of Love for Environmental Integrity

Cheryl Hall

What does it take for people to be “green”? When human beings interact with the rest of nature—as they must perpetually do to obtain all of their sustenance and find accommodation for all of their “wastes”—what attitudes and actions will engender a respectful, mutually beneficial relationship with the nonhuman world rather than a damaging one? In particular, how important is love to this relationship? Must people love the rest of nature to be green or are other motivations sufficient? Put another way, what happens to this relationship if love is absent?

In this chapter, I argue that being green indeed depends on love, at least within communities if not necessarily individuals. Individual human beings may act in green ways for instrumental reasons, but human societies cannot be green unless at least some of their members genuinely care about the web of life on Earth. If this is the case, then cultivating more love for the web of life is both crucial and urgent, because the well-being if not survival of many forms of life on Earth (including humans) now greatly depends on how humans interact with the rest of nature. We desperately need to know how to stop human damage to the web of life and foster a more protective relationship. While this is a deeply complex problem with no easy solutions, I suggest that understanding the role of love can help.

The chapter begins with an exploration of what it means to love (or not) and what it means to be green. Next I describe the current failure of dominant human cultures to love the web of life on Earth, given what it means to (not) love. I then consider the consequences of this failure in order to demonstrate that being green ultimately depends on love. Finally I discuss what cultivating love for the web of life would entail and whether it’s an achievable goal.

What Does It Mean to “Love”?

To understand what we mean by a concept, it’s often helpful to begin with the concept’s opposite. So let’s explore some common intuitions about what love is *not*. Consider first the example of two people in a personal relationship, whether as partners, family members, or friends, and suppose that one of these people perceives the other as having little value or worth. We would be hard pressed to call that “love.” But notice further that there are multiple ways in which this person might perceive little value in the other. For instance, they might simply pay little attention to the other and/or develop little understanding of the other over time.¹ Or they

might see the other as entirely alien and separate, without any similarity, commonality, or connection to themselves. Since love creates a sense of connectedness, even toward someone initially perceived as alien and separate, if that sense is missing, we don't call it love. At the same time, connection is not the same as identification. So we also don't call it love if the person can't see any valuable difference, uniqueness, or independence in the other; that is, if all they can see or appreciate in the other is a reflection of themselves (rather, we call that narcissism). And of course we don't call it love if the person considers themselves to be fundamentally superior to the other in their overall worth. In general, if a person fails to recognize and respect another person's distinctive qualities, to appreciate their strengths and at least accept if not embrace their weaknesses, we don't see them as having a loving attitude toward the other. Put another way, inattention, ignorance, "othering," narcissistic assimilation, denigration, and disdain are not "love."

But above and beyond the *perception* of value, we also don't call it love if a person *treats* another as having little value or worth. Most obviously, we don't call it love if the person violates or harms the other in some way—not even if the abuser claims to love. We also don't call it love if the person is solely or even primarily interested in what they can "get" from the other, thereby treating them as an object and a means to their own ends (Aaltola, this volume). We don't even call it love if the person refrains from explicit harm or exploitation yet still fails to support the other as appropriate, when care is needed and it is possible to provide—or if they support the other only when forced or obligated, with no intrinsic motivation to do so. Finally, we don't call it (true) love if the person is generally fickle and inconsistent in their treatment of the other. The vagaries of "romantic love" might suggest otherwise, but passing infatuations are precisely what we usually contrast with "true love." Again, put another way, abuse, manipulation, objectification, neglect, pity, and faithlessness are also not "love."

As is evident from these examples, what we might call "not-love" has two potential aspects: perception and action. Perhaps less evident but also notable, not-love has two potential forms of expression: active and passive. Denigration, disdain, othering, abuse, and manipulation are all relatively active forms of not-love; inattention, ignorance, narcissistic assimilation, neglect, and faithlessness, on the other hand, are more passive. Active forms of not-love might also be called "hate" and passive forms "indifference." Or to turn the point around: both hate and indifference are arguably "opposites" of love.² Notice that hate entails conscious attention to the other while indifference entails avoiding attention. Both, however, are usually harmful for the recipient, particularly in relationships. Indifference might appear less harmful than hate because the intent to harm is less clear and its outcome *might* (by chance) be similar to that of respectfully letting the other be. Nevertheless, ignorance and neglect can be as damaging as disdain and abuse; indeed, they may be even more damaging if enacted and experienced unconsciously and automatically, making them harder to resist and more difficult to repair. In this sense, indifference is insidious. Elie Wiesel's famous saying that "The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference" speaks to this point. The passage continues: "The opposite of beauty is not ugliness, it's indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it's indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, but indifference between life and death" (Wiesel, 1986). As Wiesel suggests, indifference, the absence of any concern, is ultimately a kind of nihilism that may be even more challenging to counteract than hate. It is a denial that life matters, that other beings in existence matter; accordingly, it is a denial of any relation with and responsibility for other beings in existence. But where a relationship does exist, refusing to be attentive and careful with another is irresponsible and very likely to harm the other, regardless of one's intentions.

Having explored at some length what love is *not*, we can now see more clearly what love *is*. Contrary to both hate and indifference, love is an abiding commitment to act on behalf of

another who is accepted and appreciated for who they are. Love is reasonably steadfast action in support of another's well-being, motivated by the sustained cognitive-emotional perception that the other is valuable and deserving of support, imperfections and all. Love requires committed effort to pay attention, understand, recognize both similarity and difference, appreciate, respect, avoid harm and objectification, and care appropriately for another's well-being, inspired by a fairly deep internal aspiration and regardless of feelings of irritation, frustration, boredom, and the like. Again, notice that both perception and action of a certain kind are required. On the one hand, if a person *perceives* another as valuable but fails to *do* what they can to help the other as needed, then their claim to love is shallow if not downright insincere. On the other hand, if a person *acts* in support of another but does not *consider* them to be valuable in their own right, then their action is not loving but condescending and/or merely obligatory, with the result that their ostensible support will likely be both ill-suited to the other's real needs and unsustainable over time. For how can one know what will truly help another without loving attention to and understanding of their situation? True love is a combination of caring perception and caring action.

It is useful to begin with the example of personal relationships between individual humans because it so dominates our cultural imagination of love, but love is by no means limited to such relationships. There are any number of possible "lovers," including human groups and probably some nonhuman beings. There are also any number of possible "beloveds," including people beyond our most personal lives, other living beings, groups, institutions, ideas, objects, activities, and pursuits (Haas and Vogt, this volume). Needless to say, some of the qualities of love look a bit different in different contexts, especially in cases where the lover and/or beloved are more collective, abstract, or distant. It may be more common for people to use words such as "care" or "value" than "love" in these cases. Still, there is enough of a family resemblance among these cases to put them in the same general category: love/care/value constitutes a cluster of attitudes and actions that can be usefully contrasted with that of hate/neglect/disdain.³ Working with this cluster, the remainder of this chapter will move beyond discussion of love/care/value between partners, family members, and friends to address a much broader lover and beloved.

What Does It Mean to Be "Green"?

In this chapter I use the word "green" to mean that which supports, protects, preserves, or restores the well-being of the web of life on Earth and its conditions for flourishing. In my usage "being green" is not an identity but a set of actions; it is shorthand for "living in green ways." Moreover, it is a set of actions ultimately inspired by the aim of supporting life. As I argue below, while it may sometimes be possible for individuals to live in green ways without being motivated to support life, it is scarcely possible for an entire society to do so. *Someone* must design and encourage a given action specifically for the purpose of supporting the web of life for that action to reliably "be green" in its effect. Whether direct or indirect, then, the object of being green is the well-being of the web of life, and being green is a set of attitudes and actions sooner or later aimed at this object.

To be sure, many would say that being green means supporting and protecting "nature" or "the environment"—and of course it includes this—but I have purposely avoided these terms because the dominant understanding of both excludes human beings. "Nature" is explicitly defined as that which is not human or humanly created or altered; "the environment" is considered to be "the outside," that which surrounds us rather than "us."⁴ In choosing the term "life," then, I aim to subvert a conceptual framework that not only imagines that humans are somehow separable from the rest of nature but defines humans in opposition to it. Being green,

then, means protecting the well-being of human life *together with* the rest of life on earth. And although I've focused on life here, protecting life turns out to require protecting the integrity of cycles of inorganic matter (such as nutrient and hydrological cycles) as well, since all of this provides the conditions for life to flourish. The key ecological point is that nothing exists in isolation, that countless strands ultimately connect everything in existence in a complex, interdependent web (Thiele, 2011). Given such interdependence, the viability of each part of the web depends in great part on the viability of the rest. Of course there is some "give" in the system, some ability for it to withstand fraying and/or reweave, but that resilience itself depends on the system having sufficient diversity, redundancy, and robustness. The more strands that fray, the less the web can withstand further fraying without unraveling entirely. As a result, while the immediate aim of a green action might be to protect the well-being of some specific part of the web, the ultimate aim is to protect the integrity and strength of the web itself.

There are many ways to be green; many ways to support, protect, preserve, or restore the integrity of the web of life and its conditions for flourishing. Some examples include acting in environmentally responsible ways in everyday life (such as minimizing consumption or reducing carbon emissions); educating oneself and others about ecosystems and what threatens their sustainability; working directly to protect or restore ecosystem elements from damage (such as avoiding toxic pesticides, planting trees, or cleaning up oil spills); inventing and implementing more ecologically sensitive systems to meet human needs for food, shelter, transportation, and the like; and engaging in various forms of political activism and legislation aimed at influencing community attitudes and choices affecting the web of life. In discussing the role of love in green action, I have in mind the full range of possible ways that individuals and societies might support the web of life on Earth.

What Happens to Life Without Love?

Now consider how those human cultures that currently dominate much of the human world (primarily the hegemonic cultures of the "developed" global North) perceive and treat the rest of life on Earth.⁵ It should not take long to see that the attitudes and actions of the dominant cultures toward the web of life constitute a remarkably accurate case of almost everything identified above as "not-love." Remember that not-love may be demonstrated both actively and passively, and in both perception and action. The dominant cultures' *perceptions* that the rest of life has little value are usefully outlined in Val Plumwood's work. These cultures pay little attention to "nature" overall and accordingly develop little understanding of it.⁶ As a result, they tend to stereotype and homogenize the rest of life, conceiving of it "in terms of interchangeable and replaceable units (as 'resources') rather than as infinitely diverse" (Plumwood, 1999, p. 88). Such homogenization "leads to a serious underestimation of the complexity and irreplaceability of nature" (1999, p. 89). This underestimation in turn leads to serious denial of both the countless ways in which human beings depend on the well-being of that web and the countless ways in which their actions may damage it (1999, p. 89). The other qualities of non-loving perception discussed above apply as well. Whether in spite of or because of their ignorance, the dominant human cultures conclude that the rest of nature is both alien and separate from humanity. In Plumwood's words, these cultures stress "those features which make humans different from nature and animals, rather than those they share with them, as constitutive of a truly human identity" (1999, p. 88). The rest of nature and other animals are "viewed as machines or automata [while] the range and diversity of mindlike qualities found in nature and animals is ignored" (1999, p. 88).⁷ These alien and separate "others" are certainly recognized as different, but that difference is not valued or respected. For example,

We consider non-human animals inferior because they lack (we think) human capacities for abstract thought, but we do not consider those positive capacities many animals *have* that we *lack*, remarkable navigational capacities for example. Differences are judged as grounds of inferiority, not as welcome and intriguing signs of diversity.

(1999, p. 90, *my emphasis*)

Finally, the dominant human cultures clearly consider human beings to be fundamentally superior to the rest of life: the unquestionable apex of evolution, if not the sole life-form whom a god made in its image and granted dominion over all of creation. Overall, the dominant cultures fail to recognize and respect the distinctive qualities of the web of life on Earth, to both appreciate what might be called its “strengths” (among them, that it enables all of human existence) and at least accept if not embrace what might be called its “weaknesses” (among them, that it can pose challenges to the comfort and safety of individual humans).⁸ In other words, their attitude toward the rest of life is decidedly unloving.

Unsurprisingly, this attitude has gone hand in hand with *treating* the rest of life as having little value or worth in its own right. While many cultures in human history have violated or harmed some aspect of Earth’s ecosystem, the industrialized, “developed” cultures that currently dominate much of the human world continue to do so on an unprecedented scale, from clear-cutting whole forests to removing whole mountain-tops, from draining aquifers to fracking land for oil, from torturing billions of other animals in order to feed or cure humans to killing off entire species, from synthesizing and dispersing toxic chemicals now lodged in organisms throughout the ecosystem (including humans) to producing radioactive wastes that will remain deadly for tens of thousands of years to destabilizing the very climate of the planet. As if that harm were not enough to demonstrate not-love, again, the other qualities of non-loving treatment also apply. Insofar as the dominant cultures are interested in “nature,” it is primarily in terms of what they can “get” from it. Its value is instrumental, even when what it provides is “recreation.” Needless to say, for the most part the dominant cultures fail to act on behalf of the rest of life as needed and possible, except perhaps when the damage to their own health and safety becomes manifestly inescapable or when forced to do so by less dominant groups of people who are often most at risk.⁹ And when some do act on behalf of the rest of life, their support is often rather fickle and inconsistent: they rally to save majestic scenery or cute animals, for example, but ignore the well-being of everything else. Again, such massive harm, objectification, and neglect of the web of life on Earth constitutes the very antithesis of love.

One might think that mere inattention to the rest of nature would be fine, since it’s not as if ecosystems need human manipulation to function. And perhaps in previous ages this was true, especially for the many areas of Earth at some distance from human communities. But with seven billion people and counting, and, most significantly, with a global capitalist economy driving human consumption of matter and energy at exponentially increasing rates, there are now few strands of Earth’s web of life untouched by human agency. It can be especially hard for people in advanced industrialized countries to see how much we are in relationship with the rest of nature because the connections are so attenuated and obscured: we think water comes from faucets and food comes from stores and the stuff we use is entirely human-made and the stuff we don’t want can be thrown “away” somewhere. Yet every day we make use of and affect more and more of the web of life. Whether we realize it or not, humans are in an increasingly deep, wide, and multifaceted relationship with the rest of nature, and, as I argued above, in the context of a relationship, indifference is negligence. In the context of a relationship, the refusal to pay attention to and act responsibly toward the other is exceedingly likely to harm the other, even absent conscious intent to harm.

Many readers will already have at least a general idea of the current and potential consequences of the hegemonic human cultures' not-love for life on Earth. At this moment in time, the most far-reaching consequences likely stem from climate change and biodiversity loss. Absent massive reductions in the current rate of greenhouse gas emissions within the next few decades, climate scientists as well as major organizations such as the World Bank, International Energy Agency, and PricewaterhouseCoopers expect global temperature to increase 4–6°C above preindustrial times, far above the internationally negotiated threshold of 2°C that is virtually guaranteed by now (International Energy Agency, 2012; Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Climate Analysis, 2012; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2012). According to the World Bank report, warming of that magnitude would be “devastating” (Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Climate Analysis, 2012, p. ix). In climate scientist Kevin Anderson's words, “a 4 degrees C future is incompatible with an organized global community, is likely to be beyond ‘adaptation,’ is devastating to the majority of ecosystems, and has a high probability of not being stable [that is, of continuing to warm through feedback loops]” (Roberts, 2011). Thanks not only to anthropogenic climate change but to habitat destruction, pollution, introduction of invasive species, and hunting and fishing, the web of life is also losing species at a rate that scientists estimate is 1,000 to 10,000 times greater than would otherwise occur without these human activities. Some estimates suggest that 30–50% of all species could be lost in the next few decades, which would seriously weaken the integrity of Earth's ecosystems (The Extinction Crisis, 2017). To be blunt, damage to the web of life is extensive and continuing to increase. Disease, suffering, and untimely death for untold numbers of living beings—including humans—have already occurred. Further suffering and death are undoubtedly in store for billions. The planet itself will survive the ignorance, denigration, objectification, exploitation, and abuse perpetrated by the dominant members of humanity, albeit probably in significantly altered form. But it is not an exaggeration to say that some members of this one species, *Homo Sapiens*, might be responsible for the early extinction of its own species along with that of millions of others.

Why Is Love Necessary to Protect Life?

The conclusion that love is necessary to protect life follows from the consequences of its absence. If the most powerful human cultures exhibit such extensive disregard for the web of life and thereby cause such extensive damage to it, it seems clear that preserving and restoring the web of life cannot be achieved unless these cultures cultivate a more loving relationship with it. To be sure, this claim is not new. Many environmental thinkers and activists, both inside and outside academia and ranging across the fields of philosophy, biology, politics, geography, anthropology, sociology, psychology, feminist theory, and more, have argued that humans must collectively cultivate some kind of love or care or value for the rest of nature in order to live in respectful community with it.¹⁰ Nor is it especially surprising that love/care/value would be necessary to do this given that for human beings (and maybe some other species as well) it is care that engenders and is engendered by care. That is: the cognitive-emotional orientation of caring *about* something is what engenders the tangible activity of caring *for* it, and the tangible activity of caring *for* something generally reinforces the cognitive-emotional orientation of caring *about* it. Or in other words, the two elements of love—caring perception and caring action—are not only connected but mutually generative.

Of course at the individual level, humans can be forced to separate these two elements of care or love, at least to a certain extent, but even then the separation doesn't work well for long. For instance, individuals can be prevented by any number of obstacles from helping to care for

whatever they care about (children, patients, projects, causes), but the more they care about these things, the more they will try to overcome such obstacles. At the same time, if their efforts are unsuccessful, they may eventually find it too painful to keep caring about these things. Individuals can also be forced or induced by any number of measures to provide care (of a sort) for things they do not actually care about (children, patients, projects, causes). Indeed such methods for eliciting acts of care-taking are pervasive, particularly in societies based on the structural exploitation of some people's labor by others. Often enough, though, people in this circumstance will eventually develop at least some internal sense of care about whatever they have been required to care for. To the extent that they do, perception and action will be reconnected and the quality of their care-taking will increase. But to the extent that they do not—to the extent that they continue to see whatever they must care for as worthless and undeserving of care—the quality of their care-taking will decrease. There are simply limits to how much one can manipulate people's actions (indeed, even one's own actions) separate from internal motivations. Whatever the pressures or inducements, people who don't care at all about something will scarcely provide good care for it—care that is substantial, reliable, sustainable, and truly attuned to the needs of the situation—because they will lack both the knowledge and the motivation to do so. This is precisely why societies devote so much energy to shaping their members' values, attachments, and motivations through socialization and nudging. The aim is to orient people's emotional make-up toward caring about what they will be expected to care for, thus linking perception and action.

So even at the level of individual humans, forcing a separation between caring perception and caring action ultimately reduces care. More importantly still, at the level of human groups, the larger and stronger the group, the more untenable the separation. If a whole society generally considers something to be worthless and undeserving of care, why would it devote any resources to caring for it? And who or what could force it to do so?¹¹ Nor will a society come to care about something it never cares for, since it will not come to appreciate a thing's value without careful attention to it. Finally, unless the society as a whole cares about something, it will not be motivated to require, pay, bribe, nudge, or otherwise encourage individual members to care for that thing, either. All the more than human individuals, then, human societies only care well for things they care about, and only care about things they care well for.¹²

This is why individuals might be able to act in "green" ways purely for instrumental reasons—to do things that serve to care for the web of life without caring about it (for example, installing solar panels just to save money)—but whole societies can't do so except by chance. Insofar as a society deeply values some unrelated end over the integrity of the web of life, whatever support it may evince for the web of life will be accidental, superficial, and fickle at best; misguided, disingenuous, and/or counterproductive at worst. For example, in societies that fundamentally prioritize (care most about) material wealth, love of profit will ultimately trump being green. Financial motivations to be green will only reliably lead to green ends if at least some people in the community value green ends themselves and have enough power to structure the economic incentives of others toward those ends.

But what of the motivation of self-preservation? Can't human beings—individuals or whole societies—be green just to protect themselves and other humans, without particularly loving or valuing the well-being of the rest of life? Can't people be green simply because they know they must care for the web of life in order to survive or flourish, without caring about it otherwise? Although the preservation of human life is arguably more tightly bound to green commitments and practices than other ends such as material gain, again I would argue that practices and policies are unlikely to be adequate unless someone who pays careful, *loving* attention to the highly complex web of life can provide guidance on what will actually support its integrity (Aaltola, this volume; Furtak, this volume).

Moreover, chances are high that any acts of care considered as simply means to some other end will remain difficult to sustain amidst more intrinsic motivations to care for other things. Alternatively, my venture is that the more people are able to move past a rudimentary, abstract realization that their well-being depends on a healthy environment into a deep experiential understanding of the density of the web of life, of its richly interwoven threads and their own intrinsic connection to countless other strands, the more they will begin to genuinely care about the integrity of the web as a whole, even if/as they maintain a special concern for their own strand. Alongside this shift in understanding, the more directly people can become involved in caring for some part of the web of life, the more actively they will start caring about it—and the better their care will be. That is, developing caring perception and uniting it with caring action will greatly increase the quality of care-taking for the web of life beyond that possible for purely instrumental reasons.

What Would It Mean to Cultivate Human Love for the Web of Life? Can It Be Done?

I've argued that the activity of supporting, protecting, preserving, and restoring the web of life on Earth is at heart both inspired by, and an expression of, love for that web of life. In the end, being green depends on caring, in both senses of the word. Accordingly, helping individuals and communities become greener requires cultivating both senses of caring for the web of life. Returning to the meaning of love discussed above, cultivating love for the web of life means cultivating a cognitive-emotional understanding and appreciation of its distinctive value, nurturing the attitude that it is deserving of support, and developing an abiding commitment to actively support its well-being. More specifically, in terms of perception, it entails paying attention to the specificity of life and coming to understand the thick layers of connection between humans and everything else, learning to recognize and appreciate both how much humans share with other life forms and how much value there is in the diversity of life, and fostering respect for life in general. In terms of action, it entails building a commitment to avoid harm and provide care for the web of life as needed and possible, both for its own sake (treating it as end in itself) and, given interdependence, our own. Overall, it means learning how to share a life in common with others through respect and care—as one does with those whom one loves.

Admittedly, cultivating love for the web of life presents quite a challenging goal, particularly given the deep and pervasive not-love that currently exists in the globally dominant cultures. The goal is so challenging that it might seem too much to ask, and consequently a recipe for failure.¹³ If it is necessary to *love* life (or even just to genuinely value or care about it) in order to protect it, perhaps a large enough number of human beings simply cannot and will not manage to do so. And indeed perhaps not, or at least not in sufficient time to preserve most of existing life on Earth. We can't know what will happen in the future. But we can know what has already happened, and here the evidence counters the objection of impracticality. Considering the full range of human history, it is certainly not accurate to say that human societies *cannot* love the web of life. Many cultures have; some still do. Moreover, a wealth of empirical research on the feelings, attitudes, and behaviors of people who live in contemporary advanced industrialized countries shows a strong link between some form of love for the rest of nature and commitment to act in environmentally responsible ways (Crowley, 2013; Davis, Le, and Coy, 2011; DiEnno and Thompson, 2013; Hinds and Sparks, 2008; Kals, Schumacher, and Montada, 1999; Lumber, Richardson, and Sheffield, 2017; Martin and Czellar, 2017; Mayer and Frantz, 2004; Nisbet, Zelenski, and Murphy, 2009; Perkins, 2010; Perrin and Benassi, 2009; Schultz, 2000; Tam, 2013a, 2013b). The precise character of the phenomenon measured in these studies

varies—ranging across love, concern, affective connection, emotional affinity, empathy, and more—but the conclusions are consistent. In all cases, some kind of emotional investment in one or more elements of the rest of nature is significantly correlated with a commitment to be more protective of it. Notice that the reverse is also true: a lack of emotional investment is correlated with a lack of commitment to be protective. These empirical studies thus provide considerable evidence both that caring perception and caring action are linked and that it is indeed possible for people to love the web of life, even when surrounded by dominant cultures demonstrating hate or indifference for it.

The challenge may also seem less daunting if we remember that loving the web of life doesn't mean idealizing or romanticizing it, any more than loving a person means idealizing or romanticizing them. This is a key part of love: to love the beloved for who or what it is, flaws and all. So loving the web of life doesn't mean having to convince ourselves that the rest of nature is wholly or even primarily "good" in the moral or aesthetic sense that we often use this term: always benign or always just or always beautiful. Since "love" is different from "like," it also doesn't require particularly liking the rest of nature, especially those parts that may be unpleasant or frightening or dangerous, or abjuring all efforts to protect ourselves from the effect of those parts. It just means perceiving—that is, thinking and feeling—that the web of life itself is fundamentally valuable, and acting on that perception. Of course it is not easy to care for things we genuinely value but do not always like (cranky relatives, perhaps, or our own bodies); nevertheless, the need to do so is an ordinary, regular part of adult life.¹⁴ In this sense, the challenge involved in being green is scarcely unique. The key to sustaining motivation to care for things we value but do not always like is to sustain focus on our sense of their value, and especially to feel the value emotionally as well as know it intellectually. In the case of being green, keeping the focus on the value of the integrity of the web, rather than individual unpleasant elements of it, and remembering that the web includes human life too, would also seem to be key. While it's true that "the web of life" is a relatively abstract thing to try to love, Milton notes that people have proven quite able to love other relatively abstract things, such as sports teams and nation-states and (I would add) gods (Milton, 2003, pp. 88–90). And this challenge could be ameliorated by engaging directly with the particular part of the web where one lives, thus helping one to better see its concreteness (Beery and Wolf-Watz, 2014; Klein, 2014; Rollero and De Piccoli, 2010). Again, we know it is possible for human individuals and communities to love the rest of nature because some have and do, so the real question isn't whether it's possible but rather how best to facilitate it.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that we designate inattentive and denigrating perceptions as well as neglectful and abusive actions as "not love"; accordingly, we conceive of "love" as a combination of caring perception and caring action. Given that the dominant cultures' perceptions of and actions toward the rest of nature have been inattentive, denigrating, neglectful, and abusive, it becomes clear that they must cultivate precisely that combination of caring perception and action that constitutes love in order to be green. I want to conclude by emphasizing that I am in no way claiming that love on its own is a sufficient force to preserve or repair the web of life on Earth. The right kinds of political and economic institutions, the right kinds of technology and material design, the right kinds of habits and socialization—all of these and more are necessary as well. But while love is not sufficient, it is still necessary. With love, there is a chance that humans might come to care for the web of life on Earth well enough to allow existing life-forms (including ourselves) to survive and even flourish. Absent love, chances are far worse.

Notes

- 1 For more discussion of the importance of attention to love, see Aaltola and Furtak in this volume. For an argument that no particular knowledge is necessary for love, see Jeske in this volume.
- 2 For an exploration of hate as an “asymmetrical” opposite of love, see Haas and Vogt in this volume. Haas and Vogt consider indifference a “contradictory” of love rather than an opposite.
- 3 Space constraints prevent me from supporting this claim further, other than to note that while there might be differences in intensity and exclusivity between love, care, and value, all entail belief in an object’s worthiness and commitment to its flourishing (unlike, for example, “like” or “desire”).
- 4 Indeed, as Vogel points out, “the environment” is usually identified with only the nonhuman part that surrounds us, not the humanly built part that in fact surrounds many of us most of the time (Vogel, 2016).
- 5 I focus on cultures here since their impact on the web of life both incorporates and extends far beyond that of individuals.
- 6 Both Aaltola and Furtak develop this point extensively in this volume.
- 7 Many others have also identified this aspect of industrialized Northern cultures, including Merchant (1990) and McLaughlin (1993).
- 8 As Hale argues in *The Wild and The Wicked* (2016), “nature” is just as responsible for hurricanes, cancer, and mosquitoes as it is for beautiful landscapes and huggable trees. So it is problematic indeed to contend that nature is all “good,” at least from the perspective of any one life-form, and certainly in some kind of moral sense.
- 9 For example, when transnational corporations owned in the global North dump toxins in countries in the global South (Pellow, 2007).
- 10 Some representative examples of this broad-ranging literature include Callicott, 1998; Carson, 2013; Clayton, 2003; Clowney, 2013; Crowley, 2013; Heller, 1993; Jackson and Palmer, 2015; Kals and Müller, 2012; Kellert and Wilson, 1993; Klein, 2014; Leopold and Meine, 2013; Macy, 2007; Millar and Yoon, 2000; Milton, 2003; Mossner, 2014; Orr, 1994; Perkins, 2010; Pooley and O’Connor, 2000; Seamon, 1984; Warren, 1996, 2000; Weintrobe, 2013; Wilson, 1984.
- 11 It is tempting to believe some global organization will, but the record to date attests otherwise.
- 12 One might argue, as Hale does, that love is not required for care because the human capacity for rationality and moral duty can do the job (2016). But I would argue that “duty” just smuggles love in under cover of a different name. For at the foundation of duty is love: a deep cognitive-emotional regard for, and commitment to, duty itself. Without that commitment, duty holds no intrinsic force.
- 13 This is one of Hale’s main concerns.
- 14 Panagiotarakou’s point that “the main reason we do not encounter many campaigns to help spiders, scorpions, or mosquitoes is simple: because we don’t like them” is well taken (2016, p. 1063). The problem she identifies speaks again to the need for education about the interconnectedness of the web of life.

References

- Beery, T. H. and Wolf-Watz, D. (2014). Nature to Place: Rethinking the Environmental Connectedness Perspective, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 40, pp. 198–205.
- Callicott, J. B. (1998). Environmental Ethics—Introduction, in M. E. Zimmerman (ed.), *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Carson, R. (2013). *The Sense of Wonder*, New York, NY: Open Road Media.
- Clayton, S. (2003). Environmental Identity: A Conceptual and an Operational Definition, in S. Clayton and S. Opatow (eds), *Identity and the Natural Environment: The Psychological Significance of Nature*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 45–65.
- Clowney, D. (2013). Biophilia as an Environmental Virtue, *Journal of Agricultural & Environmental Ethics*, vol. 26, no. 5, pp. 999–1014.
- Crowley, T. (2013). Climbing Mountains, Hugging Trees: A Cross-Cultural Examination of Love for Nature, *Emotion, Space and Society*, vol. 6, pp. 44–53.
- Davis, J. L., Le, B. and Coy, A. E. (2011). Building a Model of Commitment to the Natural Environment to Predict Ecological Behavior and Willingness to Sacrifice, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 257–265.
- DiEnno, C. M. and Thompson, J. L. (2013). For the Love of the Land: How Emotions Motivate Volunteerism in Ecological Restoration, *Emotion, Space and Society*, vol. 6, pp. 63–72.

- Hale, B. (2016). *The Wild and the Wicked: On Nature and Human Nature*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Heller, C. (1993). For the Love of Nature: Ecology and the Cult of the Romantic, in G. Gaard (ed.), *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, pp. 219–242.
- Hinds, J. and Sparks, P. (2008). Engaging with the Natural Environment: The Role of Affective Connection and Identity, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 109–120.
- International Energy Agency. (2012). World Energy Outlook 2012 Executive Summary, Paris, France: International Energy Agency, pp. 1–12, Available online: www.worldenergyoutlook.org/publications/weo-2012/#d.en.26099 [Accessed 5 April 2013].
- Jackson, S. and Palmer, L. R. (2015). Reconceptualizing Ecosystem Services: Possibilities for Cultivating and Valuing the Ethics and Practices of Care, *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 39, no. 2, pp. 122–145.
- Kals, E. and Müller, M. M. (2012). Emotions and Environment, in S. D. Clayton (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental and Conservation Psychology*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, pp. 128–147.
- Kals, E., Schumacher, D. and Montada, L. (1999). Emotional Affinity toward Nature as a Motivational Basis to Protect Nature, *Environment and Behavior*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 178–202.
- Kellert, S. R. and Wilson, E. O. (eds). (1993). *The Biophilia Hypothesis*, Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Klein, N. (2014). Love Will Save This Place: Democracy, Divestment, and the Wins So Far, in *This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs. The Climate*, London: Allen Lane, pp. 337–366.
- Leopold, A. and Meine, C. (2013). *A Sand County Almanac and Other Writings on Ecology and Conservation*, New York, NY: Library of America.
- Lumber, R., Richardson, M. and Sheffield, D. (2017). Beyond Knowing Nature: Contact, Emotion, Compassion, Meaning, and Beauty Are Pathways to Nature Connection, *PLoS ONE*, vol. 12, no. 5, pp. 1–24.
- Macy, J. (2007). *World as Lover, World as Self: Courage for Global Justice and Ecological Renewal*, Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.
- Martin, C. and Czellar, S. (2017). Where Do Biospheric Values Come From? A Connectedness to Nature Perspective, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 52, pp. 56–68.
- Mayer, F. S. and Frantz, C. M. (2004). The Connectedness to Nature Scale: A Measure of Individuals' Feeling in Community with Nature, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 503–515.
- McLaughlin, A. (1993). *Regarding Nature: Industrialism and Deep Ecology*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Merchant, C. (1990). *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*, London: Harper Collins.
- Millar, C. and Yoon, H.-K. (2000). Morality, Goodness and Love: A Rhetoric for Resource Management, *Ethics, Place and Environment*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 155–172.
- Milton, K. (2003). *Loving Nature: Towards an Ecology of Emotion*, London; New York: Routledge.
- Mossner, A. W. von. (2014). *Moving Environments: Affect, Emotion, Ecology, and Film*, Waterloo, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Nisbet, E. K., Zelenski, J. M. and Murphy, S. A. (2009). The Nature Relatedness Scale: Linking Individuals' Connection with Nature to Environmental Concern and Behavior, *Environment and Behavior*, vol. 41, no. 5, pp. 715–740.
- Orr, D. W. (1994). Love It or Lose It: The Coming Biophilia Revolution, *Orion Magazine*, vol. 13, pp. 8–15.
- Panagiotarakou, E. (2016). Who Loves Mosquitoes? Care Ethics, Theory of Obligation and Endangered Species, *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, vol. 29, no. 6, pp. 1057–1070.
- Pellow, D. N. (2007). *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Perkins, H. E. (2010). Measuring Love and Care for Nature, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 455–463.
- Perrin, J. L. and Benassi, V. A. (2009). The Connectedness to Nature Scale: A Measure of Emotional Connection to Nature?, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 434–440.
- Plumwood, V. (1999). Paths Beyond Human-Centeredness: Lessons from Liberation Struggles, in A. Weston (ed.), *An Invitation to Environmental Philosophy*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, pp. 69–106.
- Pooley, J. A. and O Connor, M. (2000). Environmental Education and Attitudes: Emotions and Beliefs Are What Is Needed, *Environment and Behavior*, vol. 32, no. 5, pp. 711–723.
- Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Climate Analysis. (2012). Turn Down the Heat: Why a 4°C Warmer World Must Be Avoided, Washington D.C.: World Bank, pp. 1–106, Available online: http://issuu.com/world.bank.publications/docs/turn_down_the_heat [Accessed 5 April 2013].

- PricewaterhouseCoopers. (2012). Too Late for Two Degrees? PwC Low Carbon Economy Index 2012, PricewaterhouseCoopers, pp. 1–16, Available online: www.pwc.com/gx/en/sustainability/publications/low-carbon-economy-index/index.jhtml [Accessed 5 April 2013].
- Roberts, D. (2011). The Brutal Logic of Climate Change, *Grist*, Available online: <http://grist.org/climate-change/2011-12-05-the-brutal-logic-of-climate-change> [Accessed 17 June 2017].
- Rollero, C. and De Piccoli, N. (2010). Place Attachment, Identification and Environment Perception: An Empirical Study, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 198–205.
- Schultz, P. W. (2000). Empathizing with Nature: The Effects of Perspective Taking on Concern for Environmental Issues, *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 56, no. 3, pp. 391–406.
- Seamon, D. (1984). Emotional Experience of the Environment, *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 27, no. 6, pp. 757–770.
- Tam, K.-P. (2013a). Concepts and Measures Related to Connection to Nature: Similarities and Differences, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 34, pp. 64–78.
- Tam, K.-P. (2013b). Dispositional Empathy with Nature, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 35, pp. 92–104.
- The Extinction Crisis. (2017). *Center for Biological Diversity*, Available online: www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/biodiversity/elements_of_biodiversity/extinction_crisis [Accessed 13 June 2017].
- Thiele, L. P. (2011). *Indra's Net and the Midas Touch: Living Sustainably in a Connected World*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Vogel, S. (2016). “Nature” and the (Built) Environment, in T. Gabrielson, C. Hall, J. M. Meyer, and D. Schlosberg (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Political Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 149–159.
- Warren, K. J. (ed.). (1996). *Ecological Feminist Philosophies*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Warren, K. J. (2000). *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Weintrobe, S. (2013). On the Love of Nature and on Human Nature: Restoring Split Internal Landscapes, in S. Weintrobe (ed.), *Engaging with Climate Change: Psychoanalytic and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Wiesel, E. (1986). *US News & World Report*.
- Wilson, E. O. (1984). *Biophilia: The Human Bond with Other Species*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

PART V

Art, Faith, and Meaning



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

19

LOVE AND BEAUTY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AESTHETICS

Paul Guyer

Love and Beauty

Three possibilities for the relation between love and our pleasure in beauty suggest themselves. One is that these are two separate affective states, similar perhaps in tone but different in etiology—that is, their causes and consequences—and important to distinguish. A second is that pleasure in beauty is closely related to love, but to a kind of love that must be distinguished from ordinary love such as that for children, friends, and above all for objects of sexual desire. The third is that love and pleasure in beauty should not be firmly distinguished but are instead identical or closely related, that love is the proper response to beauty and beauty the proper object of love, without any qualification on love or strict separation of it from desire. The first of these positions seems characteristic of such prominent eighteenth-century writers as Francis Hutcheson early in the century and Kant toward its end. The second of these positions can trace its heritage to Plato's *Symposium*, but in the eighteenth century is best represented by a writer not typically associated with Platonism, namely Edmund Burke. The last position has been promoted in recent aesthetic theory by Alexander Nehamas, and was not so boldly asserted by anyone in the eighteenth-century canon.¹ But Moses Mendelssohn's model of aesthetic response as consisting in complex and sometimes mixed sentiments might be approached in this light. Of course the three possibilities just described are simplifications, and each of the views to be discussed is more complex than this classification may suggest.

The focus here will be on the eighteenth-century theories, but Plato's *Symposium* is such a foundational text for the Western intellectual and aesthetic tradition that a paragraph on it can be indulged. In referring to the view of Plato's *Symposium*, one means of course the account of love proposed by Socrates when his turn to talk at Alcibiades's dinner party came around (*Symposium* 198a–212c).² Doubly distanced from the actual author of the dialogue, so who knows what Plato himself really believed, the heart of Socrates's speech is his report of “the speech about Love I once heard from a woman of Mantinea, Diotima” (201d). Socrates's endorsement of Diotima's proposal represents an alternative to that just given by Agathon, which was that love is a desire that will fulfill a lack on the part of the lover; such a view cannot be accepted because then a being that has no lacks or needs—that is, a god—could not feel love, but surely a god above all must have some “share in good and beautiful things” (202d). But if gods are to be capable of love, then it must be distinct from mere desire, which is needy, and if what they

love is to be beautiful, then beauty must be distinct from mere sexual attractiveness. Instead, Diotima proposes, the desire for a beautiful body, with which we mortals may initially identify love, is only the first step on the path to a pure pleasure in the form of the beautiful itself, which is not distinct against the form of the good itself.

This is what it is to go aright, or to be led by another, into the mystery of Love: one goes always upwards for the sake of this Beauty, starting out from beautiful things and using them like rising stairs: from one body to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, then from beautiful bodies to beautiful customs, and from customs to learning beautiful things, and from these lessons he arrives in the end at this lesson, which is learning of this very Beauty, so that in the end he comes to know just what it is to be beautiful.

(*Symposium* 211c–d)

On this account, which “finished to loud applause” (212c), love and pleasure in beauty do not need to be separated, because even if we think of beauty as something more or other than the attractiveness of a sex object, love has been separated from sexual desire, so there can be pure love for pure beauty.

Disinterested Beauty

Some philosophers in the eighteenth century thought that our pleasure in beauty is “disinterested”; that is, independent of any desire for or “interest” in its object, and in this way distinct from love.³ The concept of disinterestedness was introduced into eighteenth-century thought by Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1714), whose education was supervised by John Locke but who became a follower of the Cambridge Platonists and thus an heir to the Platonic tradition rather than to the Aristotelianism that lay behind British empiricism. Shaftesbury’s use of the dialogue form in his central work, *The Moralists* of 1709, demonstrates his allegiance to Plato. In a key passage in this dialogue, Shaftesbury’s spokesman argues that to appreciate the beauty of a garden is very different from wanting to eat the figs or peaches that grow there, and delicately adds that eager “*Desires, Wishes, and Hopes*” for “certain powerful FORMS in *Human Kind*” are in “no-way suitable ... to your rational and refin’d Contemplation of *Beauty*.”⁴ That pleasure in beauty is not a personal desire to consume or have sex with the beautiful object is what makes it disinterested. For Shaftesbury, however, the disinterestedness of pleasure in beauty is not part of a larger separation between beauty and morality. On the contrary, Shaftesbury uses the example of the disinterestedness of pleasure in beauty to introduce the idea that moral approbation is not based on self-interest either, and that the conception of morality as enlightened self-interest is “mercenary.” Further, for the Neo-Platonist Shaftesbury the ultimate object of both morality and pleasure in beauty is the harmony of the entire universe—in the latter case we admire it and in the former we do our part to sustain it—and pleasure in beauty and love of the good are in this way intimately connected.

Francis Hutcheson (1692–1746), a Presbyterian clergyman and eventually professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow, labeled his *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* of 1725 a defense of the principles of Shaftesbury from the “author of *The Fable of the Bees*”; that is, Bernard Mandeville, known for his claim that morality is nothing but enlightened self-interest, or rather the outcome of all acting in their own self-interest without much enlightenment, summed up in his slogan “private vices are public benefits.”⁵ But Hutcheson took on

Shaftesbury's conception of the disinterestedness of our pleasure in beauty without his Neo-Platonism. Hutcheson argued that our response to beauty should be considered a sense,

because of its Affinity to the other Senses in this, that the Pleasure does not arise from *Knowledge* of Principles, Proportions, Causes, or of the Usefulness of the Object; but strikes us at first with the Idea of Beauty; nor does the most accurate *Knowledge* increase this Pleasure of Beauty, however it may superadd a distinct rational Pleasure from Prospects of Advantage, or from the Increase of Knowledge.⁶

Pleasure in beauty is like other sensory responses in being immediate—that is, unmediated by thought, including any thought of usefulness—and also like other sensory responses in that the pleasure itself supervenes on some other aspect of the experience: in ordinary cases of sensation, say, the experience of a color or a fragrance, or in the case of beauty on the immediate perception of “*Uniformity amid Variety*.”⁷ Uniformity amid variety comes in two main forms, “original or absolute,” as in the beauty of the shape of an object as immediately perceived, and “relative or comparative,” the beauty of an imitation or representation lying in the unity that obtains between original and image in spite of their differences. Hutcheson's strategy is to use what he takes to be the non-controversial case of the sense of beauty to pave the way for his conception of the moral sense as an immediate feeling of approbation at the recognition of benevolent intentions, but unlike Shaftesbury he claims no direct connection between the object of the sense of beauty and that of the moral sense; that is, between uniformity amid variety in aesthetic cases and the universal well-being promoted by benevolent intentions. Pleasure in beauty and love of mankind (Hutcheson has nothing to say about sexual love) are similar in their immediacy but are not identical feelings.

This is not to say that Hutcheson sees no connection at all between beauty and love: the clergyman in him recognizes the existence of beauty as evidence of God's love for us. For Hutcheson it is evidence of God's “*Goodness*” and love for us that he has adorned “this stupendous *Theatre* in a manner agreeable to the Spectators ... for thus he has given them greater Evidences, thro' the whole *Earth*, of his *Art*, *Wisdom*, *Design*, and *Bounty*.”⁸ But it is precisely because beauty is a distinct property or set of relations and our pleasure in it is something different from other pleasures, even that of moral sense, that God's addition of it to our world is evidence of his goodness: he could have made a world that filled all our needs except our need for uniformity amid variety, but that would not have been as pleasant for us as the world that he did make.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was studying Hutcheson for his lectures on moral philosophy around 1764, when he published the *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, his earliest work in aesthetics, and his emphasis on the disinterestedness of aesthetic response and judgment—the feeling triggered by something beautiful and the judgment that it is beautiful—is fairly attributed to the influence of the earlier author.⁹ Kant's initial distinction between beauty and other forms of goodness and love for them is even more firm than Hutcheson's, but we will also find an echo of the earlier philosopher's interpretation of the existence of beauty as evidence of divine love for humans in Kant.

After his early *Observations*, Kant regularly touched upon the topic of beauty in his lectures on anthropology, metaphysics, and even logic in the 1770s and 1780s. But his next, main, and last book on aesthetics was the third of his critiques, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* of 1790, more precisely its first half, the Critique of the Power of Aesthetic Judgment. (The second half of the book, the Critique of the Power of Teleological Judgment, concerns our judgments of purposiveness in organisms and nature as a whole, which are not judgments of beauty.) The

Critique of the Power of Aesthetic Judgment is in turn divided into two parts, the Analytic of the Beautiful and the Analytic of the Sublime, the latter of which mistakenly includes Kant's further thoughts on the fine arts and on what he calls "intellectual interest" in the beautiful rather than the sublime.¹⁰ The Analytic of the Beautiful is further divided into four "moments." In the first of these, Kant distinguishes the beautiful from the "agreeable" and the "good," the former of these being that which merely gratifies the senses—Kant uses the taste and scent of food as his example of the agreeable rather than sexual attraction, but that would count too—and the latter being that which is approved of under some concept, including a prudential concept of its usefulness or a concept of its objective, moral value, in which case it is not merely "approved" but "esteemed" (*CPJ*, §5, 5:210). Satisfaction in both the agreeable and the good are "combined with interest" (*CPJ*, §4, 5:207), which Kant defines as pleasure connected with the *existence* rather than the *representation* of the object (*CPJ*, §2, 5:204), but which might also be defined, on the basis of Kant's use of the concept of interest in his moral philosophy, as pleasure that either leads to desire for any object under some classification, as in the case of the agreeable, or that arises from an antecedent conceptualization of the object, as in the case of a judgment of goodness.¹¹ In contrast to both of the cases of interested pleasure, Kant argues that "The satisfaction that determines the judgment of taste is without any interest" (*CPJ*, §2, 5:204). He appeals to our common practice to make this distinction: for example, we will all agree that when we are asked whether a palace is beautiful, we are not being asked whether we approve of the way it was financed or the labor for its construction obtained; we are simply being asked "whether the mere representation of this object is accompanied in satisfaction in me, however indifferent I might be with regard to the existence of the object of this representation" (*CPJ*, §2, 5:205), and then whether I think this satisfaction in me is one that can properly be expected to be enjoyed by others should they too experience a representation of this object in suitable circumstances (*CPJ*, §8, 5:215–16). Kant's theory of how the representation of an object can please me in a way that is independent of any interest in the agreeable or the good and yet has "subjectively universal validity" (5:215) is then that such a representation triggers a "free play" of our cognitive powers, in the first instance the powers of imagination and understanding, a state of the "facilitated play of both powers of the mind (imagination and understanding) enlivened [or "animated"] through mutual agreement" (*CPJ*, §9, 5:217, 219). Again in the first instance, Kant further argues that such free play is triggered by the representation of *form* (or the form of representations), for example by drawing rather than color in visual art or the structure of composition rather than the tones of particular instruments in the case of music (*CPJ*, §14, 5:225), although when he eventually focuses on the fine arts he acknowledges that the *content* of art, typically ideas of reason or morally significant ideas such as the ideas of virtue and vice, heaven and hell, enters into the free play, and thus that the free play involves reason as well as imagination and understanding (*CPJ*, §49, 5:314–15).¹² But even in this case, Kant maintains his view that our pleasure in the beautiful is not to be confused with our pleasure in the agreeable or the good, thus with the pleasures of desire and love in any sensory or sexual sense or in any more elevated, moral sense. Kant insists that our pleasure in beauty is disinterested in a way that any kind of love is not.

Nevertheless, Kant acknowledges that there are indirect connections between aesthetic pleasure and love. This acknowledgment takes several forms, but two are worthy of note. First, in a "General Remark" that follows the Analytics of the Beautiful and Sublime, Kant observes that "The beautiful prepares us to love something, even nature, without interest; the sublime, to esteem it, even contrary to our (sensible) interest" (*CPJ*, following §29, 5:267). What Kant means by the suggestion that the beautiful prepares us to love something without interest is that in order to make a proper judgment of beauty we must learn to set aside our immediate inclinations toward

the agreeable and our immediate desires for prudential or even moral goods in order to evaluate whether our pleasure in the representation of an object is intersubjectively valid, and that this will be helpful in our (lifelong) task of learning to set aside our own self-interest when evaluating maxims of action, which morality requires be universalizable. But this is not to say that our pleasure in beauty is identical to moral judgment, or that beauty is identical to the morally good, thus it is not to say that pleasure in beauty is the same as love in any sense, moral love included.¹³

Kant has a further discussion of the distinction between “empirical” and “intellectual” interest in the beautiful (*CPJ*, §§41–2). The former is an additional pleasure in something beautiful as an occasion for social intercourse, or perhaps self-aggrandizement, which we find agreeable, and is not the basis for any moral approbation. In this case we may love something beautiful like we love anything agreeable, but neither for its beauty as such nor in any morally significant way. Alternatively, we may enjoy a further gratification and take an “intellectual interest” in something beautiful when we take it as a “trace” or “sign” that nature “contains in itself some sort of ground for assuming a lawful correspondence of its products with our satisfaction that is independent of all interests” (*CPJ*, §42, 5:300). It is important to us that we find nature hospitable to our own concerns because we have a *moral* interest in the efficacy of our maxims and actions, and this requires that nature be cooperative, both nature within ourselves, to enable us to adopt the maxims that we should, and nature outside of us, for our actions to have their intended effects. But Kant’s talk of traces or signs makes it clear that he thinks of the connection between beauty and morality here as indirect: the existence of beauty in nature—and, given Kant’s eventual account of artistic genius as nature working through the artist, in art as well—is evidence that nature may be cooperative with us in other domains, including the moral, but it does not collapse the beautiful into the moral or any other object of love. Kant’s idea of nature as hospitable to us may be thought of as a naturalized or secularized version of Hutcheson’s idea of God showing his love for us by adorning the world with objects that we find beautiful, but no more than that does it identify our pleasure in beauty with love in either a mundane or a moral sense.

Beauty, Love, and Lust

Edmund Burke (1729–1797) did not separate beauty from interest and thus love in the way that Hutcheson or Kant did. Instead, although in a decidedly empiricist vein, Burke followed the Platonic tradition of associating beauty with love but separating it from lust, or direct sexual desire. But there is tension in his account.

Burke was an Irishman who came to London to seek his fortune, initially through literature and only subsequently in politics. His wife’s uncle was John Nourse, who had translated the 1719 work by Jean-Baptiste Du Bos, *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting, Music*, into English in 1748,¹⁴ shortly before Burke arrived in London, and perhaps this connection to that seminal work was responsible for his early interest in aesthetics. Be that as it may, his second and quickly successful publication in London was *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, published in 1757 with a second edition as soon as 1759, to which Burke added an “Introduction on Taste,” no doubt in response to David Hume’s essay “Of the Standard of Taste,” also first published in 1757. Burke distinguishes between “delight,” which depends upon relief from antecedent pain, and “positive pleasure,” which does not (Part One), and then explains the experience of the sublime as delight in the avoidance of *expected* pain, the threat of which is stimulated by various properties such as immensity, obscurity, and so on (Part Two), while the experience of beauty is a positive pleasure triggered by “that quality or those qualities in bodies by which these cause love, or some passion similar to it.” This immediately

suggests an identification of pleasure in beauty with love, although love of a passionate, presumably sensory kind, thus apparently not pure love for some pure object in a Platonic sense. However, Burke makes a Platonic move when he adds (in the second edition) that

I likewise distinguish love, by which I mean the satisfaction which arises to the mind upon contemplating anything beautiful, of whatsoever nature it may be, from desire or lust; which is an energy of the mind, that hurries us on to the possession of certain objects, that do not affect us as they are beautiful, but by means altogether different.

For example, “We shall have a strong desire for a woman of no remarkable beauty; whilst great beauty in men, or in other animals, though it causes love, yet excites nothing at all of desire.”¹⁵ (Burke was a heterosexual male, and writes as if his sole audience was other heterosexual males.) Thus pleasure in beauty, although love, is different from mere lust. The idea seems to be that the properties, at least of human beings, that we find beautiful have nothing to do with what we find sexually attractive, and conversely that what triggers our sexual lust has nothing to do with beauty—maybe it is pheromones. But Burke’s further exposition undercuts this neat distinction. For after several lengthy sections in which he argues, against Hutcheson and Hume, that beauty does not lie in formal properties such as proportion¹⁶ nor in the appearance of fitness or utility—“For on that principle, the wedge-like snout of a swine, with its tough cartilage at the end ... so well suited to its offices of digging, and rooting, would be extremely beautiful”¹⁷—he in fact enumerates as the sources of beauty qualities in objects that “we,” actually heterosexual men, find sexually attractive, in women, although for that reason we find it attractive in other objects as well. These include such properties as smallness or delicacy, smoothness, certain colors (“clear and fair” rather than “dusky or muddy,”¹⁸ so add racism to Burke’s androcentrism), and “gradual variation,” as in

that part of a beautiful woman where she is perhaps the most beautiful, about the neck and breasts; the smoothness; the softness; the variety of the surface, which is never for the smallest space the same; the deceitful maze, through which the unsteady eye slides giddily.¹⁹

The sources of beauty, which is supposed to be a kind of love but not lust, seem very much like what he, Burke, finds sexually attractive.

Perhaps Burke’s young wife found this passage flattering, but it does not fit well with his distinction between love and lust. The problem is not that it restricts his theory to a certain ideal of human feminine beauty; the theory is more general at least in allowing the appreciation of similar, feminine-like properties in other objects, for example other animal species, to which, presumably most humans, even most heterosexual males, are not sexually attracted. Thus “among animals; the greyhound is more beautiful than the mastiff; and the delicacy of a gennet, a barb, or an Arabian horse, is much more amiable than the strength and stability of some horses of war or carriage.”²⁰ The theory is that those properties that make a human woman beautiful also make other things beautiful. But the problem is rather that beauty is supposed to be different from sexual attractiveness altogether. In fact, the problem is more complex than this. For Burke has argued that although for animals, “whose purposes are more unmixed, and which pursue their purposes more directly than ours,” all that is required for sexual attraction is that the other animal be of the right species and sex, a human, or again, a human male, needs “something to create a preference, and fix his choice,” and *this* is supposed to be beauty. Thus “Men are carried to the sex in general, as it is the sex, and by the common law of nature; but they are attached to

particulars by personal *beauty*.”²¹ But the sources of beauty that Burke then enumerates are just properties that *all* men are supposed to find sexually attractive. So there seems to be no separation between love and lust after all, and beauty and love therefore cannot play its role of fixing our general preferences to particular objects. Burke tried to separate love and lust so that he can associate beauty with the former but not the latter, thereby preserving some hint of Hutchesonian disinterestedness, and all without taking refuge in a Platonic realm of pure forms such as beauty or goodness in the abstract. But he did not manage to do so very convincingly.

Mixed Sentiments

We might find a more sophisticated model of the complexity of aesthetic responses in the writings of Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), who was born in the same year as Burke and also did his chief work in aesthetics as a young man in the 1750s. Mendelssohn did not directly ask whether pleasure in beauty are the same or different, nor does he attempt to distinguish love and lust the way Burke does (although he quickly read and reviewed Burke’s book).²² He did construct a theory of aesthetic response as multilayered in a way that allows it to contain elements of love without collapsing into love. Mendelssohn was particularly interested in doing this in order to accommodate the “mixed sentiment” that we have in the case of tragedy, where our distress at characters or events portrayed has to combine with our pleasure in the portrayal; but his complex theory could also be used to explain how love in various forms can enter into our aesthetic pleasure without exhausting it.

Mendelssohn’s aesthetics is constructed within the paradigm of perfectionism that he inherited from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Christian Wolff, and Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (who coined the term “aesthetics” in 1735).²³ On their accounts, pleasure is always a sensory, which is to say clear but confused, perception of some perfection, something intrinsically good. But whereas Baumgarten had added to Leibniz and Wolff the idea that we can take pleasure in perfections of the *representation* as well as in perfections of *what is represented*, Mendelssohn adds to this that in aesthetic response, especially to works of art, we also take pleasure in the exercise of our own *mental* capacities, emotion and conative as well as cognitive, and in the improvement or perfection of our *bodily* condition as well—and on top of all that, we can take pleasure in the admirable artistry that has produced works of art also.

Mendelssohn can be thought of as having begun his aesthetic theory by combining the positions of Wolff and Baumgarten. In “On the Main Principles of the Fine Arts and Sciences,”²⁴ an essay from 1757, revised and included in Mendelssohn’s 1761 *Philosophical Writings* along with the 1755 letters “On the sentiments” and the new “Rhapsody” on the letters, he states that

We have now finally found the universal means of pleasing our soul, namely, the sensuously perfect representation. And since the final purpose of the fine arts is to please, we can presuppose the following principle as indubitable: the essence of the fine arts and sciences consists in an artistic, sensuously perfect representation or in a sensuous perfection represented by art.²⁵

The first part of this is from Baumgarten, that artistic representations have their own perfections and hence pleasures independent of their content (“representation” here refers to a work of representational art, not our mental response to such a work); the second part is from Wolff, that what pleases us in a work of art is ultimately the perfection of the content, what is represented. Mendelssohn goes on to add a great deal to this. First, he explains that what ultimately pleases us in either regard must be an “affirmative determination” of our own “soul” or mind, the

exercise of our own powers of *recognition*, *approbation* or feeling, and *judgment*. (Here is where representation in the mental sense comes in, which Mendelssohn sometimes calls *Vorwurf* or “projection” rather than *Vorstellung*; e.g., *PW* 134.) This allows Mendelssohn to argue that in the case of the artistic representation of an evil action, “recognizing an evil action and disapproving of it are affirmative features of the soul, expressions of the mental powers of knowing and desiring, and elements of perfection which, in this connection must be gratifying and enjoyable” (*PW* 133–4). It would be simplistic to think that when we represent or experience the representation of something unpleasant or painful, our overall response must be unpleasant; we can enjoy the way the representation engages our cognitive powers, and we can enjoy the exercise of our powers of approbation and judgment even when they are responding to something negative. Of course, in the case in which we have a positive attitude toward what is represented, say a human virtue rather than a human vice, there is also room for the exercise of our own powers to contribute further to our pleasure. Mendelssohn adds that the perception of beauty, whether in the representation alone or in what is represented as well, has a *bodily* effect as well:

If now it is true, that each sensuous rapture, each improved condition of the state of our body, fills the soul with the sensuous representation of a perfection, then every sensuous representation must also, in turn, bring with it some well-being of the body, a kind of sensuous rapture. And in this way a pleasant *emotion* emerges.

(*PW* 53)

So in his view, aesthetic response is cognitive, evaluative, and emotional, thus drawing on the whole range of our mental capacities, and it involves bodily responses as well. He seems to have in mind particularly a feeling of well-being that is diffused through the body from the perception of beauty, a “harmonious tension” of the nerves leading the body to become “comfortable” (*PW* 53), but here Mendelssohn could also follow Burke before him and anticipate Friedrich Schiller after him in recognizing an energizing or arousing sense of tension as well as a sense of harmony or relaxation as possible bodily effects of aesthetic experience.²⁶ Finally, Mendelssohn adds that in the case of “imitations of art” we take pleasure in “the artist’s perfection that we perceive in them,” for “all works of art are visible imprints of the artist’s abilities which, so to speak, put his entire soul on display and make it known to us” (*PW* 174). The claim that works of art put their artists’ “entire souls” on display to us may sound romantic and excessive, but the idea that through a work of art we often feel a relation not just to an image and not just to some content but to a real human being, the one who made it, although of course as we imagine that artist to be or have been, seems plausible. And to this Mendelssohn adds that in the case of natural beauties—that is, precisely those beautiful objects that we do not think of as having been made by other human beings—the pleasure that we take in them “is inflamed to the point of ecstasy by the reference to the infinite perfection of the master who produced them”; that is, of course, God (*PW* 174–5). From there he turns to genius, apparently turning back to a property of humans, but one that we must think of as divinely granted, and which “demands a perfection of all the powers of the soul as well as their harmonization for a single, final purpose” (*PW* 175).

The last two points suggest a connection between beauty and love. We admire the artistry of an artist, human or divine, Mendelssohn says, but we can just as easily think of this as a kind of love: the important point is that *through* the work of art, whether human or divine, we feel contact with another, another human person or a personage that at least some think of in quasi-human terms; so our response to beauty is not equated with anything like love of persons, but there is room for something like a relation of love to the artist as part of our complex response

to a work of (human or divine) art. This does not seem entirely implausible, when one thinks of how intensely many feel a relation to favorite artists, be they authors, composers, painters, or whatever, whom they have never met, but to whom they feel connected by their work, and whom they would dearly love to meet if that were possible.

Mendelssohn deploys his theory of the complexity of aesthetic response above all in his account of tragedy. This theory is perhaps even more complex than already suggested. Part of it is that we can respond differentially to the content and to the vehicle of artistic representation, and that pleasure in the latter may be able to outweigh displeasure at the former, without the latter entirely disappearing, thus producing what Mendelssohn calls a “mixed sentiment” (*PW* 136). Indeed, an element of pain can heighten the pleasure in artistic representation by its contrast. Thus, “sweetness alone quickly becomes boring if it is not mixed with something sour” (*PW* 143) and “a few bitter drops ... mixed into the honey-sweet bowl of pleasure ... enhance the taste of the pleasure and double its sweetness” (*PW* 74). But a further point is also crucial. This is that imagination allows us to respond to characters and events depicted in works of art as if they were real human beings and things being done by or to real human beings, even though we know perfectly well that they are not. That we are aware that we are responding to an “imitation by art, on the stage, on the canvas, and in marble” (*PW* 138) reminds us that we are not responding directly to reality and creates a certain degree of distance between us and the characters, so that we are not misled into running up to the stage to try to save Desdemona, but yet at the same time we do respond emotionally to these characters as if they were real. Thus a crucial part of aesthetic response is *sympathy*; that is, the sympathetic experience of what the characters in a work would be feeling, if they were real—“sympathetic horror, sympathetic fear, sympathetic terror”—and the possibility of this is dependent upon the fact that we can have an experientially real relation to fictional characters, including the relation of love. Mendelssohn argues that “since every love is bound up with the willingness to put oneself in the position of the beloved, we must share all sorts of suffering or pathos with the beloved persons, what one very emphatically calls *sympathy*” (*PW* 142). A good part of our emotional response to works of art is genuine emotional relation to the characters, including love, even though we know perfectly well that they are fictional. Thus love for characters is at least as much a part of our response to much art as is love of the artist.

In his most extensive discussion of tragedy, a lengthy exchange of letters with his friends Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Friedrich Nicolai in 1756–1757, Mendelssohn added that our emotional response to the tragic hero is often admiration for fortitude in the face of suffering—think perhaps of our response to Oedipus as he comes to Colonus to die rather than when he first tears out his eyes.²⁷ So he does not suggest that love and sympathy are our only response to fictional characters; there are other positive responses, such as admiration, and of course there could be purely negative responses, such as to Iago, who is necessary to drive the plot of *Othello* but who also makes sure that our response to the play is not uniform and boring. But the larger point is that without identifying our experience of beauty with love, Mendelssohn makes room for a variety of kinds of love and other emotions toward characters within the complexity of aesthetic response that also includes our response to the beauty of artistic representation, as well as room for an imaginary relation to the artist that can also be a form of love. Mendelssohn suggests that our pleasure in beauty can be intertwined with love without collapsing into it. Neither does love for characters or artists collapse the difference between fact and fiction, because our own mental complexity and the distancing means of artistic media allow us to maintain that distinction and yet enjoy a rich range of emotional reactions to art.

Postscript: Since the Eighteenth Century

In modern times, the Platonist approach to aesthetics was probably most influential in German Idealism, particularly in the aesthetic theories of G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860). Hegel understood beauty as the “sensuous appearance of the Idea,” the latter being his term for the rational character of reality in its complete extent, and also argued that artistic beauty—he had no use for natural beauty, since he did not regard it as the work of the human “spirit”—is only a transition to the higher representation, ultimately self-presentation, of the Idea in religion and ultimately in philosophy. In this way, he mirrored the conception of love of human beauty by Socrates in the *Symposium* as only a stepping-stone to love of something higher, the form of beauty or of the Good itself.²⁸ We might think of Schopenhauer, by contrast, as having adopted half of the Platonic picture. That is, like a Platonist, he thinks we must free ourselves of our ordinary, earthly desires, and he thinks that we can do this, at least to some extent, through aesthetic experience, by contemplating universals rather than particulars—he even calls these “Platonic Ideas”—which, in their universality rather than particularity, separate us from our own always frustrating particular desires. But this is only half of Platonism, because in his view there is no greater beauty or good for us to appreciate above or beyond the particulars of our ordinary experience; there is at best resignation to the insignificance of our own lives and cares in the greater scheme of things.²⁹

Schopenhauer was tremendously influential on literary and artistic thought into the earlier twentieth century, but less influential in academic aesthetics, while Hegel’s main influence on twentieth-century aesthetics might be thought to lie in Marxist aesthetics, where writers such as György Lukács argued that art-forms such as the modern novel are of interest primarily for their diagnosis and potential transformation of bourgeois and capitalist society.³⁰ But both the idea that our appreciation of beauty (or other aesthetic properties) is disinterested and distinct from love and the alternative idea that our appreciation of art is intimately intertwined with love or with our ordinary emotions more generally have continued to be represented in twentieth-century aesthetics and into the present century, although not always under these names. In the mid-twentieth century, Jerome Stolnitz defended the importance of aesthetic disinterestedness under its own name.³¹ Stolnitz’s defense of disinterestedness was criticized by George Dickie, who argued that supposedly disinterested response was nothing but careful attention to a work of art.³² But the underlying idea of the disinterestedness of aesthetic pleasure appeared and survived in many other ways. Both Hutcheson and Kant had argued that some kind of form, paradigmatically spatio-temporal form, is the proper object of disinterested pleasure or taste (although in both cases their theories of fine art ended up being more complex than that suggests), and beginning with Clive Bell’s *Art* of 1914 formalism has certainly been a major tendency of both philosophical aesthetics and art practice and criticism.³³ R.G. Collingwood’s argument that the task of art is not to *arouse* emotions but to *clarify* them could also be seen as trying to separate the aesthetic response to emotion from any ordinary experience of emotion.³⁴ Martha Nussbaum’s view that we come to understand love, but also moral dilemmas, through art might be thought of as continuing Collingwood’s line of thought.³⁵ And the recent debate over whether moral “merits” or “demerits” of works of art could count as aesthetic “merits” or “demerits” of those works can be seen as presupposing the premise that properly aesthetic responses are different from those human responses that are properly the concern of morality, including love.³⁶

But the alternative view, that aesthetic pleasure is itself a form of love or intimately connected to it, is also represented in recent aesthetics. The work of Alexander Nehamas was mentioned at the outset; his view is that our response to a work of art can itself be a form of love, in which we want to get to know everything about the work better, just as we do when we love

another person, and the art that he has in mind is often a representation of a person in response to which we feel strong emotions, such as in his favored example of Manet's *Olympia*. It could be debated whether he understands this as a complete rejection of Plato's transcendence of the human in the *Symposium* or rather just as bringing Plato down to earth. We might also think about the work of Stanley Cavell in these terms. Cavell certainly never mentions Moses Mendelssohn, but we could argue that his theory of the importance of the movie star in his early book on film, *The World Viewed*, is Mendelssohnian: he holds that we have a complex relation to the star on film, responding both to the character portrayed but also to the real human actor or actress; and his view could be interpreted as that this duality of our response is important precisely because it facilitates our having genuine emotional responses to works that we at the same time know are fictions.³⁷ Cavell's view is an heir to Collingwood's, for it is certainly part of his view that we come to understand our own emotions through art; but it is equally part of his view that we enjoy art for the sheer experience of emotions, including but by no means limited to love. Cavell's interpretations of the comedies of remarriage and of melodrama in his further books *The Pursuits of Happiness* and *Contesting Tears* present those films as explorations of a range of human emotions and the conditions for their experience and expression, but are also predicated on the assumption that we, the audience, experience genuine emotions including love in response to the beloved or despised characters of those films, mediated by our real love of the stars, although the star is a synthesis of fact and fiction, a real person seen through his or her roles.³⁸

The terms of debate have changed since the eighteenth century, but the debate over whether our pleasure in beauty or in aesthetic qualities more generally is disinterested and distinct from love and other human emotions, everyday or exalted, or is itself continuous with such emotions, continues.

Notes

- 1 Alexander Nehamas, *Only a Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).
- 2 Quotations from the *Symposium* are from the translation by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, in Plato, *Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper, associate editor D.S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis, IN and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), pp. 457–505. Citations are located by the traditional Stephanus pagination.
- 3 In *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), chapters 2 and 3, I argued that the emphasis on disinterestedness is one but not the only strand in eighteenth-century aesthetic thought, and that other approaches rather aimed to identify the human interests with which aesthetic response is most closely connected. As we will see in the next section, Burke is a major figure in this alternative approach.
- 4 Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *The Moralists*, III.ii, in *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), edited by Philip Ayres, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), vol. II, p. 103.
- 5 Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (1714), edited by Philip Harth (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970).
- 6 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725; fourth edition, 1738), edited by Wolfgang Leidhold (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2004), Treatise I, section I, paragraph XII, p. 25.
- 7 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, Treatise I, section II, paragraph XIV, p. 35.
- 8 Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, Treatise I, section VIII, paragraph III, p. 81.
- 9 See the references to Hutcheson in Kant's *Inquiry concerning the Distinctness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morality* (1764), Fourth Reflection, §2, 2:300, and "M. Immanuel Kant's Announcement of the Program of His Lectures for the Winter Semester 1765–1766," 2:311. The titles of these two works are from the translations in Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770*, edited by David Walford in

collaboration with Ralf Meerbote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). The *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* is translated by Paul Guyer in Kant, *Anthropology, History, and Education*, edited by Robert B. Loudon and Günter Zöller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Citations in what follows are from Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, edited by Paul Guyer, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). These volumes provide the Academy pagination in their margins. Citations to this work, abbreviated *CPJ*, will be given parenthetically. All citations from Kant are located by volume and page number for the Academy edition, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Royal Prussian (subsequently German, then Berlin-Brandenburg) Academy of Sciences (Berlin: Georg Reimer, subsequently Walter de Gruyter, 1900–).

- 10 Kant had intended a third heading to separate this material from the Analytic of the Sublime proper, but this heading was lost in the printing of the first edition of the work and not restored in the second edition; see Kant, *CPJ*, Editor's introduction, pp. xliii–xliv.
- 11 For explication of this point, see Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979; revised edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), chapter 3.
- 12 For Kant's account of fine art, see Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste*, revised edition, chapter 12. For further interpretation of his conception of free play, see also Paul Guyer, "The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited," in Guyer, *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- 13 Kant's conception of the relation between morality and love is too complicated to go into here. But the crucial point is that although he believes that the fundamental principle of morality has nothing to do with any feelings and that *at some level* morally worthy conduct is motivated only by respect for this principle, *in practice* respect for this principle involves cultivating and acting upon various feelings, including love for others. See Paul Guyer, "Moral Feeling in the *Metaphysics of Morals*," in Guyer, *Virtues of Freedom: Selected Essays on Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
- 14 Jean-Baptiste Du Bos, *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting, and Music*, translated by Thomas Nugent, 3 vols. (London: John Nourse, 1748).
- 15 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, edited by J.T. Boulton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), Part Three, Section I, p. 91.
- 16 Burke, *Enquiry*, Part Three, Sections II–V.
- 17 Burke, *Enquiry*, Part Three, Section VI, p. 105.
- 18 Burke, *Enquiry*, Part Three, Section XVII, p. 117.
- 19 Burke, *Enquiry*, Part Three, Section XV, p. 115.
- 20 Burke, *Enquiry*, Part Three, Section XVI, p. 116.
- 21 Burke, *Enquiry*, Part One, Section X, p. 42.
- 22 The review appeared in the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und freyen Künste*, Band III, 2. Stück (October, 1758): 290–320, and is reprinted in Moses Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften: Jubiläumsausgabe*, Band 4, edited by Eva J. Engel (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1977), pp. 216–36.
- 23 In his master's thesis, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus*, ed. Heinz Paetzold (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983), §CXVI.
- 24 Mendelssohn uses "beautiful" or "fine arts," as we do now, to refer to the visual arts, and "beautiful" or "fine sciences" to refer to the arts of literature.
- 25 Moses Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*, translated by Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) (henceforth *PW*), pp. 172–3.
- 26 See Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, Part Four, and Friedrich Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, translated by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), Seventeenth Letter.
- 27 For example, Mendelssohn to Lessing, November 23, 1756; see Frederick C. Beiser, *Diotima's Children: German Aesthetic Rationalism from Leibniz to Lessing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 211–12.
- 28 Hegel's aesthetics are best represented in the lectures on the philosophy of art that he gave from 1818 to 1828. These were posthumously edited (and expanded) by his student H.W. Hotho in 1835; Hotho's version of the lectures has been translated into English several times, most recently as *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, by T.M. Knox, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). Hotho's original transcription of the 1823 version of the lectures has been translated as *Lectures on the Philosophy of Art* by Robert F. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

- 29 Schopenhauer's aesthetics is expounded in the Third Book of his magnum opus, *The World as Will and Representation*, originally published in 1819 and expanded by him with a second volume of commentary in 1844. The most recent translation of the original volume is by Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For the supplementary material in the 1844 Volume II, the readers of English must consult the older but equally reliable translation by E.F.J. Payne (Indian Springs, CO: Falcon's Wing Press, 1958).
- 30 E.g., Georg Lukács, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ästhetik* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1954) and *Probleme des Realismus* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1955).
- 31 Jerome Stolnitz, *Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism: A Critical Introduction* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1960).
- 32 George Dickie, "The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1964): 56–65, and *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974).
- 33 Clive Bell, *Art* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1914).
- 34 R.G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938).
- 35 E.g., Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1988).
- 36 See Berys Gaut, *Art, Emotion, and Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), and numerous essays by Noël Carroll, collected in *Beyond Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- 37 Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film* (New York: Viking Press, 1972); enlarged edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).
- 38 Stanley Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981, and *Contesting Tears: The Hollywood Melodrama of the Unknown Woman* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

20

LOVE SONGS

Noël Carroll

Love is an affective state that has the capacity to engender a multitude of further, related affective states. There is, for example, the ecstasy and exhilaration of infatuation; and the love that encourages devotion. There is love that feels like salvation, to be contrasted with the love that is experienced as involuntary servitude or even slavery, sometimes as willingly accepted and sometimes as accursed; to be a slave of love can go either way.

There is love that infects as an affliction, an illness, or a disease. So much love evokes yearning, including unrequited love, although yearning may also be the result of mere loneliness, particularly on the part of the perennially lovelorn.

Often, love may strike us emotionally as a powerful, virtually magical force, akin to a spell that impels us toward a worshipful attitude toward the beloved to whom we are eager to pledge our vassalage. Love may wound, like an arrow, piercing the heart. And when love is gone, its termination or absence can instill anger, prompting rage in the spurned lover who accuses his/her former lover with indifference or even cruelty. At the very least, the break-up may induce melancholy.

Stable and enduring conjugal love may promote an affective affirmation of everyday life. On the other hand, love may offer an escape from the tribulations of quotidian existence and suffering. Love as lust stimulates the mood of *carpe diem*. And so on and on and on...

Moreover, there is a love song (indeed, often many) for every one of the amorous moods just catalogued as well as for many other shades of eros, including the indeterminately large number that lack a name (Gioia, 2015).

Celebrating love as ecstasy, for instance, there is “Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing” which declaims:

Once on a high mountain, in the morning mist
Two lovers kissed and the world stood still
Then your fingers touched my silent heart
And taught it how to sing.
Yes, true love’s a many-splendored thing.

“On the Street Where You Live” from the musical *My Fair Lady* captures the enthusiasm of being swept up into the onset of infatuation. As Freddy contemplates Eliza, he exclaims:

Love Songs

I have often walked down this street before
But the pavement always stayed beneath my feet before
All at once am I
Several stories high
Knowing I'm on the street where you live.

On the other hand, in the same musical, Henry Higgins confesses how it feels when love, so to speak, sneaks up on one and then disappears. In contrast to Freddie whom love hits like an oncoming train, Henry, at least initially, virtually whispers in quiet surprise, tinged with melancholy, that:

I've grown accustomed to her face
She almost makes the day begin
I've grown accustomed to the tune that
She whistles night and day
Her smiles, her frowns
Her ups, her downs
Are second nature to me now
Like breathing in and breathing out
...
I've grown accustomed to her face

The "Flower Song" from *Carmen* exemplifies a form of romantic yearning; "Yesterday," the melancholy nostalgia of lost love; "Ruby, Don't Bring Your Love to Town," the anguish of betrayal; "Let's Spend the Night Together," the energy of love as lust; "If I Loved You" (from the musical *Carousel*), the hesitant caution of courtship, with its fear of rejection; "Core Ngrato," the bitterness of a lover spurned; and "Do You Love Me?" from *Fiddler on the Roof*, the moving while also realistic, down-to-earth, yet emotionally deep affirmation of long-term conjugal love. The duet begins with Golde (the wife) singing:

Do I love him?
For twenty-five years, I've lived with him
Fought with him, starved with him
If that's not love, what is?
Tevye (the husband): Then you love me
Golde: I suppose I do
Tevye: And I suppose I love you too
Together: It doesn't change a thing, but even so
After twenty-five years, it's nice to know.

Whether confessional or declamatory, needless to say, a vast number of further examples could be adduced in a flash. In the twentieth century, the greatest numbers of the popular tunes on offer in the English-speaking world (and probably in many other places elsewhere) were love songs (Gioia, 2015). For instance, check out Bollywood.

Why?

A very plausible hypothesis (to be explored at length in this essay) is that inasmuch as the experience of love in its myriad different forms, moods, and vicissitudes is so widespread, it is likely that love songs serve a nearly universal function, namely to express the many diverse

affective states that love engenders in its various configurations, moods, circumstances, and moments—the songs approaching each of these phenomena from varying, though distinct angles.

This hypothesis, perhaps needless to say, assumes a variation of the expression theory of art. In its strongest form, the expression theory maintains that the essential function of art is to express the feelings, emotions, and moods of the artist (Collingwood, 1938).

My variation is not intended to pertain to all art, but only to love songs broadly construed as vocal music that addresses love in any of its stages or moods from its onset to its sunset and everything in between. Thus, “Breaking Up Is Hard to Do” is as much a love song on this understanding as “I Will Follow Him.” I am not committed to the expression theory of art, since I do not think that all art is expressive. Some may be primarily cognitive or formal in its address. However, love songs are typically expressive of affective states.

Typically what gets expressed according to the expression theorist are the feelings of the artist. However, I hypothesize that with love songs it is not only the emotions of the artists that are expressed; audiences can also appropriate love songs in order to articulate or clarify their own affective experiences of love by singing apposite love songs, or humming them, or by just playing recordings of them repeatedly. As Jeanette Bicknell says, “people sing to give a concrete form to inarticulate feelings, hopes, fears, and desires. We borrow the eloquence and musicality of lyricists and composers to express, in a way we could not manage unaided, how we really feel” (Bicknell, 2015).

This idea is literalized in the “Boyfriends and Girlfriends” episode of the 1990s TV sitcom *Freaks and Geeks* when Nick Andopolis tries to make Lindsay Weir aware of his affection by playing a recording of *Lady* by Styx. He introduces it by saying, “This song says all the things that I haven’t been able to say to you” and he gradually joins in with the chorus.

It is unlikely that many courtships have begun like this, yet some evidence that lovers use love songs this way may be the common practice of couples to identify a certain song, usually a love song, as “their song,” a song expressive of the special feeling they have for each other. But even more frequent than this, I believe, is our private use of love songs to recall and examine our own emotional experiences with eros when we use the singer’s words expressly either by singing along, or by going solo, or by humming the song, or by replaying it on either a musical instrument or a machine.

Expression theorists are usually committed to the idea that there are more emotional states than we have names for. What art does according to the expression theorist is to give us symbolic markers or labels for the otherwise ineffable neighborhoods of affect that comprise the life of feeling. “Kafkaesque,” for example, demarcates a distinctively modern form of paranoia, as clarified by the novels of Kafka, such as *The Trial*. Thus, I can communicate to you the affective tenor of an unsettling and absurd encounter of mine with the law by describing it as “Kafkaesque.”

This certainly suggests a promising approach to love songs. Given the plenitude of the diverse shades of love and their vicissitudes, love songs in their vast variety afford us with a huge repertory of symbols for labeling the nameless masses of amorous feelings. Love songs do this not by defining these elusive states as if they were providing us with a periodic chart of elementary, affective particles, but by exhibiting and thereby exemplifying either what it is like to be in the thrall of love or to be out of it.

Although love songs are most frequently presented as the expression of a lone lover, the love song can come to function socially as symbolic equipment that the rest of us can appropriate as a way of making emotional sense of our amative experiences. We cherish many different kinds of love songs in part because our amorous experiences have been diverse. We savor songs of

unrequited love because most of us have been there at least once; but we also revel in songs of infatuation, because we've been there too. Love songs are undoubtedly so popular because they touch upon so many common experiences and can be used to organize them in the sense that love songs may give you the words and tunes that can clarify to yourself how you feel.

I have repeatedly asserted that love songs *express* emotions associated with love. But what is meant by "express"? Etymologically, it derives from the Latin word "to press out," as one presses the juice out of a grape. The basic idea is to push something inward outward. With regard to the artist, she brings something inside, namely emotions, moods, and feelings, outside in the form of her artwork; in our case, her song. But this process is typically characterized as involving more than mere excavation. It is not just a matter of depositing a raw, hot, heretofore private and unmediated emotion into the public sphere. Rather, the emotion is processed. Specifically, according to R.G. Collingwood, it is a process of clarification (Collingwood, 1938).

For Collingwood, artistic creation begins with a vague feeling which the artist attempts to clarify, if she is a poet, by finding exactly the right choice and arrangement of words, or, if she is a composer, by the right combination of tunes, or, if she is a painter, by finding the right composition of lines and colors that will capture that feeling by bringing it into sharper focus. Celebrating the serenity of an afternoon picnic, the painter will try out different lighting, different arrangements of foodstuffs and picnickers, different patterns of foliage until it "feels right"; that is, until it nails the feeling of that afternoon in the sun. To clarify the animating emotion of a creative act is to explore the art's medium until the artist's disposition of forms matches, so to speak, or exemplifies precisely the affective state the artist is aspiring to articulate.

Love songs like "Losing My Mind" attempt to clarify the phenomenological feeling of uncertainty that can mark an early stage of infatuation. As with most love songs, there is a single character, putatively identified with the singer, who is trying to get clear about how he feels. Fictionally, the character is attempting to clarify his feelings. This is what he is striving to achieve albeit, in fact, through the contributions of the singer and the songwriter (both as wordsmith and/or composer). Of course, this clarification is not simply a matter of the words in the song, but also a matter of the pulse of the music. He not only verbally rehearses episodes of distraction, but the orchestration mimics its tempo. That is, together the word/sound combination creates a consilient image of how it feels to be caught up in this brand of loving. Moreover, this image is not simply the result of adding the words to the music. The sound and the words are *fused* into a unified audio-artwork (Bicknell, 2015; Ridley, 2004).

Generally the expression theorist emphasizes this process of clarification as something that the artist pursues and then achieves as she experiments with alternative choices until she hits upon the one that feels right. With respect to the famous poem "The Fiddler of Dooney," we might imagine W.B. Yeats thinking about his priestly brothers and comparing himself and his station in life to theirs. This then gives rise to a vague feeling of the superiority of poetry to prayer which Yeats makes concrete by, among other things, adopting a rhyme scheme that joyously verges on song. Thus, Yeats's enthusiasm is embodied in a formal structure which, in turn, exhibits and specifies the pride that he feels in his art by giving a rousing sample of it (in addition to the poem's narrative in which heaven smiles upon the songster). Inasmuch as most of us are not poets, the emotion that Yeats clarifies is not ours, although we are happy to overhear it and endorse the idea that *joie de vivre* trumps sanctimony.

However, whereas much lyric poetry, especially modern and contemporary lyric poetry, is dedicated to the poet's clarification of her own feelings, I want to claim that most love songs, particularly the most memorable ones, serve as scripts that the rest of us not only can use but *do use* in order to organize and clarify our thoughts and feelings regarding our once and perhaps

future amatory adventures. This is not to deny that sometimes (indeed, a large number of times) the vocal artists and/or songwriters may be expressing their own feelings about the different vagaries of love that they have suffered. Rather I want to claim that in addition they are also typically—knowingly or not—providing their audiences with templates that we listeners can employ to explore and get in touch with our own feelings, including not only those we have experienced but also those we may hope to experience through the process of rehearsing them by singing or humming the song ourselves or by replaying it on some device, whether an instrument—like a piano or a guitar (including an air guitar)—or on a recording machine.

Moreover, we need not acknowledge the persona in the song, since we may have expropriated his/her words and tunes for our own expressive purposes. Nor is this a matter of identification as it is usually construed, since we are applying those words and tunes to our own emotional experience.

The idea of songs that are intended to be used by others as a means to express, clarify, and guide the feelings of others should not sound mysterious. That is the function of hymns. These may arise as an expression of the genuine emotions of the songwriter as one supposes was the case with Martin Luther's "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Nevertheless, at the same time, that hymn was meant to enable others to shape and give body to their possibly otherwise inchoate feelings of devotion by supplying them with a text that could channel and direct their perhaps otherwise inarticulate sentiments. In this case, hymns function as prayers do. The words (and in the case of hymns, the tunes) tell the faithful what their thoughts mean. Perhaps, since in many cases, especially in medieval Europe, much of the language of the love song was descended from the language of the worship of God and the Virgin Mary, it is not surprising that the love song inherited the function of the hymn along with fragments of its rhetoric, such as the adoration of its love object.

Nor is the hymn the only example of what we might call works designed for the promotion of the expression of others. Anthems, such as "The Star-Spangled Banner," "Le Marseilles," "God Save the Queen," "Maple Leaf," "Soldier Boy," "The International," and "The East Is Red," were all designed to give citizens and/or comrades the means to voice and to make explicit their emotional attachment to their state and/or movement. For those unable to articulate the deep sentiments they felt for their community, these anthems give them the words and melodies to pledge their allegiance and, in the process, these songs yield a legible intimation of the temper and meaning of our patriotism. This, of course, is also true of school songs which are intended to give us words and tunes that, it is to be hoped, affirm the nature of our school-spiritedness and a sense of our commitment.

These are examples of emotional scripts that obviously are, roughly speaking, associated with institutions. National anthems and the like are tools that can be used by those of us other than their creators to express our feelings. But songs can not only be used collectively to express our sentiments toward our communities. They can express our individual sentiments toward lovers past, present, and imagined.

That is, I contend that love songs can function as vehicles for audience members to articulate their own amorous sentiments. This does not mean that when I sing a love song I am merely robotically running a program. For, I will fill out the pattern the song provides with my own energy and emphasis. Furthermore, I want to argue that this is not merely a way that love songs might be used now and then. Rather, I submit that this is a social function of the love song, a claim that may be partially supported by the profitability of the sale of sheet music in days past.

This approach to love songs was suggested to me by Kendall Walton's proposal of poets as "thoughtwriters," and, for that reason, my understanding of the artists who produce love songs mirrors Walton's model in a number of respects (Walton, 2011). Walton motivates his notion

of poets-as-thoughtwriters by introducing an analogy between poets and speechwriters. Speechwriters write texts not for their own use but for use by their clients—usually politicians, heads of corporations and of unions, and the like. Speechwriters supply the words for others to speak, putatively articulating the thoughts and feelings of their clients with respect to the topic at hand. Walton proposes that we think of poets along the same lines. Regarding speechwriters, Walton suggests:

Rather than understanding a poem on the model of an ordinary assertion or expressive utterance, addressed to or overheard by a listener, we might understand it on the model of a speech written by a speechwriter, for use by another person. Speechwriters don't use the words they inscribe (not insofar as they are simply speechwriters); they mention them. They produce a text for use by someone else. The speechwriter doesn't assert the declarative sentences he comes up with; his client asserts them when she delivers the speech.

(2011)

Walton then goes on to extend this model to poets by analogy. He writes:

We use words in thinking, in formulating thoughts for ourselves, as well as in communicating with others. Words found in a poem or learned from other speakers may come in handy for this purpose also—to articulate thoughts, to express to ourselves opinions, feelings, attitudes. A poet's words might strike me as just the right way of expressing a thought that I had. Or, on reading a poem I might decide then and there to endorse the thought they express, and use the words of the poem to assert myself. Alternatively, I may think of the words as clarifying my thoughts, as well as well as providing a means of expressing them. So I will say that poets serve not exactly as speechwriters, but as *thoughtwriters* (by "thoughts" I include not just "intellectual" ideas, but any feelings, emotions, sentiments, etc. that might be expressed by means of words).

(2011)

Walton thinks that it is not unlikely that some poets may write with this intention, even if it is not their primary intention. Perhaps some support for this is that most lyric poetry is written to be read aloud in order to be understood—something which the poet may regard as an invitation to the audience to regard her as a thoughtwriter. Also, in the past, students were often required to commit large amounts of poetry to memory, putatively in order to recruit the poets' words in order to clarify one's thoughts and feelings about some matter of the moment. Thus, to a certain extent, the social context of the circulation of poetry, as manifested in the educational system in the old days, seems to have presumed something like the role of the poet-as-thoughtwriter as part of the institution of literature.

This is not to claim that that every poet conceived of herself as a thoughtwriter, but only that the function of the poet-as-thoughtwriter was a position in the literary game-world, a form of life that allowed readers to appropriate poems for their own expressive purposes such as clarifying their thoughts and feelings. As Anna Christiana Ribeiro has argued, this sort of appropriation of poetry is something that historical research reveals was a very common practice (Ribeiro, 2009).

Walton's proposal of poets-as-thoughtwriters is very provocative. However, it raises certain questions that need to be confronted. Nevertheless, even if it has certain shortcomings when

applied to lyric poetry, I maintain that something very like it may apply more perfectly to love songs.

There are at least two problems with Walton's view of poet-as-thoughtwriter that are worth mentioning. Its plausibility is based on the analogy with speechwriters. But the analogy is not iron-clad. For example, the relation of the speechwriter to her client is very often less like a dramatist supplying the words to an actor than it is like someone preparing a first draft for the client to modify in various ways—editing out this, expanding that; in short, often using the speechwriter's text as a jumping-off point. Stories about the ways in which President Clinton extensively revised the texts his speechwriters worked up for him, for example, are well documented.

But that is not how lyric poetry is intended to be used in the institution of contemporary literature. The lyric poem is standardly treated more like the way the actor uses the dramatist's script. Like the actor, the reader of poetry does not rewrite the text. Indeed, even if the reader is appropriating the words of a poem to clarify her own feelings, she does not edit or revise the poem. She does not treat the poet as a speechwriter. If she recites the poem aloud, she does so word by word as they poet has, so to speak, dictated them.

Furthermore, even if at one time in the past, perhaps before the advent of modernism, poems were often used as Walton contends, that does not seem to be the case with most serious, contemporary poetry which seems too complex and personal to suit the experience of people beyond the poet, as Eileen John argues with reference to Elizabeth Bishop's "At the Fishhouses"; John writes: "Experiences with such poems as 'At the Fishhouses' suggest to me that that thought that can be fully my own is rarely on offer in a poem" (John, 2013). Maybe with respect to the sort of "pre-modernist" poetry that we were schooled in reciting, the poet-as-thoughtwriter was a plausible hypothesis. But it no longer seems as tenable today with respect to most serious lyric poetry; serious poets might regard Walton's thoughtwriter as a characterization of the pre-packaged emotion that the authors of greeting cards manufacture rather than as a characterization of what they do.

Nevertheless, something very like the thoughtwriter view may apply more neatly to the production and use of love songs than it does to the contemporary lyric poet where the creators of love songs are conceptualized on the model of hymn writers rather than that of speechwriters. This adjustment deals tidily with the disanalogy between speechwriters and poets and songwriters insofar as the authors of hymns are not presenting their songs as first drafts for the parishioners to revise. Hymns are scripts to be followed. Likewise, love songs are to be sung as inscribed. Audiences are not encouraged to come up with their own versions of the lyrics and, in any event, they typically do not, unless they are attempting to parody the original.

Similarly, contemporary love songs dodge the objection that confronts contemporary lyric poems: that contemporary poems are too complex and personal to serve as vehicles for the expression of anyone's emotions other than those of the poet, because contemporary love songs, as well as those in the past, are typically neither verbally complex nor idiosyncratic. The lyrics to "Red Rubber Ball"—which are fairly representative of the level of complexity of most popular love songs—are very straightforward and direct. There are no obscure allusions; the narrative circumstances are clearly stated and very familiar. The situation is generic enough that an indeterminately large number of people can recognize in it something that they've gone through.

Nevertheless, defending the love song as a vehicle of expression in this way may appear to raise some problems of its own, namely: if the lyrics of the love song are so simple, how can they be said to clarify anything? We don't repeat the clichés mass-produced in Hallmark-type cards of condolences in order to explore our feelings of grief for a deceased friend or lover. So is it

plausible to suppose that we can use the lyrics of popular love songs, which are often not that much more sophisticated than the texts of greetings cards, to plumb our romantic emotions?

However decisive this objection appears, it is important to stress that it rests upon a false assumption. In assessing the power of a love song to clarify our emotions, we must not consider only the lyrics. As I emphasized earlier, love songs, like all songs, are not merely words plus music. The words are not meant to stand alone. They are infused by the music. That the words are banal when standing alone is irrelevant to the emotional charge they possess when invested with sound.

First of all, of course, the words are sung by a singer or group of singers. They enliven the words with the affect emanating from their voices and give the words a texture, an emotional feeling tone. If the words are generic, they are nevertheless instantiated and particularized with the temper and temperament of the singer's rendition. If the words of the song are somewhat general, they are clarified and made specific by the affective grain of the singer's voice.

One quandary, sometimes raised with respect to movies, is how it is that we can be absorbed in a motion picture narrative that is so threadbare that if we encountered its like in a novel, we would throw the book in the trash as an insult to our intelligence. The answer is that in movies the stories are filled in or embodied by actors whose physical qualities of body and soul, of flesh and voice have a story of their own to tell. The threadbare story is a pretext for a Buster Keaton, a Jackie Chan or a Cary Grant to express their incomparable grace. A Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers backstage musical may have the most simplistic plot, but the plot does not grate because it is enacted by that couple whose movement and singing are so richly expressive. Morgan Freeman could probably read the contents of a cereal box on camera and make it sound arresting given the authority of his body, his demeanor, and, most of all, his voice.

Likewise, the frequently unassuming, even stale, lyrics of love songs are invigorated by the affective qualities that singers convey vocally through them. The mundane circumstances that popular love songs recount in often predictable verbiage are made particular and thereby clarified by the performer who, in making the words her own, discovers a precise feeling space that we can use to shed light on our own comparable amorous adventures. The words, that is, come charged with the singer's feelings in a way that clarifies the experience at hand.

Furthermore, in addition to the emotional clarity that the performer's delivery brings to the lyrics, there is also the musical orchestration. The music alone adds an additional layer of affectivity insofar as music possesses emotional qualities by virtue of its imitation of the cadences and tones of the human voice. This phenomenon was noted by music theorists in the eighteenth century and has been confirmed by contemporary neuroscience. Thus, the lyrics, the singer's voice, and the "voice" in the instrumentation of the music intersect like the circles in a Venn diagram, converging on a specific feeling, often one that, though nameless, is identifiable. And once the listener recognizes the amatory feeling in the song, she can use it in order to express her own congruent emotions. The repetition of the song brings clarity to our feelings by giving us a handle on them such that we can use it to examine our affective experience by being given a map that tells us where we are. That is, by having a symbolic word/music marker for the feeling, we have a more fine-grained sense of it, and this granularity itself is an advance in our understanding of the way in which we feel. It supplies us with a more refined grasp of rich diversity of the feelings that accompany the life of love.

When Ella Fitzgerald sings Cole Porter's "So in Love," her powerful voice adds conviction to the lyrics. As she sings, "So taunt me, and hurt me/Deceive me, desert me/I'm yours till I die," her voice deepens, signaling the dark side of her passion, while the swirling violins throughout echo her delirium. Together the elements of sound and sense render a thick expression of her vulnerability, her willingness to suffer even abuse as a proof of her devotion.

My hypothesis throughout has been that as “civilians,” we listeners can use songs like this to express our own amorous sentiments. By repeating the words of the songs, by imitating the delivery of the singer and the tempo of the orchestration, we can home in on a specific romantic feeling, one that might be otherwise ineffable. The love song can make that feeling effable to us in a way that we can use to express our own moods by singing or humming the song, or by merely replaying it on a recording device or even just by savoring it in our mind’s ear. In the way in which a hymn provides us with the words and music we use to express our love of the divine, love songs provide us with the words and music we can use to express our love and devotion to our beloved both in his/her presence, but, as importantly, in his/her absence.

Love is such an important part of our lives that we need a way to articulate it. So we sing, but most of us do not create the words and the music ourselves. We borrow them from others ranging from traditional balladeers to contemporary pop stars. In this regard, love songs provide us with what Kenneth Burke called “equipment for living” (Burke, 1974; Robbins, 2017). They give us tools for organizing our love lives by affording us symbols for making sense out of or giving structure to our messy emotional lives of which those connected with love are perhaps the most subjectively mysterious. Love songs give us the means to “name” the love we uniquely feel for our partners—real or imagined—and, in labeling our feelings, afford a grasp on them. Rehearsing those songs—by singing, humming, or hearing them again and again—is a way of reflecting or examining or placing our nameless, shimmering sentiments.

Moreover, in this regard, love songs may have something to tell us about the relation of art to love in general. Love, especially romantic love, generally leaves us at a loss when it comes to understanding it. The feeling can be overwhelming, leaving us feeling at sea. Not only are the emotions seemingly hard to grasp. Our behavior—how we should proceed—eludes us. Art, or, more accurately, the *arts*, are an indispensable cultural resource in this regard. They help us by providing some instruction on what to feel and what to do. There is not one single way in which the arts do this. Rather the arts offer advice and understanding through a variety of different modes and methods.

The narrative arts may tell us how to love—ranging from tips to catch the fancy of a stranger to how to treat the beloved. Novels may instruct us in the ethics and etiquette of courtship or what to look for in a mate. Paintings and sculpture may tutor us in the perception of beauty. Poems may teach us ways in which to address a lover. Love songs may enable us to express our feelings. In these ways, the arts supply us with the equipment to live our love lives, one of the most potentially perplexing precincts of life, but one where guidance is typically the least forthcoming. Art, in this regard, is culture’s Cupid.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Joan Acocella, Lorie Moore, and Sam Toporoff for their assistance in the preparation of this chapter. However, they are not responsible for the imperfections here; I am.

References

- Bicknell, Jeanette, *Philosophy of Singing* (New York: Routledge/Taylor Francis, 2015).
Bradley, Adam, *The Poetry of Pop* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017).
Burke, Kenneth, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974).
Collingwood, R.G., *Principles of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938).
Gioia, Ted, *Love Songs: The Hidden History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
John, Eileen, “Poetry and Directions for Thought,” in *Philosophy and Literature* 37 (2013), pp. 451–471.

Love Songs

- Ribeiro, Anna Christiana, "Toward a Philosophy of Poetry," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* XXXIII: *Philosophy and Poetry* (2009), pp. 61–77.
- Ridley, Aaron, *The Philosophy of Music: Theme and Variations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).
- Robbins, Michael, *Equipment for Living: On Poetry and Pop Music* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017).
- Walton, Kendall, "Thoughtwriting—in Poetry and Music," in *New Literary History* 42 (2011), pp. 455–476.

21

HOW FAITH SECURES THE MORALITY OF LOVE

Sharon Krishek

Introduction

Without question, love is experienced as central to human life. Romantic love, friendship, parental love—all play a crucial part in constituting life as valuable. However, love also appears to posit a threat to morality. Partial by nature, romantic love, friendship, and parental love seem to elude the moral demand for impartiality. Moreover, as these kinds of love are rooted, to a large extent, in the desires of the lover, they may prevent us from attesting a disinterested concern for the beloved, hence seeming to fail another moral demand. The implication is disturbing: Are we essentially immoral when we love?

As this question concerns love between humans, *faith*, being primarily a relationship with God, may seem quite alien to the inquiry. However, in this chapter I wish to argue that faith—when understood in the manner suggested by the 19th-century religious philosopher Søren Kierkegaard—is the key for answering in the negative the question that I raised above. Faith, I claim, secures the morality of love. This claim can be taken to suggest either a strong connection between love and faith or a weaker one, and in what follows I shall examine both. Beginning by presenting a Kierkegaardian-inspired conception of love, and then discussing the structure of Kierkegaardian faith, I will attempt to demonstrate that faith is highly significant for love either by serving as a *model* for a morally secured love or, more strongly, by serving as a *condition* for it.

Love as Emotional Caring

The Nature of Love

Love, I suggest, is first and foremost a concern for the well-being of the beloved. However, unlike other prevailing conceptions of love that identify it with caring, I do not take it to be selfless or disinterested.¹ Rather, love is a kind of caring that always involves emotions; these arise in response to the perceived *value* of the relevant beloved, and accord with the lover's *interest* in him. Although diverging from Kierkegaard's analysis of love (Kierkegaard 1995), who takes genuine love to be neighborly love (thus characterizing it as an impartial and selfless kind of caring),² I nevertheless accept his view of love as basically *caring* and endorse his distinction between love and *works* of love.

Such distinction, in my view, discerns between the ability (or potential) to love, and *actual* loving. I take this to imply that human beings, despite having the *ability* to love,³ do not necessarily actualize this ability *properly* (or at all).⁴ Further, taking as a clue Kierkegaard's reflection on two artists—one who travels around the world but fails to find any person worthy of painting, the other who stays at home but finds something worth painting in *every* person—and his conclusion that “[genuine] love . . . [is] able to find something lovable in all of us” (Kierkegaard 1995: 158), I suggest that Kierkegaard holds love to be *responsive* to the value of its object. In the same way that an artwork (in this example) is generated in response to a quality that the artist discerns in the object, so love is generated in response to a quality that the lover discerns in the beloved.

As a starting point of our inquiry, then, we can delineate the following basic conception of love. The ability to love is a core feature of human nature, but it is embedded in humans only as a potential. This potential is enacted in response to a value that the lover discerns in the beloved; this is how love spontaneously arises. However, such a spontaneous enactment does not necessarily result in proper, morally secured, love. When actualized (only) spontaneously, love may be offensive both to the beloved and to those who are not him.

The Threats of Love

Kierkegaard distinguishes between preferential love and neighborly love. The former is the kind of love that comes naturally to us (such as romantic love, friendship, parental love); according to Kierkegaard this is love in its initial, spontaneous, stage of actualization. The latter—love for a person by virtue of his or her being a person (i.e., a neighbor)—is, according to Kierkegaard, love when it has been *properly* actualized. As such it overcomes the threats of love, which Kierkegaard identifies as follows.⁵

The first may be called the threat of selfishness. Love often involves intense desires, and since being driven by them involves self-concern—desires address the needs of the one who desires—the lover may become oblivious to the needs of the beloved. Worse, if there is a clash between the lover's desires and the beloved's needs, the lover may intentionally disregard these needs. For example, Juliet yearns for the presence of Romeo and is driven by an intense desire to be with him. Being thus immersed in her desire, she may fail to notice that Romeo is preoccupied with other concerns. And if she *does* notice, she may regard such concerns as unimportant and may even blame Romeo for not sharing her feelings. Such sins of love (when blinded by desires) can be trivial, as in this example, or much more severe.

The second threat is that of partiality. While the object of the first threat is one's beloved, the object of the second threat is everybody who is *not* one's beloved. If we accept the moral demand to treat all humans as equals and thus as equally deserving of our concern, it is clear how love posits a threat to this demand. The romantic lover, the friend, the parent—all these lovers naturally focus their attention on their beloveds. Such particularistic concern may either exhaust their ability to care for others (who are not their beloveds) or render them indifferent to them.

Addressing these threats is surely the undertaking of morality. And indeed, Kierkegaard holds that attending to them adequately requires an adherence to the religio-moral demand to love one's neighbor as oneself. In Kierkegaard's view, then, a proper actualization of our ability to love—which accords with the demands of morality, and fulfills love's essence as caring to its utmost—amounts to neighborly love.

Neighborly Love

Kierkegaard characterizes neighborly love as selfless and impartial. The neighborly lover acts out of self-denial—she is motivated solely by a concern for the well-being of the beloved—and her love is rooted in the value of the beloved *qua a neighbor*, namely a person. It is easy to see how neighborly love addresses the threats of (natural) love. Its selfless nature, aimed at attending to the interests of the beloved (rather than one's own), counters the threat of selfishness. And being grounded in the value of the beloved as a person (rather than in his value as, say, wise and beautiful) counters the threat of partiality: one has a reason to love impartially, as every person possesses the value of personhood.

Coupled together, love is therefore understood as an impartial attitude of caring, which—by virtue of its being *selfless*—assumes its specific character (as, for example, romantic or parental) in accordance with the *beloved's* needs (Ferreira 2001: 93, 112–13). However, such a conception of love raises two difficulties. First, can we demand that caring be impartial? Is it reasonable to demand from a parent (for instance) to care about a stranger as much as she cares about her own child? Second, can we capture the rich and distinctive nature of various forms of love by limiting it to a *selfless* attitude? Can Juliet's romantic love for Romeo (for example)—which is distinctively different from her love for anybody else—be explained only in terms of her concern for his needs? Let me begin with the latter difficulty.

Since Kierkegaard is committed both to the legitimacy of natural loves (such as romantic love) and to neighborly love being the “only kind of love,”⁶ it seems that he takes the relation between neighborly love and natural loves to be modeled as follows. Considered as a general phenomenon, love is characterized as *neighborly* love (i.e., selfless concern), while different kinds of love—romantic love, parental love, friendship—are its different manifestations. According to such an understanding, that which turns romantic love into *love* is essentially the same as that which turns love for a stranger into love: selfless concern.

To begin with, such a suggestion is counterintuitive: is Juliet's love for Romeo *love* by virtue of being an attitude that she ideally holds also for a complete stranger? Is that which turns her passionate attitude into love (only) her selfless concern for him? Further, the implication of this suggestion is that special characteristics that are typical of different forms of love (such as eros in the case of romantic love, or fondness in the case of friendship) become marginal. Hence, according to this suggestion, they are only contingent addendums to love, not part of its essence. This is of course in line with the demand for selflessness: after all, these aspects of love reflect the needs of the *lover*. However, the result is a thin model of love that does not give the richness and diversity of love its due.⁷

But even if we are willing to accept such a thin model of love, we are still left with the first difficulty. Indeed, to render love a selfless concern is already to distance the conception from our experience (by deeming as not truly part of love those features that are central to our experience of different kinds of love), but to demand that this concern be *impartial* is to distance the conception even further. To demand of a romantic lover to care for her estranged neighbor (not to mention her enemy) as much as she cares about her beloved, or for a parent to care about a stranger's child as much as he cares about his own, is to dismiss the experience of love altogether. Practically speaking, a deep and committed concern consumes time and (emotional and material) energy, limiting one's capacity for it. Conceptually speaking, when the ideal is impartial concern, natural love—as a devoted, unique, and exclusive relationship between two people—loses its meaning.

The solution to these two difficulties, even if not in line with Kierkegaard's position, is in my mind rather simple. I suggest that neighborly love should be understood not as the *general*

phenomenon, but as *one kind* of love among others. This, note, is not to deny that neighborly love has a special status. Unlike natural kinds of love that are rooted in qualities that the beloved does not share with others, neighborly love is rooted in a quality that everybody shares—personhood—and thus ought to be a part of any human interaction. Friend or enemy, one's child or a complete stranger—all are neighbors, human beings, and as such deserve to be the object of one's neighborly love.

And yet, one might wonder what distinguishes neighborly love from other forms of natural love: what does it mean for a lover to love in this way? Further, one might wonder if neighborly love replaces, alters, or simply coexists with natural kinds of love. Put differently, if Juliet loves Romeo (also) as a neighbor, what does it entail regarding her *romantic* love for him? Finally, one might wonder if it is indeed neighborly love that secures the morality of love. Let me address each of these concerns.

What does it mean to love in a neighborly way? Returning to the conception of love as emotional caring that was presented at the beginning of the discussion, I suggest that the impartiality of neighborly love consists in (1) recognition of the value of personhood that everybody shares; (2) acknowledgment that as such, each person is entitled to certain fundamental rights (the right to a dignified life, the right to freedom, the right to be treated with respect and so on);⁸ (3) feelings of compassion. While points (1) and (2) are rather uncontroversial, point (3), which (significantly) renders this attitude to be one of *love* (rather than a mere *moral* attitude), is not necessarily so. On the face of it, it might seem quite unreasonable to demand impartiality of feeling. Spontaneous in character, feelings—it might be argued—cannot be *demand*ed, let alone in relation to *any* person. Yet, I suggest that compassion is precisely a feeling that can be thus demanded.

Compassion, literally meaning “suffering with,” is that feeling of tenderness and sorrow that one feels when witnessing the suffering of someone else. Naturally, suffering is various (in degree and kind), but compassion (as I understand it) is not conditioned by this or that degree and kind of suffering, but only by its very presence. And suffering, I claim, is *always* present, as it is an integral part of being human. Being temporal and finite, loss and death are deeply entwined in human existence. Sorrow and agony over things lost, fear and anxiety over the possibility of loss, frustration and misery over forfeited dreams—suffering is the lot of every person, simply by virtue of being a person. This is arguably what human vulnerability amounts to, and we may call the kind of suffering that it reflects “existential suffering.”⁹

Thus, if compassion is conditioned by suffering, and every person suffers (in the sense just explained), then there is a reason to impartially feel compassion for all persons. The fact that we normally fail to feel this way is therefore not due to a lack of reason, but due to our habitual blindness to others' vulnerability. We fail to notice the vulnerability (and thus suffering) of others either because we are distracted, preoccupied with our own affairs, or because people often do not appear as vulnerable (they may act powerfully, be vain, offensive, or simply annoying). Hence *selflessness* (which characterizes neighborly love) becomes crucial. Barriers that prevent us from conceiving of other humans as *humans* (hence preventing us from either seeing the suffering of others, or fully letting it register) are pushed aside, and the way to encounter others in their vulnerability is opened. Once *this* happens, compassion will naturally follow.¹⁰ The difficulty then is not to feel compassion impartially, but to create the conditions that allow this feeling to naturally arise.

Neighborly love, then, is the kind of love that should be directed at every person. However, while allowing impartiality in this regard, it does not deprive the lover from being partial in her other kinds of love. She should love in a neighborly way *every* person, but it is legitimate that when loving in a romantic way (for example) she could love only *one*. If Juliet loves properly,

she loves Romeo both as a neighbor and as her romantic beloved. Emotionally speaking, this means that alongside the emotions that characterize her romantic love (eros, joy, excitement, etc.) there is also the feeling of compassion, for she loves him not just as the particular person he is, but also as a *person* (like everybody else). Needless to say, Juliet's love for Romeo is not somehow divided between loving him as a neighbor and loving him as a romantic beloved. Rather, these two kinds of love merge into one instance of love, Juliet's love for Romeo. This love receives its particular shape by virtue of the diversity of emotions (typical of these two kinds of love) which are together interwoven, in the same way that interwoven colorful strings give a piece of fabric its particular texture.

Finally, it is true that neighborly love has the special status of being (ideally) always present: in every encounter with every person. It does not matter who the beloved is, what his particular qualities are, what his virtues and vices are—as long as he is a person, a human being, he deserves to be loved in this way. However, this special status of neighborly love does not render it superior to other kinds of love. It would have been superior if, as Kierkegaard claims, it had the role of securing the morality of natural kinds of love. However, my claim is that it does not—rather, this role belongs to *faith*.

Faith, Existentially Understood¹¹

In *Fear and Trembling*, probably his most acclaimed essay, Kierkegaard offers a detailed analysis of the nature of faith. Presenting as the paradigm of faith Abraham's stance at the dramatic moment of the Binding of Isaac, Kierkegaard (writing under the pseudonym Johannes de Silentio) is notorious for allegedly taking faith to prevail over morality. In my view, however, Kierkegaard considers faith as the only way to *fulfill* and *secure* morality (that is, the duty to love one's neighbor, including one's beloved son). In order to perceive this, however, a shift of focus is needed from Kierkegaard's provocative presentation of the (supposed) dilemma between faith and ethics to another crucial aspect of the essay, namely the existential significance that Kierkegaard's conception of faith bears. The key for understanding faith existentially is found in Kierkegaard's recounting of one who "looks just like a tax-collector" (i.e., a sinner). One who lives a non-dramatic life in 19th-century Copenhagen; a portrait of "everyman." Alongside the uncommon story of Abraham, the common story of this (supposedly) common man—who is nevertheless a knight of faith—will substantiate an existential conception of Kierkegaardian faith.

Resignation

Kierkegaard defines faith as a "double movement" of resignation and faith. By "movement" Kierkegaard means something like an attitude or mental approach, and defining faith thus means that faith is conditioned by resignation. In the case of Abraham, the evident object of his renunciation is Isaac, but to clarify this concept, Kierkegaard analyzes a somewhat less outrageous paradigmatic example of resignation (which is not as yet faith)—of a young man who renounces his wholeheartedly loved princess.

First, renouncing X presupposes desiring X. Thus, as long as one *renounces* something it means that one is (emotionally) attached to it. Renouncing the princess, for example, the young man still longs and cares for her. His resignation does not result in indifference to her. Second, renouncing X means to acknowledge that in some crucial sense the "possession" of X—its attainment, keeping, or custody—is impossible. The young man wills a relationship with the princess more than anything else, but realizes that this is impossible. Renouncing her amounts

to acknowledging this impossibility without resentment, anger, or protest. Third, in light of the two prior points, it is clear that resignation is a sorrowful position. Desiring that which one accepts as unattainable cannot but be painful. And indeed Kierkegaard claims that the “knight of resignation” (unlike the “knight of faith”) is recognizable by his pain. Fourth, despite being as sorrowful as can be, the knight of resignation is nevertheless reconciled with existence by means of his love for God. Thus, while being attached to his worldly object of resignation (the young man does not replace his love for the princess with his love for God; rather, he continues loving her), the knight cannot find any joy in this attachment. His only joy is rooted in his love for God, whom he considers to be the real “owner” of anything worldly.

Since faith—being a *double* movement—necessarily includes resignation, Abraham renounces Isaac. Applying the analysis of resignation to Abraham’s position, it is evident that Abraham indeed loves Isaac deeply (the first point), and that raising the knife must be extraordinarily painful for him (the third point). Also, raising the knife as a response to God’s call, Abraham holds God to have authority over Isaac: God is Isaac’s real “owner” and thus has the right to demand him (the fourth point). However, in what way is the “possession” of Isaac impossible for Abraham (the second point)? After all, unlike the young man who cannot “have” the princess, Abraham “has” Isaac as his son and maintains a loving relationship with him. What is “impossible” in their relationship? The impossibility that underlines Abraham’s relationship with Isaac is of a deeper level than the kind of impossibility that prevents a relationship between the young man and the princess. This is the impossibility to *secure the presence* of Isaac in Abraham’s life, which is rooted in the nature of human existence as temporal and finite.

Here it would be helpful to consider the resignation of the “everyman”—or mundane—knight of faith. Deeply immersed in daily affairs, he may be mistaken for a “tax collector.” He is happily married (as opposed to the young heartbroken man), and is as far as he can be from sacrificing a son (as opposed to Abraham’s ordeal). But he is a knight of faith through and through, and as such he performs the movement of resignation: “He empties the deep sadness of existence in infinite resignation, he knows the blessedness of infinity, he has felt the pain of renouncing everything, the dearest thing he has in the world” (Kierkegaard 2006: 34).

To renounce “everything,” I suggest, is to acknowledge the implications of living in time. Human life is temporal and thus finite. Accordingly, nothing is secured for a human being. “The dearest thing he has in the world”—his beloveds, his possessions, his very life—is ephemeral. Every single thing that imparts value to life may be taken away from him, at any moment. Moreover, temporality means that his life is marked by loss. Time goes by and takes along with it the hours, days, and years of which his life is made; its progress forward renders some broken things unfixable and some dreams unattainable.

In other words, life is fragile, permeated with loss, and finite. This is a painful truth, often avoided. However, to acknowledge the nature of human existence is to acknowledge *this*. Such an acknowledgment, I claim, is the essence of resignation. Thus, the mundane knight acknowledges with deep sorrow—but without bitterness—that nothing in this world can be securely possessed by him. Everything is thus colored with its future loss; everything present appears also as absent. No wonder that he “empties the deep sadness of existence.”

Considered in this (existential) way, Abraham’s resignation becomes a dramatic expression of accepting the truth that every parent—every *lover*—shivers to acknowledge: that “the dearest thing he has in the world”—his child, his princess, his “everything”—is not for him to securely hold. A greater power than his own has the final word regarding the fate of his dearest. I therefore suggest that the knife above Isaac’s head (in Kierkegaard’s retelling of the story, at any rate) is best viewed as emblematic of the inescapable insecurity entailed in human existence,¹² and Abraham’s willingness to hold it as emblematic of his deep acknowledgment of this insecurity.¹³

Understood in this way, it is also easier to see how Abraham's story is relevant to the common reader, who (thankfully) is not called to sacrifice his child. After all, if Abraham is a *model*, then his story should pertain to all. And indeed, everybody has their "Isaacs": their beloved, cherished, "dearest thing in the world," whose temporality posits a threatening knife over their head.

Faith

Raising the knife, however, is not what makes Abraham's story remarkable, according to Kierkegaard. Raising the knife is an act of resignation, while Abraham is a knight of *faith*.¹⁴

he believed that God would not demand Isaac of him ... [although] it was indeed absurd that God, who demanded it of him, in the next instant would revoke the demand.... Let us go further. We let Isaac actually be sacrificed. Abraham believed. He did not believe that he would be blessed one day in the hereafter but that he would become blissfully happy here in the world. God could give him a new Isaac, call the sacrificed one back to life.

(Kierkegaard 2006: 29–30)

Abraham is therefore admirable for his ability—while raising the knife—to believe that Isaac will continue to be his living son in this world. And indeed, while having faith means that “all human calculation had long since ceased” (ibid.: 30), this does not mean that Abraham, as a knight of faith, ceases to be rational. He knows that using the knife the way he intends to will result in Isaac's death, and he surely does not hold the contradictory belief that Isaac will be both dead and alive (at the same time). So what *does* he believe?

In my understanding, Abraham believed that Isaac would live, despite lacking the knowledge as to how this will happen. Indeed, not only that Abraham did not have any evidence to support his belief, he had evidence to the contrary. God demanded it, so there is no reason to expect that the demand be annulled (“it was indeed absurd that God ... would revoke the demand”), and Kierkegaard goes as far as to imagine that Isaac dies, so there is no reason to expect that his death will be spared. And nevertheless “Abraham believed.” What justifies such an “absurd” belief?

Kierkegaard does not state this specifically, but we might presume that the justification lies in God's promise to Abraham that through Isaac he would become a great nation (Genesis 17:19). Thus, Abraham was not tested on his willingness to sacrifice his son, but rather on his ability to *trust* that God will keep his promise (when all evidence seems to be against it). Indeed, Abraham's story is unique—he was given a specific promise with regard to his son—but this does not make it irrelevant to others. Thus, to formulate Kierkegaard's position in more general terms, I suggest that faith is the ability to trust the ultimate fulfillment of goodness, even when everything seems to be lost (cf. Davenport 2008).

Faith, then, amounts to trust: in God's promise, in God's goodness, in the ultimate goodness of existence. Related to this is another crucial aspect of faith, which Kierkegaard articulates by defining faith as a double movement. While the first movement of faith is resignation, the second movement of faith can be described as affirmation. The former amounts to accepting that Isaac's presence cannot be secured; the latter amounts to fully rejoicing in Isaac's presence “as if it were the most certain thing of all” (Kierkegaard 2006: 34).

Kierkegaard expresses this point several times. He admires Abraham for succeeding “once again to be joyful with Isaac” and asserts that “whoever has made the infinite movement [of resignation]

... and cannot do more only keeps Isaac with pain” (ibid.: 29). Of the mundane knight he says that “the finite tastes every bit as good to him as to someone who never knew anything higher ... he has this confidence to delight in it as if it were the most certain thing of all” (ibid.: 34). And when imagining the possibility of living with the princess, he says that the real challenge for *this* knight (let us call him the knight of love) is “to live [with her] joyfully and happily every moment.” That is to say, “every moment to see the sword hanging over the beloved’s head,¹⁵ and yet to find, not rest in the pain of resignation, but joy by virtue of the absurd” (ibid.: 43).

The joy of faith, then, has a special depth acquired by the pain of resignation. The value of anything *present* is most evident against the background of its (actual or possible) *absence*.¹⁶ Accordingly, the joy of faith in X—any X (Isaac, the princess, everything)—is the complete opposite of an unappreciative attitude, of taking X for granted. It is to fully acknowledge the value of X; an acknowledgment which naturally evokes joy. Thus, the second movement of faith—the ability to rejoice in our “Isaacs”—expresses the existential significance of faith as a deep and committed affirmation of life.

Two Kinds of Resignation

In itself, resignation does not necessarily entail a religious standpoint. Acknowledging the insecurity of human existence depends only on sincere inquiry into the nature of being human, without any commitment to a theistic framework. The analysis of faith, however, assumes such a framework. What is the difference, then, between (merely) existential resignation and an existential-*religious* one? While the two knights share the painful understanding that nothing belongs to them (in the strong sense of “belonging,” as being secured under their control), the religious knight nevertheless takes everything to belong to *someone*: namely, to God.

Accordingly, if we understand faith as trust—only a *religious* resignation allows such a position. One can believe that a renounced X will be received again only if one considers there to be a power to bestow it. Abraham can believe in the return of Isaac (having accepted him as essentially gone) only because he takes God to have the power (and authority) to return him. The mundane knight and the knight of love can hope for the continuing presence of their “Isaacs” despite seeing the “sword hanging over their heads” only because they trust the goodness of the power under whose control “their Isaacs” really are.

This difference will prove crucial as we now return to the question that concerns us here: how does faith secure the morality of love?

Love and Faith

We suggested that love is a kind of caring that is elicited in response to the perceived value of the beloved and receives an emotional shape. However, despite being essentially an attitude of caring, such a spontaneous arousal of love is short of securing love as moral, as its passionate, emotional aspect poses two threats: the threat of selfishness and the threat of partiality. How does Kierkegaardian faith address these threats?

Love in the Structure of Faith

As a first step, which is not as yet theistically committed, we can focus only on the structure of faith, being a twofold attitude toward a particular object. The suggestion, in other words, is that we apply the attitude expressed by faith—of simultaneously renouncing and affirming (i.e., rejoicing in) X—on *loving* X.

Beginning with the threat of selfishness, renouncing the beloved assures that the lover's attachment to X, and her involvement in the relationship, will prevent her from instrumentally (hence selfishly) treating the beloved as a means to satisfying her needs. After all, to renounce the beloved is to accept him as ultimately independent. The lover cannot "possess" her beloved, cannot have him under her control. Hence the beloved cannot be objectified (as objects are precisely things that one can possess and have under one's control) and accordingly cannot be viewed instrumentally. Further, renouncing the beloved is to continuously conceive of the possibility of the beloved's loss. As such, the beloved cannot be taken for granted—nothing assures the endurance of his presence—and his value, which otherwise might be dimmed, gleams in its fullness. If selfishness is to focus on oneself and appreciate one's beloved in accordance with the way he serves the lover's needs, resignation excludes this.

However, resignation alone cannot substantiate love. Being an *emotional* caring—motivated also by desires, passions and needs of the *lover*—love cannot flourish when the lover perceives the beloved only through the sorrowful gaze of resignation. Love requires the further movement of affirmation, which allows emotions such as joy, erotic thrill, delight, fondness (and so on) to thrive. The affirmative lover is attached anew to the beloved; an attachment which is morally secured by resignation, but consist not only in its painful strings. Rather, she is attached to the beloved also by the strings of various desires, passions, and emotions, without which love in its diversity cannot exist.

Now, on the face of it the structure of faith should also address the threat of partiality. There is no reason not to apply this morally augmenting structure on one's attitude to *any* person (a friend or an enemy, one's spouse or a total stranger). However, applying the structure of faith on one's attitude to a person to whom one is *not* already attached by spontaneous love assumes that one conceives that person as subject to one's *neighborly* love. But there is nothing in the structure of faith that commits to such an assumption. In other words, the structure of faith is applicable to an already existing attitude of love, but such an attitude normally does not exist with regard to *any* person. This is precisely the threat of partiality. Thus to conceive of any person as a *neighbor* (deserving of one's love) requires something stronger than only applying the structure of faith to already existing loves.

Love as Conditioned by Faith

To posit faith as a *condition* for genuine love is to claim for a stronger relation between love and faith than would obtain if love were simply conceived in the structure of faith. It is to claim that for love to be morally secured the lover should not only *apply* the structure of faith to her way of loving, but *be* a person of faith and endorse it as an encompassing way of living. The difference between the two lovers is that the latter's resignation is an *infinite* one—the subject of her renunciation is not only the beloved but "everything"—and her affirmation is grounded in her trust in God.¹⁷ This has implications both for the threat of selfishness and the threat of partiality. Beginning with the latter, my claim is that if the moral requirement of impartiality amounts to acknowledging that all humans are equal in their value, deserve the same fundamental human rights and, emotionally speaking, deserve to be treated impartially with compassion, then being a person of faith secures this demand. How?

To be a knight of *religious* (or infinite) resignation, we have said, is to acknowledge that everything belongs to God.¹⁸ And if everything belongs to God, then every neighbor belongs to God, including those with whom we are not related in ties of spontaneous love (let us call these the "non-preferred neighbors"). Now, it is easy for us to appreciate the value of preferred neighbors because we are already naturally attracted and attached to them; it is more challenging

to appreciate the value of non-preferred neighbors, to whom we are not related (and from whom we are sometimes even alienated). Here the role of infinite resignation becomes clear. Performing it amounts to acknowledging the non-preferred neighbors' belongingness to God, and thus to conceiving of them as infinitely valuable. This is so, arguably, because such belongingness reflects their being created (and desired) by God.¹⁹ Further, religious resignation reveals the non-preferred neighbors not only as valuable but also as vulnerable, since (by virtue of resignation) we fully conceive of them as temporal and finite. Keeping in mind the connection between vulnerability and compassion,²⁰ it is clear how infinite resignation is crucial for impartial neighborly love.

The first movement of faith (infinite resignation), then, grants the ability to acknowledge the non-preferred neighbors as equally valuable and, accordingly, deserving of the same human rights as do the preferred neighbors—and it grants the ability to feel compassion for them. The *second* movement of faith (affirmation) grants the ability to feel not only the sorrow of compassion—but also joy. Being limited in time and resources means that often we will be able to do very little, if anything at all, to advance the well-being of such non-preferred neighbors. Does this mean that our emotional involvement with them will be characterized only by sorrow and regret (for being so constrained in our ability to help)?²¹ Not if we are persons of faith. In such a case we can hope for the well-being of the non-preferred neighbors and can thus also find joy in our (even minimal) interaction with them.²² But this is possible only if we have trust in the fulfillment of ultimate goodness, and such a trust is justified only for the person of (existential and theistic) faith.

This kind of trust is crucial also for the threat of selfishness. Analyzing the applicability of the structure of faith to love, we delineated how resignation defeats selfishness. This still holds true. The difference here lies in the movement of affirmation. The absence of *trust* when applying the structure of faith outside the theist context prevents a full affirmation. Full affirmation of the presence of the beloved while wholeheartedly acknowledging his potential absence (namely, renouncing him) is valid only if one can nevertheless see a possibility for the endurance of the beloved's *presence*. Holding to such a possibility, however, depends on trusting the fulfillment of ultimate goodness. Thus, if unqualified joy in the beloved depends on holding to the possibility that his existence endures, which in itself is conditioned by trust, then it is only the person of faith who is capable of achieving complete, unqualified, joy.

Indeed, "it must be glorious to get the princess." Thus "the knight of faith," as Kierkegaard says, "is the only happy person and heir to the finite," since he "live[s] joyfully and happily day in and day out with her," which is "miraculous" (Kierkegaard 2006: 43). If we take Kierkegaard's word for it, then, proper love is conditioned by faith.

Acknowledgment

The writing of this chapter was supported by The Israel Science Foundation (grant no. 111/16).

Notes

- 1 Among those who hold this kind of conception we can find both contemporary secular philosophers such as Harry Frankfurt, and religious philosophers such as Søren Kierkegaard. See Frankfurt (2004), Kierkegaard (1995).
- 2 See section on "Neighborly Love" below.
- 3 By virtue of their (supposedly) being created by God, whose nature is love, and in his image.
- 4 For an exegetical justification of this see Krishek (2010).

- 5 Contemporary discussions of love also consider these threats as posing a danger to the morality of love. See, for example, Velleman (1999) and Jollimore (2011).
- 6 “Christianity ... recognizes really only one kind of love” (Kierkegaard 1995: 143).
- 7 One may argue, as do commentators like Stephen Evans and John Lippit, that the relation between neighborly love and natural loves should be understood differently. Neighborly love is a purifying attitude that transforms relationships of love into *moral* relationships. However, such a suggestion, rendering neighborly love into primarily a moral position, fails to explain what makes neighborly love, *love*. See Krishek (2017) for a detailed discussion of the two alternative suggestions and my criticism of both.
- 8 The well-being of a person depends (at the very least) on the fulfillment of these rights. Thus, if love is a concern for the well-being of the beloved then it must include an acknowledgment of these rights and an interest in their fulfillment. Accordingly, even if caring (considered as an overall attention for the well-being of the beloved, and an action to achieve it) cannot be impartial, caring in the *qualified* sense (considered as an acknowledgment of the neighbor’s rights and desiring their fulfillment) should be equally present in one’s relation to every person.
- 9 This is not to claim that the emotional state of, say, a parent who witnesses the suffering of her child is the same as her emotional state when witnessing the suffering of a stranger; or that a person’s emotional state is the same when witnessing a suffering to a great degree and witnessing (only) existential suffering. However, the important differences between the emotional states in these various situations do not hinge on the compassion involved in each, but rather on the degree and intensity of caring, pain, and other emotions that are involved.
- 10 Consider how easy it is for us to feel compassion toward babies, small children, and the helpless in general. Arguably this is because the two conditions for feeling compassion are easily fulfilled: their vulnerability is relatively apparent, and our defenses are down in their presence (thus overcoming the usual barriers that prevent us from discerning the vulnerability of others).
- 11 For a more elaborated and textually grounded discussion of this thesis, see Krishek (2015).
- 12 In the same way that “the sword hanging over the beloved’s head” (Kierkegaard 2006: 43) is. See note 15 below.
- 13 It is important to remember that the real knife is not essential to Abraham’s resignation. As he obviously continues to be a knight of faith when the trial is over, he keeps renouncing Isaac when *that* knife is no longer raised.
- 14 Kierkegaard imagines an Abraham who raises the knife but does *not* have faith (Kierkegaard 2006: 9). This supports the suggestion that in Kierkegaard’s retelling of it, the story is not about sacrifice and even not (primarily) about an obedience to God. For Kierkegaard faith is not reducible to each but rather amounts, as I attempt to show, to trust in divine goodness.
- 15 This echoes the “flaming sword which turned every way” (Genesis 3:24) in the exile of Adam and Eve from heaven. One of the central consequences of this banishment is of course humans’ fate as finite. Arguably, then, this biblical allusion can be read as another textual clue for understanding Kierkegaardian faith along the (existentially inspired) lines suggested above.
- 16 Think of the cliché that one does not appreciate what one has until it is gone. The point, then, is that considering the beloved’s *absence* makes the value of the *present* beloved’s salient.
- 17 See section on “Two Kinds of Resignation” above. Kierkegaard, who obviously discusses religious resignation, calls it “infinite resignation.”
- 18 As was explained above (“Two Kinds of Resignation”), while resignation, existentially understood, amounts to an acknowledgment of the finite nature of everything and thus of everything as essentially escaping our possession, *religious* resignation is no less existential but it goes further by conceiving everything as being in the possession of God.
- 19 Earlier we delineated how resignation makes the value of the renounced beloved salient by virtue of exposing the meaning of the beloved’s finitude. This is the immediate way to experience that which, in the case of non-preferred neighbors, should be mediated by the acknowledgment of their belongingness to God. We may call the former “subjective” realization of value, and the latter “objective” realization of value. The former should be *accompanied* by the latter (there should be an acknowledgment of the value of the beloved not only by virtue of one’s attachment to the beloved but also by virtue of the beloved’s belongingness to God), but the latter is not *conditioned* by the former (hence the demand to love non-preferred neighbors).
- 20 See again section on “Neighborly Love” above.
- 21 Assuming, of course, that we sincerely attempt to do what the relevant circumstances allow us to do.

- 22 Cf. Kierkegaard's claim that to be a genuine neighborly lover is not only to feed the poor but to see in this meal a banquet (Kierkegaard 1995: 83). Arguably, to give a banquet is precisely to be able to take joy in their company; namely, performing the second movement as well.

References

- Davenport, J. (2008) "Faith as Eschatological Trust in Fear and Trembling," in Edward F. Mooney (ed.) *Ethics, Love, and Faith in Kierkegaard: Philosophical Engagements*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Ferreira, M. J. (2001) *Love's Grateful Striving: A Commentary on Kierkegaard's Works of Love*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Frankfurt, H. (2004) "On Love, and Its Reasons," in *The Reasons of Love*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jollimore, T. (2011) *Love's Vision*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1995) *Works of Love*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (2006) *Fear and Trembling*, trans. Sylvia Walsh, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krishek, S. (2010) "The Enactment of Love by Faith: On Kierkegaard's Distinction Between Love and Its Works," *Faith and Philosophy* 27: 3–21.
- Krishek, S. (2015) "The Existential Dimension of Faith," in Daniel Conway (ed.) *Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling: A Critical Guide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krishek, S. (2017) "Kierkegaard on Impartiality and Love," *European Journal of Philosophy* 25.1: 109–28.
- Velleman, J. D. (1999) "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109.2: 338–74.

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE?

Luc Bovens

Love Is Not Love That Alters When It Alteration Finds

There are all kinds of things that we want in life—an interesting job, a cruise to exotic lands, a night on the town, a sports car.... And then there is our love life. Again, there are all kinds of things that we want in the way of love. We want a happy love life, we want to be with our beloved, or one might say, we want our beloved. But this thing called love, as the Cole Porter (1929) song continues, is a “funny thing” and “who can solve its mystery?” Indeed, love-related wants are curiously different from more mundane wants.

Let’s start with something that so many of us want—chocolate. Like love, most ordinary mortals don’t just want chocolate, they crave it. Suppose that you grew up on Cadbury, but now you think that you made the discovery of your life—you tasted these nicely wrapped Ghirardelli squares from the Bay Area and you swear that they are the best thing under the sun.

Being a choosy Belgian when it comes to chocolate, I ask what you like about it. You immediately start raving about the velvety texture, the robust bitterness, the aroma of hazelnuts, and so on. I understand your passion. But if that’s what you like about chocolates, then I have news for you. Try these pralines from Daskalidès, manufactured in Ghent, Belgium—they score higher than Ghirardelli on all the dimensions that you mention.

You are somewhat incredulous, but you are willing to give it a go. And indeed, you fall head over heels for Daskalidès on first bite. It is to die for! Ghirardelli pales in comparison. And so, you trade up. Ghirardelli is a thing of the past—the future with Daskalidès is bright.

And there are simpler ways to wean you off Ghirardelli. I might suggest you put on your reading glasses and read the ingredients of the Ghirardelli chocolate. You notice the soy lecithin among the additives. For some reason or other you have some misgivings about soy additives and you turn your back on Ghirardelli.

Or Ghirardelli may decide to source its cocoa from a different supplier. It just doesn’t taste the same anymore to your discerning palate, and, again, you say farewell to Ghirardelli.

In all these cases, we wouldn’t bat an eyelid. You liked Ghirardelli yesterday. But you traded up, you learned something new about Ghirardelli, or Ghirardelli changed. You don’t like it anymore today. This is no reason to say that you didn’t truly like Ghirardelli yesterday.

But compare this to love. Suppose that you tell me that you have found a new beloved. You are besotted and beguiled—you hear the angels singing. I ask you—what is so great about them?

You are more than happy to tell me all out about how beautiful, witty, charming, and intelligent your new beloved is.

As with Ghirardelli, I am happy to dispense good advice. If that's what you find so attractive in your newfound Mr. or Ms. Right, I invite you along to come and meet Mr. or Ms. So-Much-More-Right—someone who has all these nice character traits to an even greater extent. We set up a date, you agree with my excellent judgment as a match-maker, swiftly trade up, and live happily ever after.

Trading up from Ghirardelli to Daskalidès did not stand in the way of saying that you *truly* liked Ghirardelli yesterday. But trading up from Right to So-Much-More-Right makes one less confident about your love for Right yesterday. If you were so beguiled and besotted, why did you even take me up on setting up a date? And how is it that you were so easily convinced? You have to admit: Maybe you did not *truly* love Right after all. To quote a well-worn line from Shakespeare's (1914) Sonnet 116: "Love is not love that alters when it alteration finds."

Love should also be resilient to learning—at least more resilient than your fancy for Ghirardelli. As we become more acquainted with our beloved, we may learn things about them that would have stopped us from falling in love. But now that we are where we are, it shouldn't matter. If this new knowledge can undo our love, one might question how true it was.

This is a favorite recipe of tragic love stories. In Kate Chopin's (1893) short story "Désirée's Baby," Armand's wife Désirée was adopted and is of uncertain heritage. When he notices that their infant son has African features, he sends her and the child away. In Thomas Hardy's (1891) *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman*, Angel learns on their wedding night that Tess had a child out of wedlock and leaves her. One questions whether Arman truly loved Désirée and whether Angel truly loved Tess. As a contrast, take the young love that blossoms between Jimmy and Dil in the movie *The Crying Game* (1992). Then Jimmy learns that Dil is transgender and anatomically male and Dil learns that Jimmy was the cause of her former lover's death. Though they would never have fallen in love with each other had they known this at the outset, they cannot let go of their love.

Wendy Cope (1992) has a two-line poem entitled "Two Cures for Love": "Don't see him: don't phone or write a letter. The easy way: get to know him better." The poem is tongue-in-cheek. Indeed, it sounds fully reasonable that, as we learn unwelcome information about our beloved—which is due to come—love will wither. But true love is less than fully reasonable and is meant to be resilient in the face of unwelcome information.

Love should also be resilient to change. There is no problem with turning our back to Ghirardelli with a change in their cocoa supplier. Nothing stays the same—Ghirardelli is just not what it used to be. But no person stays the same either—lovers tend to change on us as well. But here, again, is where love differs from our passion for chocolates. We expect love to be able to weather change—at least to some extent.

This is what is called the *constancy* of love. (Cf. Soble 1990: 203–36 and 2008 [1998]: 173–9.) If alleged love is subject to trading up or is brittle in the face of learning unwelcome news or unexpected changes, we conclude that the alleged love was not quite true love. It's a mark that something was absent. It is this constancy that sets love apart from other desires, longings, and passions—even from cravings for chocolate.

How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Ways

There are three grand and ancient models of romantic love. They go back to respectively Socrates' and Aristophanes' speeches in Plato's (2008) *Symposium* and to the opening lines of St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13 in the Bible.

Eros. Love is born in response to finding attractive features in a person. This can take many forms. Lorelei Lee, the character played by Marilyn Monroe in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), says, “Don’t you know that a man being rich is like a girl being pretty?” Diane Keaton says that there was chemistry between her and Woody Allen “because it was Woody Allen and because he was funny” (Miller 2015). Or, maybe less controversially, one may find someone sensitive, charming, attentive, willing to listen to us....

This is the model that we find in Socrates’ speech in the *Symposium*. Socrates actually states that all he knows about love he learned from Diotima, the woman from Mantinea, who, he says, is “a woman wise in this and in many other kinds of knowledge.” In keeping with the tradition, we will call this the *eros* model of love. There is a bit of mission creep in Socrates’ speech. It starts with an appreciation of what is beautiful and good in one’s beloved, but a minute later, we move onto the beauty and the good in the laws and institutions of the city, in the practice of philosophy, and finally, to what it means for something to be beautiful and good. We let Socrates and Diotima go down this metaphysical alleyway on their own. All we need is the idea that romantic love is constituted by an appreciation for the wonderful features of the beloved. The motto for this model might be—to love is to find one’s beloved great.

Agape. There is a love that wants to take care of the other, to bring out the best in them. This love is not a response to great things in the other. Rather, it aims to bring about great things. It does not seek value, but rather it confers value.

Here is some Theology 101. When we say that we are loved by God, clearly the *eros* model would not be fitting: God is not gently looking down, impressed and beguiled by all the greatness He sees in mortals roaming around on earth. Rather, He despairs seeing all this sinfulness in motion. However, it is through His loving us that he aims to lift us up and make us into better people, provided we are receptive to His love.

St. Paul praises this kind of love in 1 Cor.13:1–7. He uses the Greek word *agape*, which is translated in Latin as *caritas*. It is a love that is self-forgetful, that sacrifices its own interests for the well-being of the beloved. It is also a love of commitment, no matter what comes. Let the motto be—to love is to make one’s beloved great.

Shared Identity. Before Socrates takes his turn in the *Symposium*, the playwright Aristophanes tells a myth about how humans in times long gone were like spheres and had two pairs of legs and arms, two heads and two genitals—some were double male, some were double female, and some were male–female. They revolted against Zeus and as a punishment Zeus split them in two. And that is the human form as we know it. But these humans have an irresistible longing to find their original other halves. And depending on the original form, this longing is for our gay, lesbian, or straight other half.

The myth underscores that we have a need to find someone in life who complements us. Lovers create a shared self or a joint identity. They go through the world not as two separate people, but as one in body and soul. They think of themselves as such and they want to be seen by the world as such. The motto for this model: to love is to become one with one’s beloved.

These models are not mutually exclusive. In Sonnet 43 in *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1850b) asks to “count the ways” in which she loves her beloved. Relationships tend to display a bit more or less of an *eros* focus, of an *agape* focus, or of a shared-identity focus. Single-model relationships tend to be pathological. With too much *eros* comes infatuation. With too much *agape* comes a loss of self. And with too much of a shared-identity focus comes clinginess. One needs a mix for a healthy relationship. Let us look in more detail at each of these models and see how they fare in the face of the constancy of love.

Love, So Wrought, May Be Unwrought So

Let us start with the *eros* model. Loving people for their features causes trouble for the constancy of love. Features may change. We may realize that we misjudged our beloved due to the infatuation of young love. Or, someone may cross our path who displays the attractive features to a greater extent. If the *eros* model is all there is to love, then what is there that could keep us from saying that we have reached the end of the line?

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's (1850a) Sonnet 14 in *Sonnets from the Portuguese* puts the worry very aptly:

“I love her for her smile—her look—her way
Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day”—
For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may
Be changed, or change for thee—and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so.

Browning exhorts her beloved not to love her on the *eros* model of love. All the features he may love her for may change in her. Or her beloved may come to see them differently. And that, she fears, would mean the end of love which she wishes to avoid at all costs.

But the *eros* model may have its own defense mechanisms against short horizons built into it. Think back to the Lorelei Lee observation that women love men for their money just as men love women for their beauty. Maybe true love is rooted in the appreciation of valuable features—as the *eros* model stipulates—but certain features just cannot play this role. If we fall for someone because of their money or beauty, then one would be hard-pressed calling it true love.

This is fair enough, but then, what sort of features *can* play this role? What sort of features are such that their appreciation could be a ground for true love? There are many candidates but none of them are unproblematic.

In *He That Loves a Rosy Cheek*, the 17th-century English poet Thomas Carew (1875) exhorts us not to love “a rosy cheek, a coral lip or star-like eyes,” because these are bound to fade. Rather, it is “a smooth and steadfast mind, gentle thoughts, and calm desires” that can “kindle never-dying fires.” This is similar to Socrates’ ascent in the *Symposium*: First the novice in the art of love finds beauty in the body of the beloved and at a later stage “he will consider that the beauty of the mind is more honorable than the beauty of the outward form.”

The suggestion is that one should love a person for their character traits. Character traits may be somewhat less ephemeral than looks, but they provide far less than the constancy one would expect from love. Browning does not want to be loved for *speaking gently* either, because she may not speak gently tomorrow, or her beloved may not think of her as speaking gently tomorrow.

People change, for better or for worse. Those of us who have nurtured a loved one through depression know all too well how little can be left of the person we fell in love with. If love is not to fade, character traits may be as fragile as beauty or money. It may be wiser to focus on character traits, because desirable character traits are typically a better predictor of long-term marital satisfaction. Similarly, it may be wiser to choose a place to live on grounds of its social scene or the opportunity for satisfying work, rather than on grounds of its natural beauty or the opportunity to make lots of money. But if natural beauty and riches really matter to *you*, then

why not? And if the beauty of the outward form in a partner or the posh life-style that they promise really matters to *you*, then why not? You may come to realize that you were mistaken in your assessment of the relative importance of these features. But whether it's a *rosy cheek* or a *smooth and steadfast mind* that kindles your love does not make that love any more or less true.

But maybe we love people not for having certain features—bodily, monetary, character, or what have you—but for the *particular mode* in which they display those features. I adore my beloved not for, say, being a great skier, but for the way in which they ski. Nobody takes those turns quite the way they do. It's not how good of a skier they are, it's the mode in which they are a great skier that stirs those butterflies inside.

This may guard against trading up. My beloved may not measure up to the Olympic skier I just met in the lounge, but the Olympic skier's mode of skiing does not catch my fancy the way my beloved's does. Hence this appeal to the particularity of the feature may guard against trading up. But it is less clear that it will guard against change. After a few ligament ruptures little may be left of their oh-so-special way of taking those turns. Maybe this mode of skiing may live on in the other things they do in life and this is what guards against change. But if we go down this route then it all becomes a bit mysterious—the ground for love becomes a kind of *je ne sais quoi*.

There is another clue in William Butler Yeats' *For Anne Gregory* (1933). The poem is a dialogue between two lovers in which the beloved refuses to be loved for her yellow hair—those “great honey-coloured ramparts at my ear.” Rather, she wants to be loved “for herself alone.” But what is it to love a person for themselves alone? There is a mystical and not so mystical reading.

Let's start with the not so mystical. There are certain features of ourselves that we identify with, that we think of as defining us, and typically these are also features that we are proud of. The real Anne Gregory was a young child with flaxen hair when Yeats wrote his poem featuring the granddaughter of the Irish playwright Lady Gregory. But let's think of an imaginary Anne Gregory. She may not have cared much for her yellow hair. So, to be loved for it is not very satisfying. Maybe our imaginary Anne Gregory may have thought of herself as an intellectual or an artist. She would not mind being loved for being just that. When she says that she wants to be loved for herself she means for something that she stands for, something that she takes herself to be all about.

It is true that people like to be loved for what they take pride in. But it is one thing to be loved by the world and another thing to be loved romantically. It seems to me that there is, at least for most people, a separation of spheres. I want to be admired, appreciated, and loved for one set of features at work, for another set of features in my community, and yet another set of features by my beloved. Venus Williams may yearn to be loved by the world for her tennis prowess. Adele is desperate to be adored by her fans for her vocal talent. But I doubt that they want to be so loved by romantic lovers.

So here is a more mystical reading of being loved for oneself alone which needs a bit of a metaphysical warmup.

Think of the universe as a big bag. Grab something out of the bag. Put it back. Grab one more time. If both objects you grabbed have precisely the same features then you grabbed twice the very same thing. This principle goes back to the 17th-century German philosopher Leibniz and is called the *Identity of Indiscernibles*.

The 20th-century English-American philosopher Max Black did not like the principle much. Suppose, he said, there is a universe that is void except for two blue balls of the same size and composition circling around each other. Then both objects have exactly the same features, but they are not identical—they are clearly distinct objects. There seems to be something wrong with Leibniz's *Identity of Indiscernibles* (Forrest 2010).

To defend Leibniz, we step back a few centuries to the 13th-century Scottish philosopher Duns Scotus. Aside from all of its run-of-the-mill features such as being blue, weighing 20

pounds, being sphere-shaped, etc., each of Max Black's balls also has the property of being this very ball. One ball has the property of being this very ball and the other ball has the property of being that very ball. Each ball has its own *primitive this-ness* or, following Duns Scotus, its own *haecceity*. (*Haec* is a Latin form for *this*.) It is in virtue of their respective *haecceities* that the balls in Max Black's universe are discernible and hence we can comfortably say, on Leibniz's principle, that they are distinct.

Let's return to Anne Gregory now. In matters of love, Anne Gregory does not want to be loved for her yellow hair, her smarts, her gentle demeanor, or whatever run-of-the-mill property you might want to add. She wants to be loved for being her, for being the unique person that she is. She wants to be loved for her *haecceity*, in Duns-Scotus style.

This is a common theme in science fiction—such as in the episode “Be Right Back” in *Black Mirror* (2017). We may be able to create a replica of one's beloved who is just as good-looking, sensitive, smart, witty, with exactly the same memories and dreams, but it wouldn't do: What they are lacking is being the very person whom you loved before.

The more sober-minded will think it stark raving mad to bring in such bizarre features as *haecceities* to account for the fact that people do not wish to be loved for any other feature than being the unique person that they are. But when love is the prize, maybe a bit of metaphysical fairyland is just what we need.

In short, the quest for a special set of features that can ground true love and that provide a basis for constancy is quite elusive. We tried character features, modes, identity-constituting features, and *haecceities*. They all have some attraction, but none of them are entirely convincing.

Only God, My Dear, Could Love You for Yourself Alone

We now turn to the *agape* model. After Anne Gregory kicks up a fuss about wanting to be loved for herself alone, her interlocutor responds:

I heard an old religious man
But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear,
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair.

There are two ways to understand this. One reading understands “for yourself” as indicating the *ground* of love: God loves us because we are the unique individuals that we are. But there is also another reading. Think of the expression: “Buy something nice for yourself.” Here you are meant to be the beneficiary. So, if God loves us for ourselves, we are the beneficiaries of His love—He loves us with the aim of lifting us up.

Is it true that *only* God can love in this manner? *Agape* is an ideal of love and maybe only God can live up to it. But nonetheless, it is held up as an ideal to strive for in interpersonal relationships as well as in romantic love.

In *Love and Responsibility*, Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) holds it up as a model of romantic love in marriage:

We love the person complete with all his or her virtues and faults, and up to a point independently of those virtues and in spite of those faults. The strength of such a love

emerges most clearly when the beloved stumbles, when his or her weaknesses or even his sins come into the open. One who truly loves does not then withdraw his love, but loves all the more, loves in full consciousness of the other's shortcomings and faults.
(1993: 135)

This *agape* model of love also finds expression in popular culture in Tammy Wynette's (1969) *Stand By Your Man*: "it's hard to be a woman giving all your love to just one man. You'll have bad times and he'll have good times, doin' things that you don't understand. But if you love him, you'll forgive him ... 'cause, after all, he's just a man."

St. Paul writes that faith, hope, and love abide and that love is the greatest (1 Cor.13:13). What makes love in the form of *agape* abide? There are several grounds for its constancy.

First, it is a love that is not drawn out by attractive features of the beloved. Hence there is no problem with features changing, with learning about the darker sides of one's beloved, or with any threat from someone crossing one's path who exemplifies the features you fancy to a greater degree. Features simply don't matter from the get-go.

Second, *agape* is about commitment. I once attended a wedding sermon in which the minister said: "You fell in love; you were in love: and now you are saying, I will love." One takes on the commitment of taking care of one's beloved and living up to this commitment is a matter of the will. It is a love that is not contingent on the good fortune that passions won't fade.

Third, love is unconditional on the *agape* model. Love won't fade when one's beloved errs, shows weakness, or in whatever way does not live up to expectations. It is a love that aims to build up the beloved. Hence the lower the beloved falls, the greater the call. It is like an ardent sports fan who is not let down when the team goes through a losing streak. *Agape* is not a fair-weather love.

But the constancy of *agape* comes at a cost. Here are some trouble-spots for *agape*.

First, a model of love that exhorts us to bear it all can become self-destructive. To protect our mental health, its proponents tend to throw in a qualifier that functions as an exit clause. Note how John Paul II throws in "up to a point"—love persists in spite of the beloved's faults, *up to a point*. In Shakespeare's (1914) Sonnet 116, love "bears it out to the edge of doom"—but it doesn't follow the beloved beyond this edge. Nonetheless, *agape* may have its boundaries, but it can come dangerously close to the pitfalls of co-dependency and abusive relationships.

Second, how can an *agape*-model lover respond to the simple question from her beloved: Why do you love me? She might say, because I want to take care of you. But why, the beloved persists, do you want to take care of me, rather than of somebody else? What might our *agape*-model lover respond? Because our paths crossed? That just seems a bit too *whatever*. Because I saw that you needed me? That seems a bit patronizing, or even worse, it sounds like a handyman who is keen to buy a fixer-upper. What would bring a spark to the beloved's eye is if the lover would tell her what makes her so special. But if they are genuine about this, if it's more than some sweet nothing, then we are back with the *eros* model.

For One Is Both and Both Are One in Love

Finally, there is the *shared-identity* model (Nozick 1989; Solomon 1981). Aristophanes' myth tells the story of how humans try to find their other halves to reunite with them and go through life in the form they were before they were punished by Zeus. Philosophers talk about the *phenomenology* of love. What they mean by this is that there is something that it is like to be in love, that loves strikes us in particular ways, that love appears to us to be one way or another. The myth of Aristophanes ticks a lot of boxes when it comes to this phenomenology of love.

First, love is about forming an extended self or a shared identity with the beloved. There is the line from Christina Rossetti's (1881) poem, "I loved you first: but afterwards your love," stating that "one is both and both are one in love." Or, think of Catherine's speech in Emily Brontë's (1847) *Wuthering Heights* in which she proclaims: "I *am* Heathcliff. He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being."

The extended self can take various forms. It can be a kind of merging—the individual selves are permeable and they fuse as two cells becomes one. The old selves are no more. There is one new self that has absorbed the selves that once were. The singletons are gone; only the dyad remains. Aristophanes in the *Symposium* seems to favor this idea of merging. He imagines Hephaestus, the god of blacksmiths, proposing to weld the two lovers together. And the lovers wholeheartedly agree to this—they wish to "be melted into one and remain one here and hereafter."

Kahlil Gibran (1923) warns against this loss of the individual self in *The Prophet*. One should drink together, but not from the same cup. One should eat together, but not from the same loaf. And then he suggests various images in which greatness is reached by joint action that involves individuality—such as the pillars that make a temple, or the strings of a lute that stand by themselves yet jointly create music. And also, a respectful distance helps the cause of love—the cypress and the oak do not grow into each other's shadow.

We find a similar warning in Shel Silverstein's children's books *The Missing Piece* (1976) and *The Missing Piece Meets the Big O* (1981). A rock is trying to find its missing piece and a missing piece is trying to find its rock so that the two of them can merge and roll, but the mission ultimately fails and they find happiness without merging.

If we wish to preserve the individual self, then we can envision love in one of two ways. Draw an outer circle that represents the individual self and place a smaller circle of the shared self within it. Or draw an outer circle that represents the shared self and place a smaller circle of the individual self within it. These pictures are suggestive. Robert Nozick (1989) thought that there was a gender difference, with men typically identifying with the former model and women with the latter model. Men make room for the *we* in their lives, whereas women find a place for the *I* within the relationship.

Second, love strikes us as being fated. Think of the '20s jazz tune *It Had to Be You* by Isham Jones (1924). It's not that our paths just happened to cross and we found out that we were a good match. Rather, once we met, we knew right away that this was the match that was waiting for us all along. There is no room for maybe. There are 7.6 billion people on the globe and the only right match is between you and your beloved—nothing else will do, it just had to be you. Lovers may even tell stories about how it seemed as if someone was pulling the strings, providing a little tug left and right to bring back the two halves that were once united.

This also squares with Aristophanes' explanation of sexual preference. We do not choose our sexual preference. They are simply given to us because they are contingent on whether we came from a unisex or mixed-sex original unit.

Third, we feel that we have always known our beloved. "I knew I loved you before I met you" is a line in the chorus of a top hit, "I Knew I Loved You" by *Savage Garden* (1999). Lovers sense that they were already present in each other's dreams before their paths crossed. They did not just find someone who matched their dreams—rather, they already knew this very person in their dreams.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1947) plays on this theme in the short story *Eyes of a Blue Dog*. It is a conversation between two lovers who repeatedly meet in their dreams. Since they hit it off so well, they agree to find each other in the real world, with the phrase "Eyes of a Blue Dog" as a

kind of code. But tragically, nothing comes of it, because the man cannot remember his dreams and the woman goes mad in her pursuits to find the lover of her dreams in real life.

This feeling of prescience or *déjà vu* is also present in Aristophanes' myth. We knew each other already before we met, because my beloved is my long-lost love from the time before time began when we were still one.

The Scent of Bitter Almonds

"It was inevitable: The scent of bitter almonds always reminded him of the fate of unrequited love." This is the opening line of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's (1988) *Love in the Time of Cholera*. So, what if love is unrequited? What if love that was once required is no longer so? Each of our models has its own response to the pangs of love and forges a path forward.

On the *eros* model, loving one's beloved is like loving a pretty awesome Lamborghini is for a car lover. And losing love is like losing that pretty awesome Lamborghini. Something great—that is, something with the greatest features—just slipped through my fingers. Maybe the car was even tailor-made, a kind of *pièce unique*. And that is what is lost, never to return.

On the *agape* model, the pangs of love are less about loss of value, but rather about the loss of a project and about failure. It is as if I was trying single-mindedly to save the family firm, working night and day, but I finally had to admit defeat and declare bankruptcy. There is this nagging doubt that if I had just tried a bit harder, I could have succeeded, and that maybe I just did not love quite enough.

The *shared-identity* model is the cruelest of them all. The loss of love is like a death—it is a death of the shared self. Emily Dickinson (1896) compares episodes of parting with death in the poem "My Life Closed Twice before its Close." "Parting," she says, "is all we know of heaven and all we need of hell." And this death of the shared self affects the individual self in the deepest way. How it affects us depends on whether we see the shared self as a merged self, as having a place within the individual self, or as encompassing the individual self.

On the model of merged selves, the individual selves are ripped apart and are left wounded. On the model of the shared self within the individual self, what is left is a hole, a gap, an emptiness. On the model of the individual self within the shared self, the individual self is left without a compass or a mooring place—it is adrift in a world that makes no sense because the shared self that gave it meaning is gone.

What adds to the trauma is the image that love is fated. If it had to be you, then it is not just a death, it is *the* death of the one and only shared self that there can ever be. It is the sense that there is only one missing piece that provided for the right fit that makes the loss irreparable. It is not a loss of something of great value as in the *eros* model. The relationship may even have been arduous from the get-go. It is not a loss of project as in the *agape* model. A doomed love may never even have reached the stage of being a project to bring to fruition. Rather, it is the sense that there is something deeply amiss with the world, because for whatever reason, what had to be so, cannot be so—the world below does not live up to what is written in the stars.

There is no right model for being in love. The revelers at the *Symposium* and St. Paul all have something to add to the mixture. At different times in life, depending on where we come from, whom we are with, and where we want to go, it's good to hold up some models and downplay others. Neither is there one right model to deal with unrequited love or love lost. On the *eros* model, we set off to find a new love that will be equally wonderful. On the *agape* model, we search for someone new to give our heart to. On the *shared-identity* model, we tell ourselves that we must have misread those stars and trust that time will heal all wounds. There is no telling what may work when, for whom, and with whom.

References

- Black Mirror*. (2017) [Film] Netflix Original: Charlie Brooker. Available at: www.netflix.com/title/70264888. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Brontë, E. (1847) *Wuthering Heights*. [online] Transcribed from the 1910 John Murray edition. Project Gutenberg eBook. Available at: www.gutenberg.org/files/768/768-h/768-h.htm. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Browning, E.B. (1850a) "Sonnet 14 in Sonnets from the Portuguese," in *English Poetry II: From Collins to Fitzgerald*. Vol. XLI, The Harvard Classics. 1909–14. New York, NY: P.F. Collier & Son. [online] Available at: www.bartleby.com/41/591.html. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Browning, E.B. (1850b) "Sonnet 43 in Sonnets from the Portuguese," in *English Poetry II: From Collins to Fitzgerald*. Vol. XLI, The Harvard Classics. 1909–14. New York, NY: P.F. Collier & Son. [online] Available at: www.bartleby.com/41/620.html [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Carew, T. (1875) "The True Beauty," in F.T. Palgrave (ed.) *The Golden Treasury*, London: Macmillan. [online] Available at: www.bartleby.com/40/230.html. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Chopin, K. (1893) "Désirée's Baby," in *Kate Chopin: Complete Novels and Stories*, The Library of America, pp. 242–7. Originally published on 14 January 1893, issue of *Vogue* and collected in *Bayou Folk* 1894. [online] Available at: <http://storyoftheweek.loa.org/2010/09/desirees-baby.html>. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Cope, W. (1992) "Two Cures for Love," in *Serious Concerns*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Dickinson, E. (1896) "Poem 96: My Life Closed Twice Before its Close," in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown (1924). [online] Available at: www.bartleby.com/113/1096.html. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Forrest, P. (2010) "The Identity of Indiscernibles," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [online]. Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-indiscernible>. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953) [film]. Los Angeles, CA: Howard Hawks.
- Gibran, K. (1923) *The Prophet*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. [online] Available at: <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200061h.html>. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Hardy, T. (1891) *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman*, Project Gutenberg eBook. [online] Available at: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/110. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Jones, I (1924) "It Had to Be You," with lyrics by Gus Kahn. [online] Orchestral version by Isham Jones. Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbFwkP3BsLI. Performed by Ruth Etting. 1936. Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=3y8cHVylDa4. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Marquez, G.G. (1947) "Eyes of a Blue Dog." [online] Available at: www.classicshorts.com/stories/bluedog.html. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Marquez, Gabriel Garcia. (1988) *Love in the Time of Cholera*, translated from the Spanish by Edith Grossman. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Miller, J. (2015) "Diane Keaton Dares Woody Allen to Work with Her Again," *Vanity Fair*, 11 Nov. issue. [online]. Available at: www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2015/11/diane-keaton-interview. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Nozick, R. (1989) "Love's Bond," in *The Examined Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster, pp. 68–86.
- Plato. (2008) *Symposium*, translated by Benjamin Jowett. Project Gutenberg eBook. [online] Available at: www.gutenberg.org/files/1600/1600-h/1600-h.htm. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Porter, C. (1929) "What Is This Thing Called Love," [online] YouTube. Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCmn61kOVQ. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Rossetti, C. (1881) "I Loved You First: But Afterwards Your Love," [online] Available at: www.poetry-foundation.org/poems/50507/i-loved-you-first-but-afterwards-your-love. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Savage Garden (1999) "I Knew I Loved You." [song] Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjnmICxvoVY. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Shakespeare, W. (1914) "Sonnet 116: Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds," in W.J. Craig (ed.) *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. London: Oxford University Press. [online] Available at: www.bartleby.com/70/50116.html. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Silverstein, S. (1976) *The Missing Piece*. New York, NY: HarperCollins. Animated version. [online] Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=mT0wKeJQvGk. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Silverstein, S. (1981) *The Missing Piece Meets the Big O*. New York, NY: HarperCollins. Animated version. [online] Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCmZ2jrQooE. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].

- Soble, A. (1990) *The Structure of Love*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Soble, A. (2008 [1998]) *The Philosophy of Sex and Love*. 2nd ed., St Paul, MN: Paragon.
- Solomon. (1981) *Love: Emotion, Myth and Metaphor*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- St. Paul 1 Corinthians 13, in Bible—English Standard Version. [online]. Available at: http://biblehub.com/esv/1_corinthians/13.htm. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- The Crying Game*. (1992) [film]. Los Angeles, CA: Neil Jordan. [online] Information available at: www.miramax.com/movie/the-crying-game. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Woytila, K. (1993) *Love and Responsibility*. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press.
- Wynette, T. (1969) “Stand By Your Man.” [song] Available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwBirf4BWew. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].
- Yeats, W.B. (1933) “For Anne Gregory.” [online] Available at: www.poemhunter.com/best-poems/william-butler-yeats/for-anne-gregory. [Accessed on 10 March 2018].

PART VI

Rationality and Morality



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

23

REASONS FOR LOVE

Esther Engels Kroeker

“Why do you love me?” a person might ask her lover, hoping perhaps to be reassured, or simply out of curiosity. The romantic lover might then answer by mentioning the wonderful qualities she possesses, such as her beauty, kindness or strong character. A friend who tries to answer this question might mention her friend’s great qualities, and she might also appeal to the history, experiences and adventures they have shared. The mother might simply answer her child by saying: “you are my child.” All of these answers seem to appeal to reasons: to factors that show why one’s love is reasonable or intelligible.

However, one might be puzzled by the question, and claim that an answer like “we go way back” or “she is my child” is no reason for love. These answers express explanatory factors, one could point out, but reasons are not merely explanatory; they should also show why an attitude is justified. Appealing to the positive qualities of the beloved is also problematic, these interlocutors may point out, because even if such qualities change love still endures. Some might even point out that love is not the kind of phenomenon to which the predicates “justified” or “unjustified” apply.

As usual, therefore, the question “why do you love me?” is not as simple as it might at first appear. For contemporary philosophers working on these issues, there is a sense in which this question might be taken to be a quest for reasons—reasons for love. And these philosophers are divided into those who think there are reasons for love, and those who think there aren’t. In what follows I offer a survey of these two positions. I then present a hybrid view, where love is both normative and non-normative, and I lastly introduce my own qualified hybrid position. First, though, let us start by briefly elucidating what is meant by “love” and by “reasons” and by clarifying the questions posed in this chapter.

Understanding the Questions: Love and Reasons

Love

The type of love that stands at the center of recent work on love and reasons is partial love. Partial love is discriminating; it is love that is directed to one particular person or object. It is not the kind of love that is directed, for instance, toward all of mankind, or toward artwork in general. It is directed toward a particular person or object that the lover favors and prefers to

other persons and objects. We focus, in this chapter, on love of persons, and the prime examples of such partial personal loves are romantic love, love of parents for children and friendship.¹

Partial love may not be reduced to one particular emotion, or to one decision, or to one specific desire, but it is, as most tend to recognize, more of a syndrome. It is a mixture of beliefs and motivational states which tend to involve certain kinds of emotions, although these need not be continually felt (but must be felt sometimes). Partial love also involves non-instrumental desires for the good of the beloved. A lover takes the interests of her beloved at heart and desires the beloved's well-being. The lover also hopes the beloved will satisfy and pursue her own desires and purposes—not for the sake of the lover, but for the sake of the beloved. Lovers are affected by the emotions, ends and well-being of the other. They take measures to help the beloved, feel responsible for the beloved and defend their beloved against criticisms or negative influences. They take their love to be a reason to act in certain partial ways; love provides lovers with responsibilities and specific obligations toward their beloveds.² In the case of romantic love, furthermore, lovers (hope to) share common goals, interests and intimacy.³ Romantic lovers also typically want their beloveds to love them back, and thus desire reciprocity.

Reasons

Scholars working on love's relation to practical reasons usually think of reasons as normative rather than explanatory. Explanatory reasons (or causes) are appealed to in order to explain how an action, attitude, emotion or state of affairs came about.⁴ Hence the fact that I had a car accident this morning, for example, explains why it is that I met the police officer who came to draw the report. If a friendship develops with this officer, meeting her in several important contexts explains how our friendship came about.

Normative reasons for action also explain actions but in a different way. They count in favor of actions by rationalizing and justifying them. Normative reasons are often related to positive or valuable states of affairs or to beliefs or desires about these valuable states of affairs, or to thoughts about what one should or ought to do. Hence the (justifying or normative) reason for my action of stopping on the edge of the road, for example, is that someone is in need of help, and that helping is good, or required.

When authors wonder whether there are reasons for love, therefore, what they are asking is whether something valuable or positive justifies, rationalizes or makes this love appropriate and intelligible.⁵ Moreover, what these philosophers are after is not only whether, in general, there are reasons for love. What they are after is whether love is the type of phenomenon that is typically reason-responsive. If love is typically responsive to reasons it is the kind of attitude that contains, essentially, the recognition of some value or desirable state, or some normative thoughts. My friendship with the police officer, for example, and my friend-type love for her, would possibly consist of attitudes that respond to her kindness. "Are there reasons for love?" is hence taken to mean: "is love a response to reasons?" or "is love a reason-responsive phenomenon?" And if it is, then "what are the reasons to which it responds?" These are the questions that lie at the center of the discussion of this chapter. Some philosophers think there are reasons for love, and that love is, in its nature, responsive to such reasons. Others, conversely, think there are no reasons for love because love is not the kind of attitude that responds to reasons. We turn now to this latter position.

The No-Reasons-For-Love View

The "no-reasons-for-love" view is simply the view that love is not a response to reasons. Harry Frankfurt is a famous proponent of this view. He argues that love is not a response to reasons

but is in fact rather the basis of all reasons. He writes that the domain of practical rationality pertains to the question of how a person should live (Frankfurt 2004: 5). For instance, he points out, morality and self-interest are important domains from which we tend to answer this question (Frankfurt 2004: 9). He argues, however, that morality and self-interest will be sources of reasons (will be action guiding) only if we love morality and our life. Love, he observes, “provides us with stable ambitions and concerns; it marks our interests and our goals” (Frankfurt 2004: 23). For Frankfurt, therefore, the totality of the different things we love specifies the “answer to the question of how to live” (ibid.).

Now, Frankfurt continues, suppose the person wonders whether there are good reasons that justify him in living that way. This is a question about whether he should really love the things he loves (Frankfurt 2004: 23). According to Frankfurt this question is impossible to answer because in order to know the criteria for determining whether one has good reasons to love what one loves, one must first know what it is that is important. And what is important for a person is determined by what he loves. It is not possible, according to Frankfurt, to have reasons to live or to act unless there are some things one already loves. Love, that is, is the basis, the grounds, from which we order our lives. Hence it makes no sense, according to Frankfurt, to wonder whether we have good reasons to love what we love. Having good reasons, for Frankfurt, is in fact determined by what we love, and not the other way around.

Since Frankfurt’s ground-breaking account of love and reasons, other philosophers have adopted a similar stance. Nick Zangwill, for instance, writes that love is not a kind of valuing and hence is not reason-responsive. He argues that evaluation is propositional. Emotions such as fear or anger are propositional attitudes, he observes. I fear or am angry that *p*. But love, he points out, is not propositional: I do not love that *p*—I love *p*, according to Zangwill (Zangwill 2013: 304–305). Furthermore, romantic love, he notes, is often “untamed, raw, inappropriate and gloriously amoral” (Zangwill 2013: 306). Zangwill writes that although some features of a person might cause us to love her, we may not value these features, and these features might even be regrettable flaws (Zangwill 2013: 307). Love, therefore, should not be characterized as a kind of valuing or reason-responsive phenomenon.

A most common objection to the no-reasons-for-love view is that this position renders love unintelligible. One still wonders why it is we feel we have reasons to love the specific persons we love, the objection goes. As Eleonore Stump writes, if there is no reason for love, then “it seems as if the lover could just as easily have loved some other person” and “there is also no reason why he should love her rather than anyone else” (Stump 2006: 2; see also Soble 2005: 17). When a beloved asks her lover “why do you love me?” she will thus not find the answer “for no reason” very satisfactory, according to this objection.

Another criticism, which Annette Baier and Susan Wolf both raise, is that Frankfurt-style accounts do not distinguish between love of things that are unworthy and love of things that are worthy of our love (Baier 1982; Wolf 2002: 227, 231). Some things seem to be valuable, they argue, independently of the fact that we love them or not, and love seems to be an appropriate response to such independent values. Similarly, Niko Kolodny points out that the no-reasons view fails to show why, from a third-person perspective, some loves (or their absence) strike us as appropriate or not (Kolodny 2003: 143).

The observation, therefore, that some kinds of love strike us as appropriate, and others inappropriate, and that loving particular persons requires loving for reasons tied to the beloved, leads to the position we will consider next: the view that love *is* responsive to reasons.

The Rationalist View

All rationalist positions agree in holding that love is an attitude or syndrome that is typically responsive to reasons. Reasons in these accounts are taken to be features, properties or attitudes that are valuable, or are about something valuable. Among the rationalist positions, two versions stand out: the quality view and the relationship view.

The Quality View

What justifies and motivates personal love, according to the quality rationalist position, are the properties we value in the object of our love. Simon Keller, for instance, points out that when I love a particular person, I love her in virtue of her attractive qualities, and my love for her is justified by these properties (Keller 2000: 167).⁶ Kate Abramson and Adam Leite also defend a rationalist view in which love, they argue, is a response to the beloved's virtues and laudable qualities. The qualities that justify love are, according to them, part of the sphere of the ethical, a sphere that is broader than the domain of moral obligations and virtues. Love is hence a response to moral qualities in this broad sense of *moral*. Love, they claim, is an appropriate response to features of the beloved's character that express his or her good will. According to them, other kinds of love are "shallow, superficial, or perverse" (Abramson and Leite 2011: 678).⁷

Among the objections to the quality rationalist position Keller defends we find the worry that a quality view such as Keller's implies that one's love would cease to be justified if the beloved lost her attractive qualities, or if some other person possessed these qualities to a higher degree. If love is responsive to attractive or desirable traits in the object of love, then it seems that love would cease, change or disappear with the change or disappearance of these attractive qualities. But love does not seem to be temporary and fragile in this way, which implies, the objection concludes, that a Keller-type reason view is not correct. One may also wonder why I love *this* person with average valuable qualities rather than *that* person who has more valuable qualities. Another worry is that if reasons are universal, and if my love for a person P is a response to those reasons, then everyone is justified, or even obligated, to love P.⁸ This consequence is also counter-intuitive, and hence problematic for the quality view.

In response to such worries, Troy Jollimore has recently argued that his version of Rationalism, the Vision View, is not subject to these problems because, according to him, love is perspectival, and it involves silencing of other reasons (Jollimore 2017). Love arises in a specific context in which the lover adopts an attitude that excludes comparison with competitors, and in which the reasons for loving competitors disappear from the sphere of the lover's motivation (ibid.: 13). In this context, furthermore, lovers typically see the beloved in a charitable or positive light; they notice qualities of the beloved that others might not notice (ibid.: 5–7). In the same vein Abramson and Leite answer that the reasons to which love responds are not the kind of reasons that obligate or require. Love is, rather, a response to warranting reasons, which rationalize but do not require a response. Hence the quality view, they argue, does not imply that love is fickle and fragile, and it is not too universal.

Nevertheless, even if these answers solve puzzles related to Keller's quality account, a view such as the one defended by Abramson and Leite, where love is responsive to moral qualities, still gives rise to unanswered worries. If love is a response to moral qualities then one might wonder, for instance, if such accounts have the resources to distinguish love from moral respect (in a broad sense of moral). Personal love seems to be more partial in nature than respect. Imagine, the objection goes, that I find two persons equally laudable, and respect and approve

both. However, I might find that I love, in a partial, discriminating manner, only one of the two persons. Partial love is therefore less broad than the love/respect that arises in light of the other's laudable qualities. In some cases, moreover, some suggest that the reasons for which I love my child or friend is not the child or friend's qualities, but it is the valuable fact, rather, that she is my child or friend. We turn now to these types of relationship views.

The Relationship View

Niko Kolodny is one of the best-known recent defenders of the relationship view. He claims that love is a psychological state "for which there are normative reasons: a state that, if all goes well, is an appropriate or fitting response to something independent of itself" (Kolodny 2003: 135). He argues that "one's reason for loving a person is one's relationship to her: the ongoing history that one shares with her" (ibid.: 135–146). Love, he points out, partly consists of the belief that the relationship (friendship, romantic relationship, parent–child relationship, etc.) is valuable and renders love appropriate (Kolodny 2003: 146). And the absence of love is inappropriate, he continues, when there is a relationship that calls for it. For Kolodny relationships are ongoing historical patterns of concern between particular persons. He holds that lovers view relationships as reasons for valuing both the relationship and the person with whom one has the relationship (ibid.: 148–151).⁹

Among the possible objections to the relationship view we find the following: the relationship view fails to account for love at first sight, and the relationship view does not do justice to unrequited, but arguably appropriate, love (Stump 2006: 26–27). As Sara Protasi argues, moreover, Kolodny's account fails to distinguish between love and the social (loving) relationships. A person may love another and yet not be in a relationship with that other person. According to Protasi, the person might nonetheless have reasons for loving the other, even in the absence of a relationship (Protasi 2016). Others argue that the relationship is merely the context in which the qualities of the beloved (the reasons for love) are made salient (Abramson and Leite 2011: 676).

Recently, Thomas Hurka has also argued, convincingly I believe, that a problem with a relationship view like Kolodny's is that it assumes that the desires involved in love are fundamentally normative, cognitive, desires. Cognitive desires involve normative thoughts (about what's good or supported by reason). Kolodny holds, for instance, that love partly consists of beliefs about the value of the relationship one shares with a loved one, and that desires involved in love are responsive to that value. In light of such a claim, Hurka objects that even if some of the desires involved in love are normative, other desires involved in love are non-normative; they are more direct and involve no normative thoughts. Both kinds of attitudes, Hurka observes, figure in love (Hurka 2017: 164–165). Love is a response to reasons, Hurka writes, but it also arises because of things we like in the other, things we find attractive, without thinking anyone has a normative reason to value them (ibid.: 165–166).

The Hybrid View

Several philosophers, such as Thomas Hurka and also Adrienne Martin (Martin 2015), have recently defended hybrid accounts of love and reasons. They argue that the relation between love and reasons is a complex one, and that love is made up both of attitudes that are non-normative and of attitudes that are normative. For Hurka, those desires, emotions or beliefs that are normative are responsive to two kinds of reasons: the qualities of the beloved, and the shared history (if it was good in some sense). These reasons are often intertwined, he continues. When

I share a valuable history with a person, he points out, I come to admire qualities because they belong to someone with whom I share this history. Conversely, I feel more attached by a history if it involves someone whose qualities I admire (Hurka 2017: 168). The non-normative elements, or sub-rational ones, are those you just like, such as her blond hair or her interest in Scrabble, even though you don't have a positive reason to like or to dislike such things, according to Hurka and Martin (Hurka 2017: 170–171; Martin 2015: 692). Hurka's view is therefore a hybrid position in which love contains elements that are responsive to reasons and some which are caused by neutral qualities (that are not reasons). Martin also holds a hybrid view, in which she defends an "incorporation conception" of love that integrates, she holds, both rational and sub-rational motives (Martin 2015). She also articulates how such a view has many of the same strengths central to Hurka's account. According to Martin, love might contain only sub-rational motives, or only rational ones, but love at its fullest has both (Martin 2015: 694).

Hurka's and Martin's contributions are enlightening since love does seem to contain elements that are responsive to reasons as well as elements that are not. And those that do respond to reasons arise in light either of the desirable qualities of the beloved, or because of the (valuable) shared history, or sometimes because of both conjoined. However, Hurka seems to hold that love is always composed of *both* normative and non-normative elements. Contrary to Hurka, and more in line with Martin, I will argue that love may sometimes be of a non-rational kind only, containing little or no normative components, and love may in other cases be of a rational kind only, made up mostly of normative attitudes. Hurka and Martin are right, however, in thinking that both kinds of love often merge together.

The Qualified Hybrid View

According to the view I want to defend, love is sometimes mostly (or completely) a-rational, and love is sometimes mostly (or completely) rational. Rational love is the type of love that responds to reasons, and a-rational love is the type of experience that arises for no reason and that is not characterized by a response to reasons. At times love is also of a hybrid sort, with the rational and a-rational components conjoined. Still, one type of love may be present without the other. Love, that is, is not *necessarily* a hybrid attitude.

A-Rational Love

As Martin and Hurka observe, love is made up both of elements that are normative (reason-responsive) and of elements that are non-normative. Non-normative attitudes are, for instance, subjective desires, which are desires that aim toward a state of affairs or that respond to a state of affair regardless of the state's value, and independent of any normative thought. As Martin argues, love is sometimes the kind of experience that is composed *essentially* of such non-normative attitudes. I argue that the normative constituents are completely or mostly absent in a-rational love. The components that make up a-rational love are non-rational and more instinctive desires, emotions or beliefs that arise for some causal explanation, but not as a response to value or to thoughts about what should be done. The desires to eat or to drink are instances of such instinctive desires. They may arise independently, and sometimes despite, thoughts about what one should do, what should be pursued, what is good or desirable. I often desire water because I am thirsty, and not because water, or drinking, is some valuable or desirable object, and not because I *should* drink (if I want to survive, or be healthy, say). Some desires are of this sort, but emotions and beliefs as well, since they sometimes arise in response to some object, or aim at an object, without involving any normative consideration. The kind of non-rational

attitudes that are part of this kind of love would be some kinds of affections, desires to be with the other, feelings of pleasure, etc.

Evidence that love is sometimes composed exclusively (or overwhelmingly) of these kinds of attitudes is found in love at first sight, and in the love parents often experience for their children. Even if love at first sight is not a full-blown, mature kind of love that has deepened and taken root in a historical context, it is sometimes experienced as a lightning bolt, or as a sudden, unexpected experience. This kind of experience seems to arise for causal factors, certainly, but not because of reasons. The mere presence of a person, or the way the person talks or looks at me, might be the occasion for such an experience. Those who have experienced love at first sight talk of one's heart stopping, or skipping a beat, affection of a strong sort, strong attraction, pleasure, etc. Now, some might object that love at first sight is not love *per se*, but only some physical attraction or infatuation.

Another piece of evidence, therefore, is more clearly available in the love of parents for children. Hurka argues that the love of parents for their children is grounded in the history shared with the child. He writes that "parents don't love their newborn child because of her qualities; they love her because she's the one they conceived, gestated, and now have borne. History remains central in this type of love" (Hurka 2017: 168–169). It is true that parents do not, or should not, love their children for their valuable qualities, but, contrary to what Hurka writes, parents might find they love their children even without any shared history. Imagine the father who leaves for war, who returns to find that he has a child, and experiences a sudden love for his newfound child. Or imagine the parents who meet their adopted child for the first time, and find that they love her from the moment they hold her in their arms. Hence Hurka is correct that parental love is not typically a response to the child's valuable qualities, but, contrary to what he argues, the love of parents for their children is not based, essentially, in the (good) relationship with the child either.

Other similar situations also demonstrate the more original non-normative grounds of love, for example when siblings realize they have a brother or sister they never knew about. The love they experience is not parental love, but some other kind of family love, and it arises regardless of thoughts about what is good or valuable, or any history shared. One might object, however, that the fact that the baby is one's child or that this person is one's sibling are valuable states of affairs, and that one's love is responsive to this value even if one is not consciously aware one has reasons to love. I doubt this is the case, but if it is, then another, stronger, piece of evidence is available to show that a-rational love sometimes occurs.

To show that a-rational love is possible we may appeal to the rationalist positions themselves, where defenders of this view claim that love without reason is sometimes possible. What they wrongly suppose, however, is that loving without reason means loving contrary to reason—hence that a-rational love is in fact irrational. Troy Jollimore, for instance, writes that "to say that we love for reasons ... is not to say that people always love with reason" (Jollimore 2017: 1). Abramson and Leite argue in the same way that love is not always responsive to morally laudable qualities of the others (Abramson and Leite 2011: 678). However, these authors then argue that loving without reason is inappropriate. They argue that when love is not a response to the valuable qualities of the other, or to the value of the relationship (in Kolodny's account), then this kind of love is unjustified, shallow or mistaken. Jollimore writes that "typically, we love other people for reasons, and when we lack such reasons there is something wrong with our love" (Jollimore 2017: 2). My view, however, is that love of the a-rational sort may be, in some cases, contrary to reason, but not always. Sometimes a-rational love is, in fact, appropriate. Moreover, even in cases where it is contrary to reason, it is not always the case that it is wrong, or shallow.

Non-rational loves that arise and exist because of causal factors only and not as responsive to reasons possess an intrinsic value. Love at first sight, for instance, might turn out to be either appropriate or inappropriate from the point of view of morality or of prudence. There is, however, in both cases, something free and beautiful about this kind of love. But its value does not depend on its reason-responsiveness, since, if it exists, it is not responsive to any value. Or imagine women who experience conjugal violence and who decide it's best to leave their partner in order to protect themselves and their children. They probably have good reasons to leave their partner. But what makes this kind of situation so terrible is that they often do love their partners despite their abusive character, and despite the fact that their relationship was the opposite of valuable. And to say that their love does not exist, or is wrong, shallow or inappropriate, is to miss something unconditional and free about the nature of non-rational love.¹⁰

Three points can be drawn from these examples. First, they show that a-rational love sometimes occurs, and that love is not typically (or essentially) the kind of experience that is reason-responsive. Second, when a-rational love is contrary to reason, it is often still valuable. In cases where the reasons opposed to love outweigh love's value, one should take measures to put oneself in a situation where this love might disappear (with distance and time, for instance). But these situations are terrible and difficult not because a-rational love is inappropriate (if morality or prudence, say, offers reasons against this love), but because even though inappropriate, one still thinks it would have been wonderful if such a love could have, in some other world, existed in an appropriate context. Third and finally, a-rational love is not necessarily inappropriate. It is misguided to assume, as the defenders of rationalist views do, that loving without reason is loving contrary to reason. Sometimes a-rational love can be perfectly appropriate or supported by reason, despite the fact that it is not, itself, a response to reasons, as we will see in the next paragraphs. In such cases a-rational love can turn into a more rational kind of love. Let us already conclude, therefore, that a-rational love is possible, and that sometimes the answer to the question: "why do you love me?" is simply: "I don't know," or "just because." Certainly, though, apart from a-rational love, humans also experience another kind of love: one that is reason responsive.

Rational Love

As opposed to a-rational love that occurs regardless of normative considerations or states of affairs, rational love starts and continues because of normative considerations or facts. The essential components here are evaluative attitudes, emotions, beliefs or affections that arise and continue as a response to value such as awe, appreciation, praise, approval, etc. Now, rational love may turn into a hybrid kind of love, when a-rational kind of love appears in addition to the rational one. But let us first consider the possibility of a purely rational kind of love.

Purely rational love arises or continues solely because of the value perceived in the beloved, or because of the valuable history that lovers share. The observation that we may come to learn to love someone is evidence of this fact. It is easy to observe that some objects or persons are worthy of love, and that we may wish to love them. Even though love is not wholly voluntary, there are steps we might thus take to learn to love something or someone. One step available in order to learn to love is to focus or discover the value of the object or person. A good way to learn to love wine, for instance, is to learn more about the good qualities of the wine: its terroir, conservation, the quality of the barrels, the way the fruits were cultivated, its fullness and excellent taste, etc. Similarly, imagine the commonplace situation in which I want my friend F to meet my other friend G because they are both wonderful persons. Imagine I think that if F could just come to see some of G's great qualities she might at least wish to spend more time with him, and perhaps think G is the kind of person she might love. And, indeed, this might

well happen. The beginning of love might therefore be responsive to valuable qualities—to reasons—in the other. But love might also be sustained by such qualities. As histories develop, one's love might continue to respond to the value of this history, as when friends reflect and enjoy recounting all they have been through together. And love is also sustained by the valuable qualities of the other, such as the other's moral qualities, for instance. These give rise to value responsive attitudes such as awe, wonder, sympathy, moral approval and pleasure that arises from the approval. Love of the rational kind is therefore revealed when we learn to love something or someone, and when love is composed essentially of reason-responsive attitudes. In such cases, one loves an object, but one would be hard pressed to say one is *in love* with the object.

Hybrid Love

One might love an object in the rational way, and then wake up one day to find one really is in love with it. Rational love, that is, can come to be accompanied with non or a-rational love, and hence become a hybrid kind of love. A spouse in an arranged marriage, for instance, might love his spouse in a rational way, responding, say, to the spouse's beauty and intelligence. And one day the spouse may realize the love has developed into a more a-rational sort, realizing one is *in love* with the other.

And the opposite is also possible: a-rational love can turn into hybrid love as well.

Human beings are typically reason-responsive agents; they tend to submit any kind of attitude or belief to evaluation. They are also concerned about what they should do, feel, desire or believe. Any kind of attitude, therefore, is one humans are susceptible to evaluate and to submit to normative considerations. I might be moved by hunger—a subjective, a-rational desire—to eat a red berry. But I have learned that red berries are not always good for me. They might, in fact, be poisonous. I therefore ignore or try to give up this desire. I might also be moved by hunger to eat this wonderful fresh salad, and I might be moved at the same time by the thought that this salad is healthy and good for me, and think that my subjective desire is valuable. Reason meddles with all our motives and attitudes. Hence, as adults we are also careful with our loves. We learn to understand that love renders us vulnerable, fragile, and has a great effect on whole courses of action. We therefore think about whether the object of our love is, for example, respectful, faithful or loves us in return, and we then find that reasons endorse or disfavor our love.

These kinds of reason are extrinsic to love; they are reasons we would have and be motivated by even if we did not love. But sometimes love becomes rational in a deeper sense: sometimes love is a response to reasons we have because we love. All types of love of rational, adult human beings are susceptible to develop into reason-responsive love, because, as Jollimore correctly shows, love is a way of seeing what is good in the other. Because they love, lovers see valuable qualities in the beloved that others do not see. For instance, Jollimore notices that someone who sees a child misbehaving might react by saying “what a brat!” The child's parent, however, will be moved by a thought like “this is what happens when she skips her nap” (Jollimore 2017: 7). People see objects in different ways. The art critic who appreciates a painting notices things in the painting that others simply do not see. Lovers also tend to see things in the beloved that others do not see. It's not that love is blind, or that lovers see things that are not there. Rather, Jollimore observes that lovers “see in a way that is interested and actively engaged”; they see “the best version of a person that is consistent with the available evidence” (ibid.: 6). If Jollimore is correct on this point, and I believe he is, then love is responsive to reasons that one grasps *because* one loves. Love is therefore rational in this sense as well.

Both a-rational love and rational love are therefore possible human experiences. And both may occur independently of the other. In most cases, however, even if the beginning of love is

often a-rational, typical enduring human loves are generally both rational and a-rational. Both types of love are often conjoined and form a deeper, wider, more complex phenomenon. A-rational love that is embraced and judged appropriate in light of reasons that are either external or internal to love quickly merges with normative desires and emotions. Similarly, rational love that occurs, for instance, in arranged marriages where spouses admire each other might, perhaps unexpectedly, turn into a more hybrid sort of love. Spouses here would then say that they loved the other and then one day realized they were *in* love. In other cases, rational love never merges with a-rational love, and will thus be characterized more as a type of approval or respect. I find such cases, where rational love is the main component of one's love relationship, regrettable. The best kind of love, I surmise, is the one that is composed of both rational and a-rational loves. Defending this last claim, however, is a task I leave for another paper.¹¹

Notes

- 1 The topic might be enlarged to include love of non-human objects such as ideals, animals, countries, sports, communities, etc. but I focus on human loves in this paper. Love of God (love for God, or God's love for us) is also a topic I leave for other papers.
- 2 Katrien Schaubroeck discusses these kinds of reasons or responsibilities in her chapter of this volume. For more on essential characteristics of love see Nozick 1989.
- 3 Kyla Ebels-Duggan argues that love is not essentially a desire for the beloved's well-being. Rather, she writes, "love directs us to share in each other's ends" (Ebels-Duggan 2008: 156). I believe sharing ends is an essential part of a committed romantic relationship, but not of all types of love (I have many friends whom I love despite the fact that we do not share ends).
- 4 In this chapter, I will use "reasons for action" or "practical reasons" as umbrella terms that include reasons for desires, emotions, attitudes and actions, and they are distinguished from reasons for beliefs or reasons for knowing something.
- 5 For more about normative reasons and different views about the nature, source and role of these reasons, see Engels Kroeker and Schaubroeck 2017: viii.
- 6 See also Protasi 2016 for another version of the quality view.
- 7 David Velleman defends a view that is difficult to classify, but that is clearly rationalist (Velleman 1999). According to Velleman, love responds to the value of the rational self of the beloved, as it is revealed in the beloved's empirical persona. Love, for Velleman, is thus reason-responsive but it responds not to some quality but to a rational self. The objection here is that his view is problematic for those beloveds who are not yet moral individuals, or whose rational will is impaired or non-existent (such as small infants, the mentally ill, etc.).
- 8 These objections are presented and discussed in various places; see for instance Stump 2006: 25–26; Kolodny 2003: 140–141; Nozick 1989: 422–423; Jollimore 2017: 3.
- 9 R. Jay Wallace also holds a relationship view (Wallace 2012: 187).
- 10 I do not think, however, that what a pedophile feels for a child, for instance, is valuable. In fact, one essential component of love is the desire for the good of the beloved, and the attempt to bring it about. Pedophiles, etc. do not act for the good of the object, and hence actually do not love at all. Other cases are more ambivalent, when typical love attitudes are present at the same time as non-loving attitudes. The value of love will then depend on the balance between these.
- 11 I want to thank Katrien Schaubroeck and Adrienne Martin for their valuable suggestions. I also thank participants of the Antwerp Ethics Research Seminar (Lotte Spreeuwenberg, Delphine Jacobs, Kristien Hens, Pieter Gilles and Henk van Gils) and my students of the various seminars I taught on love and reasons for their questions and comments.

References

- Abramson, K. and Leite, A. (2011) "Love as a Reactive Emotion," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 61(245): 673–699.
- Baier, A. (1982) "Caring about Caring: A Reply to Frankfurt," *Synthese* 53(2): 273–290.
- Ebels-Duggan, K. (2008) "Against Beneficence: A Normative Account of Love," *Ethics* 119(1): 142–170.

- Frankfurt, H. (2004) *The Reasons of Love*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hurka, T. (2017) "Love and Reasons, the Many Relationships." In E. Engels Kroeker and K. Schaubroeck, eds., *Love, Reason and Morality*. London: Routledge: 163–180.
- Jollimore, T. (2017) "Love: The Vision View." In E. Engels Kroeker and K. Schaubroeck, eds., *Love, Reason and Morality*. London: Routledge: 1–19.
- Keller, S. (2000) "How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Properties," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 37(2): 163–173.
- Kolodny, N. (2003) "Love as Valuing a Relationship," *Philosophical Review* 112(2): 135–189.
- Kroeker, E. and Schaubroeck, K. (2017) *Love, Reason and Morality*. London: Routledge.
- Martin, A. (2015) "Love, Incorporated," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 18(4): 691–702.
- Nozick, R. (1989) "Love's Bond." In *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations*. New York: Simon & Schuster: 68–86.
- Protasi, S. (2016) "Loving People for Who They Are (Even When They Don't Love You Back)," *European Journal of Philosophy* 24(1): 214–234.
- Soble, A. (2005) "Critical Review of *The Reasons of Love*," *Essays in Philosophy* 6(1), <http://commons.pacificu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1200&context=eip>, accessed January 26, 2017.
- Stump, E. (2006) "Love, by All Accounts," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 80(2): 25–43.
- Velleman, David (1999) "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109: 338–374.
- Wallace, R. Jay (2012) "Duties of Love," *Proceedings of the Aristotelean Society*, Supp Volume 86.1: 175–198.
- Wolf, S. (2002) "The True, the Good, and the Lovable: Frankfurt's Avoidance of Objectivity." In S. Buss and L. Overton, eds., *Contours of Agency: Essays on Themes from Harry Frankfurt*. Essays in Philosophy. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T.: 227–244.
- Zangwill, Nick (2013) "Love: Gloriously Amoral and Arational," *Philosophical Explorations* 16.3: 298–314.

24

REASONS OF LOVE

Katrien Schaubroeck

Introduction

Consider the following examples:

- 1 *The friend*: “We have spent our summers at the Costa del Sol for years. I don’t care so much for a beach holiday but because it makes her happy, I enjoy it too.”
- 2 *The sister*: “I have to cancel the meeting, I am sorry, my sister just called and she urgently needs me.”
- 3 *The parent*: “One does not need to wait for a special occasion, I like to buy my child a little something now and then, just because I know he loves presents.”
- 4 *The husband*: “Of course I rescued her and not the other person in the water. She is my wife!”
- 5 *The mother*: “I think my son is guilty of the crime he is accused of, but I don’t want him in jail, so I hide him from the police.”

These self-reports refer to reasons for an action performed or a choice made. The kind of reasons invoked can be singled out as reasons of love, the nature and authority of which will be subject of this chapter. I use love in a broad sense, encompassing at least friendship, love between family members and romantic love. Reasons of love can recommend many different kinds of actions, from mundane daily gifts to life-saving heroic feats. The reasons of love that have preoccupied philosophers most are the ones that seem to intrude in the moral domain. Sometimes reasons of love provoke an action that clearly violates a moral norm, like case 5 illustrates. But in fact, as we will see, some philosophers hold that even in cases 1 to 4 the reasons of love conflict with the demands of morality. In order to assess the conflict between love and morality, we need to ask at least two questions: are reasons of love somehow different in nature from moral reasons? And if they are, is it possible that one kind of reason systematically or sometimes trumps the other kind? I will use these questions to identify two positions in the debate on reasons of love. The reductionists (as I call them) answer the first question negatively, from which it follows that reasons of love can never trump reasons of morality because they are not of a different, competing kind. What I call separatists start from a positive answer to the second question, from which they infer that love must be thought of as the source of a distinct type of reasons, irreducible to moral reasons.¹

Before spelling out these substantive disagreements I should clarify some terminological matters. First, the locution “reasons of love” is not a firm, well-coined term. Some philosophers use reasons *of* love and reasons *for* love interchangeably. Or they prefer to talk about reasons of intimacy (Jeske 2017) or special obligations (Jeske 2014) when discussing the normative phenomenon illustrated with the five examples above. I will stick to the term “reasons of love” and I will take it to refer to *normative reasons for action that a person has in virtue of loving someone or something*.² This definition remains neutral about the ultimate ground of those reasons. As we will see, some philosophers think that reasons of love are not *sui generis*, and should be considered a subcategory within a broader and uncontroversial class of reasons, namely those generated by moral principles. For them, reasons of love are moral reasons that arise under certain circumstances defined by love. Other philosophers, however, think that love provides more than circumstances, and really is a source of reasons to be distinguished from morality as a source of reasons. According to these philosophers, the fact that one loves someone is not only a condition that triggers the application of general normative principles; love itself is the source of the reasons. In other words, it is not just that Romeo’s reason for buying Julio an expensive gift depends on his love, it is also the case that the attitude of love is in itself sufficient to explain why this reason comes about. Whether reasons of love are reducible to moral reasons or not is an important question. My use of the term “the reasons of love” should not be seen as begging the question by favoring one side in the debate over the other.

The discussion on love’s connection to reasons is, as such, a fairly recent phenomenon in analytic philosophy (the publication of Harry Frankfurt’s book *The Reasons of Love* in 2004 is an important marker). Yet for a long time in history moral philosophers, especially of the consequentialist school, have engaged with reasons of love as a problem for their theory. Well known is the so-called *nearest and dearest objection* to consequentialism, which I discuss in the first section. I will summarize a line of thought running from Sidgwick to Railton that can serve as a background and historical context for a contemporary debate between what I call reductionists and separatists. In the second section I will explain the separatist view, which holds that reasons of love can trump moral reasons. The third section focuses on the reductionist approach to reasons of love, according to which the reasons of love are to be found among moral reasons. In the final section I offer an alternative view that, unlike reductionism, honors the partiality inherent to reasons of love while avoiding the exaggerated and rigid opposition between love and morality that motivates separatism.

A Well-Known Problem for Consequentialism

Reasons of love pose a problem to moral theories. Separatism and reductionism are ways of solving the problem, as will be explained in the second and third sections. In order to have a better grasp of the problem, it helps to situate it in a discussion about the demandingness of morality, which has mainly preoccupied moral consequentialists. The consequentialists I will discuss in this section are not interested in the phenomenon of reasons of love as such, and they do not analyze this phenomenon directly as the reductionists and the separatists do. Rather their goal is to find ways to secure morality’s authority when it is challenged by other forceful sources of reasons, such as love but also self-interest.

Henry Sidgwick’s “dualism of practical reason” structured a large part of the 20th-century debate on normativity and morality. The dualism refers to Sidgwick’s concern about whether self-interested reasons and moral duty always coincide, and, if they don’t, what a rational agent should do. Note that this dual picture completely ignores the possibility of a third source of reasons besides self-interest and morality, such as love. Not only does it fail to recognize the

distinct normative significance of love, it also entails that it is *irrational* to act out of love if the action does not serve either morality or self-interest. Moreover, on the consequentialist understanding of morality, endorsed by Sidgwick, it is clear that the friend in case 1 does something *immoral* in pleasing his friend. After all, the money spent on a trip to the Costa del Sol could have been used to generate far more value than the value that consists in the happiness of two friends. The point generalizes: by consequentialism's lights it seems that we always act immorally when we are led by reasons of love. *The nearest and dearest objection* against consequentialism considers this implication of the theory a problem. The charge is that consequentialism presents us with a conception of morality's demands that is too alienating for normal human beings to accept.

Some consequentialists bite the bullet and hold that indeed it is not right to spend money on an occasional present for one's child while people are starving (case 3). Other consequentialists have tried to make their theory more attuned to common sense. They argue that consequentialism does not demand that we cease to favor our loved ones, since many of the loving acts that we perform are allowed from the moral perspective of an *indirect* consequentialism. Peter Railton (1984) has refuted the nearest and dearest objection along these latter lines. I will explain his solution in more detail because it is a good illustration of the difficulties one can get in when one tries to make room for love's reasons within the moral domain. Separatists have detected these difficulties and reject a solution along Railton's lines. However, it is important to note that Railton does not take a stance on the nature of reasons of love, and he therefore does not qualify as what I call a reductionist either.

Not finding value maximization the most important thing on earth can have overall good moral effects, argues Railton; he illustrates this observation with the example of Juan and Linda. This couple is in a commuting marriage, and upon learning that Linda is very sad, Juan wonders whether he should make an unplanned visit to his wife, thereby using a lot of time, energy and other resources that could also be devoted to other projects. Railton argues that if we take into account the whole of Juan's actions over the course of his life, we might come to see that acting on a loving disposition will cause Juan, overall, to do more good in life than he would produce were he to calculate the outcomes of every single action option (1984: 159). Thus, buying expensive presents for your children or pleasing your friend with a beach holiday can be morally permissible (as the result of a value-maximizing disposition) even if the isolated acts do not seem to maximize value from your deliberative perspective.

Note that, on Railton's picture, the reasons for why buying one's child a present is morally permissible *do not* appear in the agent's own deliberation process about what he should do, nor in the motives he will cite upon being asked why he bought the gift. Juan does not reflect on whether his loving disposition will have overall good effects. The moral goodness of his loving disposition and characteristic actions is, on the indirect consequentialist reading, independent of his personal reasons for flying to his wife. Michael Stocker has famously argued that this incongruence between justification and motivation is a fatal flaw of modern moral theories like consequentialism and Kantian deontology. In "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories" (1976) Stocker argues that on a consequentialist as well as on a deontological conception of the moral good, the reason for which your action is good *cannot* be the reason for why you do it in the case of actions of love because that would undermine their meaning as a loving act. He cites the example of a person paying his ill friend a visit in the hospital. Imagine this person waves his hand upon being thanked for the visit, saying that he was just doing his duty. And imagine that he meant it, that he only visited his friend because he thought it was his duty. Surely, Stocker concludes, this would be disconcerting to the ill friend in bed, and the visit would not be seen as a sign of friendship anymore, quite to the contrary. On Railton's indirect consequentialist picture, the moral agent is not expected to cite the moral justification as a motive, but that does

not avoid the problem for Stocker: Railton's moral theory encourages a schizophrenic schism between motives and justifications. This is a problem, Stocker clarifies, because harmony between our reasons and our motives, or between the reasons that justify our actions and the reasons for which we act, is of great importance for a meaningful life. Stocker is naturally driven toward a defense of separatism, the view according to which it can be justified to disregard morality and to follow one's heart, because love is itself a source of reasons that can compete with moral reasons. Confronted with the near and dear objection, Railton assumes that love is the victim in need of help and offers a way to recover love's reasons. But why could we not turn the table, and ask what saves morality from the demands of love? This question lies at the roots of separatism and was inspired by a thought experiment by Bernard Williams, as I will explain in the next section.

Love Versus Morality: Against the Overridingness Thesis

"The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories" was published in 1976. There must have been something in the air, because the same year Bernard Williams published an article that was not only equally agenda-setting as Stocker's but also setting more or less the same agenda. In "Persons, Character and Morality" Williams wonders whether morality should be accorded absolute priority compared to other important ideals or values that agents have. He asks us to imagine a man who sees two people on the verge of drowning—one of whom is his beloved wife and the other a stranger—and who believes he can only save one. Imagine the man thinks to himself: "One of them is my wife and it is permissible in these situations to save one's wife" before rescuing her. Would we not be shocked to learn this? Williams accuses the man of having "one thought too many": we (and certainly the wife) would hope that the motivating thought is "that is my wife" (full stop). Worries about impersonal justification seem inappropriate in this situation and additionally, according to Williams, they reveal the deficiency of the love relationship.

There have been responses to Williams' article that flat-out deny that there is anything shocking, let alone wrong, about a husband who would consult morality in such a difficult situation. Thomas Nagel, for example, explains that moral concerns sometimes only become salient after the deed, but that it does not mean (quite to the contrary) that morality was not also relevant at the time of acting:

The man who plunges into the waves to save his wife will not have Kantian or rule-utilitarian arguments running through his head, but that need not prevent him from having something to say in retrospect, if only to himself, that justifies not having done anything to inhibit the natural impulse of extreme partiality.

(Nagel 1999: 170)

Nagel's response seems to me to miss the point. He takes Williams to be making a statement about normative *psychology* as if his criticism of deontology and consequentialism was limited to the statement that these moral theories lead to a psychologically unattractive picture of the moral mind. I take Williams to make a point not about psychology but about normativity.³ He is interested in the foundation of reasons for action, and he wonders why morality should always have the last or decisive word in conflict-situations. He takes there to be an intrinsic conflict between the demands of love and the demands of morality, which is not reducible to a momentary conflict of psychologically incompatible states of mind. On this separatist view of love and morality, loving relationships imply a form of partiality that is simply incompatible with the

moral standpoint. In other words, the reasons grounded in love are different and even opposed to reasons that moral concerns give rise to. Therefore, one cannot always be a good lover *and* a good moral agent, and more importantly, Williams adds that it can be rational to choose to be a good lover rather than a good moral agent. This latter claim comes down to a rejection of the *overridingness thesis*, which states that moral reasons systematically or necessarily override all other reasons, including reasons of love.

Williams is not the only one who has rejected the overridingness thesis. Usually the criticism starts from a daily life example, meant to show how removed the overridingness thesis is from common sense. Think of the mother hiding her son from the police, of a friend helping his innocent but unfortunate friend to move a body, of someone covering up her friend's unfaithful absence from home. These examples are meant to trigger the intuition that love can trump morality, or more precisely that it can be rational to do something immoral out of love. In explaining why that is so, the separatist views differ in interesting ways, although in a sense they all relate the normative force of love to the importance of self-preservation.

Susan Wolf (2012), for example, draws on Williams' concept of "categorical desires" to explain the normativity of love. Categorical desires are defined by Williams as desires that do not depend on one's prospect of being alive, but which rather support the will to stay alive and constitute the conditions for there being a future self that can have desires at all. For many people, the desires that are crucial to their lives being worth living are desires that connect them to their loved ones. Thus we can imagine the husband in our example having a categorical desire to share his life with his wife. Giving up on that desire would be like giving up on himself, and a fortiori on his capacity to act as a moral agent. Wolf summarizes Williams' point as the idea that

if a person has categorical desires ... then it will not make sense for him to be unconditionally committed to anything that would bind him in advance to acting in a way that would abandon or betray the object of that desire in certain contexts.

(2012: 88)

Applied to the context of conflicts between (family) love and morality, "it follows that [most people] will not commit to doing anything it takes to assure that their actions are morally permissible. Morality will not be more important than their families" (2012: 88). In Williams' and Wolf's opinion, love receives its normative force from the fact that it makes people's lives worth living, thus enabling moral and all other actions to be performed by keeping moral agents alive.

Another interesting and influential defense of what I call separatism is developed in a series of articles by Jeannette Kennett and Dean Cocking. According to their "drawing view of love," people in love relationships are disposed toward mutual direction by one another and interpretation of one another. The image of friends or lovers influencing one another in their actions, and in their interpretations of the world and themselves, strikes me as very plausible and rather uncontroversial. Interestingly, Kennett and Cocking infer from this view of love that the overridingness thesis must be false. The openness toward being influenced by another person is so essential to love that excluding the possibility that one might do something immoral in being directed by a friend's needs or wishes comes down to hampering the friendship from the start. Taking up a friendship in effect involves taking a risk. Nor is it easy to break up a friendship or a romantic relationship at the moment the danger becomes real, because intimate relationships constitute us as agents. On Cocking and Kennett's relational view of the self and drawing view of love, it may be rational to act as love demands even if we thereby contradict morality, since values like self-preservation and the good of friendship justify these acts of love.

Love Versus Morality: Morality Is Everywhere

Separatists wonder why it should be thought that morality leads us in all our doings. An answer along Kantian lines is that there is no alternative. Brook Sadler (2006) provides a clear defense of this line of thinking. In a nutshell, she argues that although

[l]ove and friendship do require us to act out of concern for the particular person who is the friend or beloved ... modern moral notions of respect, duty, and obligation can help us to determine just how to do this.

(2006: 248)

Ethical theories provide us with the necessary conceptual resources for being able to sustain a loving relationship, Sadler thinks. She exposes a false, and for various reasons unattractive, conception of love and friendship in the reasoning of separatists (Stocker is her target). They seem to construe love and friendship as well-defined social roles with well-defined expectations, which makes the rules of friendship implausibly dependent on contingent social norms and which is moreover false to our experience. We only need to imagine times where we are uncertain about how to act with regard to a friend or beloved to realize that we naturally engage in moral deliberation in order to figure it out. These situations make clear what is in fact always the case, thinks Sadler: love sets the stage for one's action, but moral deliberation provides the reason.

Hence it is not surprising that Sadler doesn't see anything wrong in a man who'd visit his ill friend out of duty, nor with the husband who'd let his actions towards his wife be ruled by moral reflection. If anything, these two imaginary agents ought to be admired, thinks Sadler, because "they do not blindly trust that love and friendship can be sustained effortlessly, merely by referring to socially formed roles and expectations, habituated responses, or unexamined feelings" (2006: 253). Although Sadler does not make it explicit, it follows from her argument that actions performed out of true admirable love cannot be immoral. The motivating idea is that morality should not only be seen as setting limits to what we are allowed to do from the outside. Morality also works from the inside, providing input that enables us to think and deliberate about what the proper course of action would be. For Sadler reasons of love cannot be immoral because reasons of love, like all other practical reasons, have gone through a moral filter. Sadler qualifies as a reductionist about reasons of love, because she resists the idea that love would be a self-standing source of normative reasons and she denies that love could trump morality. For her, reasons of love are not *sui generis*, because they are substantially informed by moral principles.

The explicit claim that reasons of love *are* in fact moral reasons can be found in Michael Smith (2017). He explains that reasons for action that we have in virtue of loving someone can never trump reasons that we have in virtue of standing in a moral relationship to one another, because the reasons of love derive from moral principles. In effect, reasons of love are moral reasons in disguise.⁴ Take case 2, for example. When my sister calls me in despair, I feel obliged to help her and break my promise toward colleagues. What moves me is misleadingly called a reason of love, Smith would say. In fact, the reason derives from a general moral principle that says that one should fulfill reasonable expectations created. The principle that one should always fulfill reasonable expectations that one created will apply more often in my dealings with my sister than with a stranger, but it is the same *moral* principle that guides our interactions with rational agents, friends and strangers alike.

Reducing the reasons of love to moral reasons hardly alleviates Williams' worry. His example of the drowning wife was meant to shed doubt on the assumption that one ought to treat a

beloved in accordance with morality. The reply that reasons of love are actually moral reasons in disguise does not make things better from the separatist point of view. Moreover, don't we lose the meaning of a loving act, the partiality that is inherent to love, when we interpret an act of love as an instantiation of a general moral principle? Do I really understand my own decision to help my sister as derived from the general moral principle that I should fulfill expectations created? And what about conflict cases, where both my colleagues and my sister expect something of me? Or when both my wife and the stranger in the water have contradicting expectations of me? Probably second-order expectations could be invoked, like the expectation that people will meet the expectations of their sister in need rather than the expectations of colleagues, but it is not clear what could ground this expectation but a personal experience with the requirements of love. If that is the case, moral principles are not the ultimate basis for our deliberations; rather our experience with love is. That love may be more fundamental than morality is a suggestion I want to explore in the next section. It will lead to an alternative to both separatism and reductionism.

Beyond the Conflict

Let us take stock and return to the two main questions that structure the debate. One question is: is there an essential conflict between reasons of love and moral reasons? The second question is: if there is an intrinsic conflict, can reasons of love trump moral reasons? Philosophers side in two camps. The reductionists answer the first question negatively. There is no conflict because reasons of love are also moral in nature. Hence the second question does not arise. Separatists, on the other side, start from an affirmative answer to the second question. It follows that there is always the in-principle possibility of a conflict between reasons of love and moral reasons. Separating the domain of love from the domain of morality follows logically from a rejection of the overridingness thesis.

Despite the deep waters between them, separatists and reductionists have something in common: they start out from a clear, determinate view of what morality requires, and they consider impartiality to be a key feature of morality. While the two camps in the debate work with a fixed idea of what morality is, I wonder why we could not turn certainties upside down and interpret love as a guide to explore morality. Let us look at case 4 again. The example is at the heart of a classic paper by Susan Wolf, "Morality and Partiality," in which she argues that, even on a moderate understanding of impartiality, reasons of love cannot always be subsumed under a moral umbrella. According to a moderate understanding of impartiality (which Wolf contrasts with and prefers over an extreme form of impartiality which need not concern us here), a moral person acts only in ways she believes any reasonable person would allow, and she holds herself to the same standards that she expects of others. Some indeterminacy is welcomed and unavoidable, thinks Wolf. She gives the example of someone who lets a friend sneak through the turnstile as he collects tickets for a Bruce Springsteen concert (1992: 251). Wolf herself finds this permissible: she could imagine doing this herself while allowing others to do the same under the same circumstances (that is, as long as they only do it once, and for a very good friend who could not afford a ticket etcetera). But when it comes to the mother who hides her son from the police, Wolf seems to think that there is no way to describe this action as morally permissible and universalizable. Yet, it seems to me that one could imagine that the mother in the example allows other mothers to do exactly the same, meeting the standard of moderate impartiality. Wolf does not consider this possibility because she takes the more important point to be that the mother isn't worried about morality or universalizability at all.

After all, if the meaning of one's life and one's very identity is bound up with someone as deeply as a mother's life is characteristically tied to her son's, why should the dictates of impartial morality be regarded as decisive?

(1992: 253)

In some cases, Wolf wants to show, morality is just not that important, and in these cases acting immorally can be the rational thing to do.

I agree that in the described case love offers very strong reasons, but when we spell out those reasons in more detail we find out some features of those reasons that suggest an affinity rather than a clear-cut opposition between love and morality. For example, we realize that reasons of love cannot be of an egoistic nature such as that the mother cannot bear the thought of being home alone. In order for the mother's decision to count as an act of love, she must do it out of conviction that she is helping her son, and doing it for his sake. In this way, trying to understand the example's intuitive appeal reveals that the motive of love bears similarity to the motive of respect and concern for someone's well-being that we are used to characterize as moral motives.

An important reason why Wolf prefers to characterize the mother's dilemma as a square conflict between morality on one side and the demands of love on the other, rather than a dilemma in which different, uncategorizable concerns compete, suggests itself upon reflection on Wolf's entire oeuvre: perhaps she is not open to the idea that an action out of love can coincide with a moral action because of her strict and strained conception of moral agency, as it is most clearly depicted in her article "Moral Saints" (1982). Wolf describes moral saints as irritating, obsessive and bland. But, as Vanessa Carbonell has argued convincingly, what makes the characters in Wolf's article irritating is that they care "more about the description of their actions as right than about the right-making features of the actions themselves" (Carbonell 2009: 395). Real-life moral saints, however, are not worried about, let alone obsessed by, their moral reputation, nor about the moral goodness of their concern. Rather they are concerned about the poor, the sick, the downtrodden, to which they direct their energy and resources spontaneously. Carbonell writes:

[Wolf] seems to think that a moral saint must be motivated by "morality itself" *under that description*, as an abstract concept, rather than being motivated directly by those things in the world that the concept picks out, like the relief of suffering.

(2009: 390)

This analysis of "Moral Saints" as based on a failure to distinguish between motivation *de dicto* from motivation *de re* seems right. More importantly, Wolf owns up to it when she, in her later article on the one thought too many example, explains why she would not want herself or her husband to be unconditionally committed to morality (or, to be moral saints):

[T]he hope that a person not be absolutely and unconditionally committed to morality is not the same as, nor does it imply a hope that, he sometimes behaves immorally. It is no part of my wish that my husband or I ever do anything morally impermissible. My objection or distaste is for the idea of an absolute, unconditional *commitment* to morality, not with the actions that such a commitment would command.

(Wolf 2012: 80)

Thus when Wolf says that morality need not be the most important thing in life, and that an unconditional commitment to morality is not rational, she thinks of the unattractiveness of

someone who commits himself/herself to moral principles rather than to the morally good actions themselves. The equation of moral attitudes with moralistic attitudes (as I would call this commitment to a moral ideal qua moral ideal) drives her resistance against moral saints as well as her admiration for an agent who places love above morality.

Not only Wolf but all the participants in the debate mentioned so far work with a fixed idea of what morality is about, and they assume that a conception of morality can be clear and complete before love enters the scene. Michael Smith knows what moral principles are such that loving actions fall under them; for Sadler, morality offers the secure and firm guidance that lovers need, since the requirements of love can be indeterminate or vague. Separatists give more credit to love, but even they work with a fixed view of what moral actions are such that they are positive that actions justified by love like the actions of the hiding mother or the husband-savior are immoral.

But could we not interpret the cases of the mother and the husband as challenges to what morality requires? Could we not see these cases as possibly leading us *toward* morality rather than away from it? Could love and the reasons it gives rise to not be seen as a guide to explore morality and its complexity, rather than as an enemy of it? In exploring this alternative to separatism and reductionism, I take my lead from three philosophers who have written about love from different perspectives: Jay Wallace, Troy Jollimore and Raymond Gaita.

In "Duties of Love" Wallace attacks the reductionist account of duties of love (accounts that interpret duties of love as moral duties in disguise), which he claims to be on unstable grounds. He writes:

The reductionist supposes that we might be able to make sense of moral obligations, even if there are no non-derivative duties of love. It is not really clear, however, that we can understand the notion of obligation if we are prepared to deny that there can be obligations that arise directly from our relationships with those we love.

(2012: 192)

Wallace believes that relationships of love provide the paradigmatic understanding of the notion of obligation, without which moral obligations cannot be understood. His defense depends on the thought that the very notion of being under an obligation requires a relational understanding. In order to accept the idea that one's agency can be legitimately constrained by obligations, we must think of obligations as conceptually connected to claims that other people have on us. And since relationships of love are the most familiar and extensive contexts for the application of constraint by other people's claims, they provide the most compelling examples of relational obligations.

Duties of love cannot be moral duties in disguise, Wallace's argument goes, because we cannot have a firm grip on the concept of moral obligation without knowing love. I find Wallace's assumption that we need experience with love in order to know what moral obligations (in their form of relational obligations) are very intuitive. But I am not sure that Wallace's explanation for why that is so goes to the heart of the matter. Wallace thinks that *duty* is the connecting factor between love and morality. But clearly what he says also applies to *reasons* of love. The relationship between lovers in virtue of which they have certain responsibilities toward one another is also the source of reasons which we might not want to call duties. The love for his friend does not particularly oblige the person in case 1 to go to the Costa del Sol, but love is the source of a (strong) reason to do so. The thoughtful parent in case 3 does not have a duty to buy presents for his child, but he does experience love as the source of his *reasons* for doing so. Love provides us with the experience of the enjoyment of doing something for the sake of another

person. It is this experience rather than the experience of being under a duty that makes love, in my eyes, an ally or maybe even a forerunner rather than an enemy of morality. I therefore want to suggest an alternative explanation of the connection between love and morality. There is a minimal story and a full-fledged story. The minimal story says that love is an enabling condition of moral agency, and I will invoke Troy Jollimore to explain this. On the full-fledged story, that I can only hint at by summarizing a striking passage from Raymond Gaita's *A Common Humanity*, love is not only the beginning but also the end that moral agents strive at.

In his exposition of the "vision theory of love" (according to which love instantiates a way of looking at the world: a way of seeing another person as special, unique and valuable, while at the same time seeing the world from his or her point of view) Troy Jollimore draws attention to the similarity between the standpoint of love and the standpoint of morality. He writes: "The sort of focused and devoted attention involved in love is a profoundly moral phenomenon insofar as it both enables and takes as its goal the full, unrestricted recognition of a human individual" (2011: 170). He illustrates the claim with a reflection on the significance of grief. The death of each person is a deep and tragic loss, but it is only when a loved one dies that we respond with the full recognition of what has happened. If we felt the magnitude of the loss every time someone died, we could not function anymore. Yet the reality of these psychological limits should not blind us from the reality of the moral value of every individual's life. Love channels our attention to the unique value of a person and thus "opens a window on reality, allowing us to experience and to feel that from which we are ordinarily alienated, and thus, protected" (2011: 170). I call love an enabling condition of morality in the sense that it provides a firm experience with recognizing the individuality of another being, to be repeated in other less obvious contexts. For this minimal story to work it is not necessary that one should love someone before one is able to treat him in a morally correct way. That would be too demanding. The point is more general and connects capacities rather than particular cases: without the experience of love we would not know what morality is about, let alone be able to behave morally.

The full-fledged story has it that love is not only the beginning but also the end of morality. Love is the ideal that we should strive for when interacting with other people. We can find an evocation of the full-fledged story in Raymond Gaita's monograph *A Common Humanity*, where he relates an episode from his own time as a nurse in a psychiatric clinic. The patients at the hospital were judged to be incurable and were so severely afflicted that their human value was almost invisible. They had ceased to receive visits from friends, spouses, children and even parents; often they were treated brutally by the psychiatrists and the nurses. A small number of psychiatrists, however, worked devotedly to improve their condition, and they spoke "against all appearances, of the inalienable dignity of even those patients." One day a nun came to the ward, and everything in her demeanor toward the patients, writes Gaita,

the way she spoke to them, her facial expressions, the inflexions of her body—contrasted with and showed up the behaviour of those noble psychiatrists. She showed that they were, despite their best efforts, condescending, as I too had been. She thereby revealed that even such patients were, as the psychiatrists and I had sincerely and generously professed, the equals of those who wanted to help them; but she also revealed that in our hearts we did not believe this.

(2002: 18–19)

The nun displayed love toward fellow human beings who were not only complete strangers but also almost non-recognizable as fellow human beings—in other words, beings that were very hard to love. Gaita sees in this unconditional love the mark of the saint, although I don't think

that the religious connotation is necessary. There is something morally superior in these extraordinary kind and considerate reactions, as they emanate from a vision of other people as unique individuals worthy of love. It is an ideal for all of us, I'd like to think, and not only a possibility for the faithful among us.

Conclusion

I believe that the arguments by Wallace, Jollimore and Gaita, even in the very short versions presented, show, each in their own way, that the conflict between love and morality is not as structural and deep as Williams and Wolf think. Nor does bridging the gap require moralizing the reasons of love like Smith and Sadler do. When the mother wants to help her guilty son, she does not present this action under the category of "things that my son can reasonably expect from me." There are no universal principles guiding her. She acts out of personalized concern for this particular individual whom she loves. Yet, I do not see why that, in itself, disqualifies her action as bearing any moral significance or value. What I would expect from a loving mother is that she realizes that her son's victim was someone's beloved too, that the victim's mother is in pain and deserves justice. If she realizes that, but also believes that her son will suffer and might not have a fair trial (for example), it may be rational of her to hide him from the police, the moral permissibility of which can be a matter for discussion. But it is important to recognize that her love need not prevent her from taking up the moral standpoint but might precisely move her toward it. That love is compatible with morality and even supportive of it strikes me as obvious when we consider the other key example we have been talking about (case 4). Wolf (2012) confesses that she wants her husband not to be concerned about morality when he has the choice between doing what is morally right and rescuing her. If I think about my own preference, I also want a husband who saves me, and who does not have to deliberate about that, but, in an important addition to Wolf's expectations, I would also want my husband to be sad and deeply sorry that the situation was such that he could not also save the other person who is someone else's beloved.

Does it follow from my preference that I think morality can be overridden by love? I don't think so, insofar as the overridingness thesis assumes a clear-cut distinction between two types of reasons, or two types of attitudes. Of course there can be practical conflicts because of lack of time and lack of resources, but the attitudes in essence are akin. The position thus sketched is less vulnerable than separatism to the objection of egocentricity. Remember that Williams, Wolf, Kennett and Cocking hold that it can be rational to do something immoral because in some cases, doing what is morally required would result in a life void of meaning. The objection of egocentricity questions the assumed importance of sticking to our lives and our selves ("So what, if an agent would lose his identity by doing the right thing? Perhaps there is something wrong with this identity to start with!"). In my suggested alternative view what justifies an agent acting for reasons of love is not that he would otherwise lose his identity, but that without love he would not know what morality is about. It is because the husband knows how important his wife is that he realizes the enormous loss of the unfortunate partner of the person he was not able to save.⁵

Notes

- 1 I borrow the distinction from Jay Wallace (2012) although he does not use the term separatism. How he defines reductionism is slightly different from my definition in that he takes it to be a position about *duties* of love whereas I also apply it to reasons of love. This is how he describes reductionism about

- duties of love: “there are no genuine duties of love, only moral duties that people have to each other in virtue of certain generalizable features of their loving relationships” (2012: 175).
- 2 Note that I limit the scope to actions, although it is arguable that love also yields reasons to feel certain emotions or have certain beliefs. Keller (2007) and Jollimore (2011), for example, focus on the epistemological reasons grounded in love.
 - 3 I side with Wolf (2012) who writes in her interpretation of the Williams article: “I shall argue that the [one thought too many] passage should lead us to question not only the model of moral agency that would involve constant *attention* to the question of moral permissibility, it should lead us to question the model of moral agency that would require unconditional *commitment* to acting within the bounds of what morality permits” (2012: 75).
 - 4 To be precise, Smith believes that love gives rise to both desire-based reasons and respect-based reasons, of which only the latter are moral reasons. The reasons that interest us here qualify as respect-based reasons of love in Smith’s terminology.
 - 5 I would like to thank Sara Protasi, Esther Kroeker, Adrienne Martin and the participants of the Antwerp Ethics Research Seminar for their valuable feedback.

References

- Carbonell, Vanessa (2009) “What Moral Saints Look Like,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 39(3): 371–398.
- Cocking, Dean and Kennett, Jeanette (2000) “Friendship and Moral Danger,” *Journal of Philosophy* 97(5): 278–296.
- Frankfurt, Harry (2004) *The Reasons of Love*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gaita, Raymond (2002) *A Common Humanity: Thinking about Love and Truth and Justice*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Jeske, Diane (2014) “Special Obligations,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/special-obligations>.
- Jeske, Diane (2017) “The Rational Significance of Intimate Relationships,” in E. Engels Kroeker and K. Schaubroeck (eds.) *Love, Reason and Morality*, New York: Routledge, 75–92.
- Jollimore, Troy (2011) *Love’s Vision*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Keller, Simon (2007) *The Limits of Loyalty*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nagel, Thomas (1999) *Other Minds: Critical Essays 1969–1994*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Railton, Peter (1984) “Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 13(2): 134–171.
- Sadler, Brook (2006) “Love, Friendship, Morality,” *The Philosophical Forum* 37(3): 243–263.
- Smith, Michael (2017) “The What and Why of Love’s Reasons,” in E. Engels Kroeker and K. Schaubroeck (eds.) *Love, Reason and Morality*, New York: Routledge, 145–162.
- Stocker, Michael (1976) “The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories,” *Journal of Philosophy* 73: 453–466.
- Wallace, Jay (2012) “Duties of Love,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume LXXXVI*: 175–198.
- Williams, Bernard (1976) “Persons, Character and Morality,” reprinted in Williams B., *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, 1–20.
- Wolf, Susan (1982) “Moral Saints,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 79(8): 419–439.
- Wolf, Susan (1992) “Morality and Partiality,” *Philosophical Perspectives* 6: 243–259.
- Wolf, Susan (2012) “One Thought Too Many, Love, Morality and the Ordering of Commitment,” in Heuer U. and Lang G. (eds.) *Luck, Value, and Commitment: Themes From the Ethics of Bernard Williams*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 71–93.

LOVE AND AGENCY

Kyla Ebels-Duggan

Our ordinary talk reflects a deep tension in the way that we think about love. On the one hand, we regard love as an expression of our selves, and an especially important one. A person *is* a book lover. Love for one's children can be one of the most central organizing commitments of one's life. Many religious people take their love of God to be at the core of their identity. People understand or experience attacks on the things, people or ideals that they love as attacks on themselves. On this familiar way of thinking, loving is something that we do, something active.

On the other hand, we also think of love as something that happens to us, in the face of which we are passive and can be powerless. What we love is not up to us. We can't help loving who or what we do. We simply find ourselves loving what we love and must figure out what to do in the face of it. Talk of "falling in love" marks this strain of our thought. On this view, love isn't something that we do, but rather part of the circumstances in which we act.

While it's hard to see how to hold these two ways of thinking of love together, I argue that we must find some way of doing so.¹ I vindicate both aspects of our ordinary thought about love, arguing that there are good grounds for regarding it as an expression of agency, on the one hand, and as merely a feature of the circumstances in which we act, on the other. I will argue, first, that we must think of love as a contentful attitude that is attributable to its agent. Love is in this way like beliefs and intentions and unlike blood pressure and headaches, paradigms of states that occur in us but are not agential. Thus love is importantly an expression of our selves, not merely a state of our bodies. But in section II I argue that familiar ways of understanding agency would sort love into the category of things that happen to us, rather than things that we do. You cannot love at will, nor is love an attitude to which you could reason.

Love gets sorted as passive largely due to its dependence on experience of the beloved. To love someone or something, we must appreciate him, her or it directly, but experience is importantly passive; the way that we experience something is seemingly not up to us. Beliefs based on perception may seem to share this feature, but in section III I argue that even this analogy between love and belief fails. All beliefs are judgment sensitive in T.M. Scanlon's sense, but love is not: you cannot determine yourself to love someone or something just on the basis of your conviction that there is sufficient reason to do so. Love's dependence on experience is thus even deeper than that of perceptual beliefs, and this rules out another way in which we might have tried to understand our agency with respect to love.

In the last section, I argue that we cannot solve the puzzle of how to understand love merely by concatenating active and passive elements. In order to understand how such decomposable parts or aspects of love interact, we would need to address the very questions raised in earlier sections. I conclude that questions about the relationship of our agency to what we love are not superficial, but stem from deep tensions about the relationship between love and reasons.²

I Love as an Active Verb

Only by regarding love as active, as something that we do, an expression of our agency or our selves, can we make sense of many of the ways that it figures in our practical thought. First, in stark contrast to mere aspects of the circumstances in which a person finds herself, we take what she loves to reflect her character.³ That love has this significance is one point that Iris Murdoch makes with her famous case of the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in “The Idea of Perfection.”⁴ In opposition to a moral theory that limits ethical significance only to actions, Murdoch uses the case to press the point that how we regard or “see” one another also matters morally. The mother-in-law of her example *acts* impeccably throughout, but Murdoch imagines her attitude toward her daughter-in-law changing. Whereas she had thought of her as brash and childish, she now—reminding herself of vices of her own that could well distort her vision—determines to “look again.” This further consideration results in a revolution in her attitude toward her daughter-in-law, whom she comes to see as refreshingly simple, delightfully youthful and spontaneous. Murdoch calls the new attitude *more loving* and contends that it constitutes a morally significant improvement in the mother-in-law, an important ethical gain, even apart from any manifestation in action.

Murdoch is right that we make evaluative assessments of one another’s character partly on the basis of what we love. Moreover, this normative evaluation in virtue of our loves is not solely, or even primarily, a matter of evaluating *others*: It is central to our own self-understanding.⁵ If you think that what you love is of no real value, you may feel frustrated with or ashamed of yourself. By contrast, feeling or judging that your loves are well directed—that what you love is indeed the sort of value worthy of animating and organizing a human life—can be a source of deep satisfaction.

Someone might challenge the move from love properly bearing on our self-assessment in this way to the assertion that it is an expression of our activity. After all, we assess one another and ourselves according to all sorts of standards that make no reference to agency, for example standards of strength, attractiveness or intelligence. But this objection gets a grip only if we are prepared to affirm that attitudes of frustration, shame or satisfaction toward ourselves are equally warranted in the two kinds of cases, a claim that many will resist. One line of resistance would reiterate that assessments based on what we love are assessments of character, while these others are not of that kind.

Moreover, something further is true about love, and not of these other categories of self-evaluation: We can ask *why you love* what you do, where this is not merely a request for a causal account of how love came about, but something more akin to the Anscombian question, a justificatory query about why the attitude makes sense to you from the first person.⁶ There are many puzzles, and a large philosophical literature concerning what, if anything, would count as a good answer to this question.⁷ Taking no position on that for the moment, I am here advancing only the modest claim that raising a question of this sort about love is not a category mistake. A justificatory question is intelligible with respect to love, whereas it is not intelligible with respect to your headache or blood pressure, nor your strength or intelligence. These latter states are not of the sort that could be justified or warranted, make sense or fail to do so.

That we are in this way answerable for what we love shows that love cannot be assimilated to a category of mere bodily states to which we are subject or with which we are faced. On the same grounds, we cannot understand it as a brute preference or an arational disposition about which there is *nothing* more to say than “I just like it.”⁸ By hypothesis, it would be mistaken to raise a distinctively justificatory query about any such state. But love is not just a circumstance to which you may need to react but for which you do not need to answer. Love is apparently in some way properly responsive to reasons, or more to the point we should somehow be responsive to reasons in our loves.⁹ Unlike a passive bodily state, arational disposition, or a situation in which you find yourself, and like a belief or intention, loving something or someone is an attitude that is attributable *to you*, and so something that you are doing.

To say this is to go beyond the widely recognized point that *actions* taken on the basis of love are subject to justificatory query and something that we do. That’s true too, but notably love itself is subject to the justificatory query. Your agency is involved in what you love prior to and apart from whether and how you act on, or in light of, the love. Again, Murdoch’s example brings this out. The new attitude of the mother-in-law is more loving, but Murdoch also characterizes it as more just. That is, this attitude toward the daughter-in-law represents a more adequate response to the standards that govern it, and, again, does so apart from any change in actions.¹⁰

I have been arguing that love is an attitude ascribable to us as an expression of our agency. It can serve as a basis for self-assessment of our character, and is an attitude for which we can sensibly be asked to answer. It follows that loving something or someone must be an attitude with intelligible content, again more like a belief or an intention and not at all like a headache. In the analogous case of belief, the content is the proposition believed. Love’s content may not be propositional, but it must be contentful in some way that allows it to figure both as an object of justification and a basis for further evaluations and justifications.¹¹ Only some such content could make sense of the reactive attitudes that our loves call forth—the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with ourselves, and the approval or disapproval of others on the basis of what they love. Moreover, there must be some such content on which we reflect when faced with the justificatory question. The relevant *why* question can only ask after the justification of some contentful attitude.¹² So love is a rationally evaluable, contentful attitude, attributable to its agent. It is an attitude that the agent has, and an expression of her agency. Loving is something that we do.

II But I Can’t Help Falling in Love with You

In the last section I argued that we must think of love as active. Thinking of love as something that merely happens to us would require significant revisions in our practical thought and self-understanding, and it is far from clear how these revisions could succeed. But this leaves us with a deep puzzle, since, as I will argue in this section, familiar ways of understanding agency do not apply to love.

I set aside here metaphysical conceptions of agent causation, on which agency is a matter of spontaneous or ultimate control or being a first cause, requiring the ability to do other than what you in fact do in some absolute sense.¹³ I am not convinced that this conception of agency is coherent or that, if it can be made coherent, we have reason to care about whether we are agents in this sense.¹⁴ So, while it is difficult to see how agency, so conceived, could apply to love, I am not at all sure that we can make sense of its application to actions, intentions, or any other attitude either. In the remainder of this section I argue that more attractive and viable conceptions of agency, conceptions that *do* clearly characterize other aspects of our activity, do not apply to love.

First, what you love is clearly not under your *volitional control*. You have volitional control over that which you can do just by deciding or choosing to do it.¹⁵ Actions, especially what some philosophers call “basic actions” are the paradigmatic case of exercises of volitional control. In normal circumstances I can raise my hand, or point at you, or walk across the room if I so choose. I do not need to take any means or adopt any technique in order to bring it about that I engage in these actions. They are things that I do, not merely states of affairs that I produce. My choice to do them is sufficient, and they are in this sense under the direct control of my will.

Love is clearly not like this. You cannot love something or someone simply by deciding or choosing to do so. Sometimes, and to some extent, you can exercise a different, indirect, control over your love. You can adopt the aim of bringing it about that you love something or someone, and you can do *that*—adopt that aim—just by deciding to do so. You can then reason instrumentally about how to produce the state of affairs in which you love as planned. You might decide to spend more time with a person you aim to love, engage in meaningful conversations with her or stare into her eyes.¹⁶ Psychologists are learning more and more about which techniques of this kind can effectively stimulate love.¹⁷

But no matter how much insight we gain into these techniques, no matter how good we thereby get at *managing* our loves, this will never amount to volitional control over them. Deciding to (try to) *bring it about* that you love is not the same as *deciding to love*, even if you are quite reliable at realizing the former aim.¹⁸ In the former case the love remains an object of manipulation, something that you try to fashion in accord with your goal, not something that you are doing. Here you stand in the same relation to your own love as you would to that of third party whom you aim to influence. In fact, this sort of attempt to control your love is not different in kind from the manipulation of elements of your environment that are clearly no part of you or expression of your agency. You might, similarly, aim to rearrange the furniture in your office, bringing it about that the couch is near the window. Or you might decide to bring it about that you have a tattoo on your arm. Here too, you may be quite reliable in your ability to produce these states of affairs. But proficiency in positioning the couch or knowing how to go about getting that tattoo does not amount to either the couch or the tattoo being under your volitional control. You cannot affect these things by decision alone. Similarly, having effective techniques for generating attitudes of love is not the same as loving at will or volitional control.

That love is not under our volitional control explains some people’s resistance to the idea that love is something for which we are answerable, and so attributable to us. Several philosophers respond to this resistance by pointing to an analogy with belief.¹⁹ We cannot simply decide what to believe, yet beliefs are subject to a justificatory *why* question. That is to say, while beliefs are not under our volitional control, we are answerable for what we believe, and our beliefs are attributable to us, a proper basis for certain assessments—though generally not moral assessments—of our selves. The case of belief shows that it is wrong to assume that answerability and the attributability to our agency that it signals require volitional control.²⁰

But it would also be wrong to conclude from this that we face no difficulties in understanding our agency with respect to love.²¹ That we are answerable for both our beliefs and our loves, while neither is under our volitional control, has led many to assume that whatever conception of agency applies to beliefs applies to love as well. But, in fact, we can trace our answerability for beliefs to a distinct conception of agency in which love does not share: We have a kind of *evaluative control* over our beliefs.²² This means that, though we cannot adopt beliefs at will, we can adopt them on the basis of our own reasoning, or *reason to* them; an explicit line of reasoning can conclude with a belief. If I reason through a proof that there is no greatest prime

number, I thereby come to believe that there is no greatest prime number. I reason to this belief. And, in general, if a line of reasoning is sound, and the agent who thinks through it is rational, her reasoning concludes with a belief the content of which is the conclusion of that argument. To be convinced *that* some line of reasoning is sound is to be convinced *by* it, and so arrive at or adopt the belief that is its conclusion. An agent who is so convinced needs no further reason or motive to acquire the belief, nor would a third party who knew that she had been so convinced need any further explanation of how she acquired it.

Many practical philosophers are concerned to argue that the same is true of practical attitudes: just as we can reason to beliefs, so we can reason to intentions or judgments about what to do. Intentions, like beliefs, can be the conclusions of sound lines of reasoning. I've decided to be at the office by 9 am. To get there by 9 I have to leave home at 8:30. Thinking through reasoning like this explicitly can lead to the decision or intention to leave home at 8:30. To be convinced that a line of practical reasoning is sound is to be convinced by it, and so to adopt the intention that is its conclusion. An agent needs no further reason or motive to adopt the intention, nor would an observer need any further explanation of why he does so.

The exercise of evaluative control over an attitude is a recognizable conception of agency with respect to it, and one that is distinct from and does not require volitional control. Because reasoning is something that you do, the conclusions of your reasoning are attributable to you. Drawing these conclusions is also something that you do—in fact, it's just another way to describe your activity of reasoning. So the conclusions do not merely happen to or occur in you. And it is clear that and why we are answerable for attitudes that are subject to reasoning: If an attitude is appropriately the conclusion of a line of reasoning, then it is apt to ask justificatory questions with respect to it. These questions ask the agent to reproduce the reasoning that led to the attitude, or to reconstruct a line of reasoning that could have done so. A fully adequate answer to this justificatory *why* question about an attitude would simply be a sound line of reasoning concluding with the attitude in question.

But, while love shares with belief and intention lack of volitional control, it differs from these attitudes in that it also lacks evaluative control, so conceived. Just as we cannot adopt an attitude of love just by deciding to do so, neither can we adopt an attitude of love by reasoning to it. You cannot arrive at love, as you can a belief or an intention, merely by considering an argument for it or a report of the reasons that would justify it. That is, no line of reasoning could conclude with an attitude rightly identified as love. If it *were* possible to reason to love, then it would be possible to love someone whom you had never met, of whom you have no direct experience. You could love her based merely on a report of the reasons for doing so, perhaps a report of her recommending qualities. But it is no more possible to love a person you've never met than to love a book you've never read.²³

It seems that the most that an argument could do is convince you that you have adequate—sufficient or perhaps even requiring—reason to love someone, or that loving her would be a good idea, advantageous for extrinsic reasons. Based on this conclusion you might reason to and so adopt the sort of intention discussed above, an intention to bring it about that you love her, or at least to try. But no line of reasoning, no consideration of an argument or report of considerations telling in favor of love, could yield love itself. To put this another way, while the justificatory query about why you love what you love makes sense, no answer can be given such that you could come to love someone simply by thinking through that answer. Thus, though there is no category mistake in raising the question about why we love, there is a sense in which no report of any purported reasons for love could count as a fully adequate answer.²⁴

Consider Murdoch's case again. M reasons to the intention to "look again" at D. She resolves to attend to her, in Murdoch's special sense of attending, as a result of thinking through the

reasons that she has to do so. But she does not *thereby* adopt her new more loving attitude toward D. She does not and cannot reason to that attitude. Rather, she arrives at it through interactions with D, or imaginative reflection on past interactions. Murdoch's visual metaphor of *change in view* aptly captures the fact that there is something ineliminably passive about this revolution in M's attitudes. What we train our attention on may be up to us, but there is no clear volitional or evaluative sense in which it is up to us what we see when we attend. So there is at least some aspect in which the change that M experiences is something that she undergoes, not something that she does. Her revised attitude toward D is not a conclusion to which she comes, but just the *result* of looking again, the way that D strikes her upon this further consideration.²⁵

Murdoch's case thus encapsulates both sides of the tension in our thinking about love: On the one hand it suggests, as Murdoch intends, that love is something that M *does*, such that coming to the more loving attitude is a morally significant improvement in her and she is answerable for it. But, on the other hand, how D *looks* to M seems to be passive, something that she observes, not something over which she exercises any familiar straightforward sense sort of agency.

Murdoch's visual metaphor suggests a different strategy for rescuing the parallel between love and belief that I rejected above. Beliefs based on perception, the literal cases of seeing on which Murdoch's metaphor draws, are clearly contentful attitudes, attributable to their agents and subject to justificatory query. Yet we do not acquire these beliefs by reasoning to them, but rather by being subject to the perceptual experiences on which they are based. Most philosophers hold that we normally arrive at such beliefs non-inferentially.²⁶ And even if it seems that we could reconstruct a possible inference to a perceptual belief, it is hard to see how any such inference could dispense with appeal to experience as grounding justification. I *might* reason:

P1: I seem to see a blue chair.

P2: If I seem to see a blue chair there is a very high probability that the blue chair is in front of me.

And so conclude with the belief:

C: There is a blue chair in front of me.

But, even if this argument were accurately to represent my thinking—itself true only in odd cases—its first premise refers to and takes its justification from the experience, which is not itself a proposition that can be believed or to which I can reason. P1 cannot contribute to justification for the belief stated as C independent of this experience.²⁷

We might think that the same sort of explanation figures in why love is not only standardly acquired non-inferentially, but is such that we cannot reason to it: experience of the beloved must figure in the justifying grounds of love in something like the same way that perceptual experience must figure in the justifying grounds of perceptual beliefs. In both cases, no set of propositions we could believe or accept could *substitute* for the experience. All plausible reconstructions of arguments for the attitudes will contain premises whose content and justification depends on reference to the experience. So nothing can count as simply reasoning to the attitudes that these experiences support.

These similarities between love and perceptual belief are real and illuminating. To the extent that they hold, we can ask whether they help us to understand the sort of agency we have over love, or rather introduce puzzles about the sort of agency that we have with respect to beliefs

based on perception parallel to those I am here raising about love.²⁸ But, however we resolve this, important differences between the two cases will remain. For even if you cannot acquire a belief of the sort we are considering by reasoning, you can arrive at a belief of just the same content through non-perceptual routes. Supposing that you are blindfolded, you can learn through testimony that there is a blue chair in front of you. But nothing of that sort works for love. That's because our inability to reason to love derives from a deeper feature that belief does not share: We cannot settle the question of whether to value someone or something as we do when we love them merely on the basis of a conviction that we have sufficient reason to do so. But we can settle questions about what to believe, and also what to intend, in this way.²⁹ That is to say, love isn't just beyond our evaluative control; it's also not judgment sensitive in T.M. Scanlon's sense, while all kinds of beliefs are.³⁰

This rules out yet another possible way of understanding the agency that we have with respect to love. Scanlon notes that the judgment sensitivity of an attitude is one way of understanding how an attitude can be "up to us." It is closely related to, but not the same as, being under our evaluative control. An attitude is under your evaluative control insofar as it can be the conclusion of reasoning. Beliefs based on perception are not under our evaluative control in this sense. But, like all beliefs, they are judgment sensitive: we can adopt them just on the basis of a conviction that we have sufficient reason for them and they are in this sense up to us. Perhaps this is sufficient to account for the agency that we have with respect to these beliefs. But, like volitional and evaluative control, it cannot account for the agency that we have with respect to love.³¹

III Rejecting a Concatenation Approach

I have argued that love has both active and passive aspects, so that it's not clear how to understand it, all told. In the face of this, someone might suggest that love is just a *composite* of attitudes or states, some active and some passive. On this view the active and the passive aspects of love can be neatly decomposed, and to count as loving someone or something you must simply have both together.³² For example, you must both be subject to a distinctive constellation of feelings and judge that your beloved is intrinsically valuable. Or, as on Kant's view, you might have on the one hand an intention to act in particular ways with respect to a person—to promote his happiness or share in his ends—and on the other certain feelings about or toward him. Kant calls these practical and pathological love, respectively.³³ The former is agential. It is an intention, or the adoption of a maxim, straightforwardly judgment sensitive and under your evaluative control. The latter is passive, and for this reason Kant holds that pathological love cannot be commanded and we can neither have reason for it, nor be held responsible for it. These feelings are not up to us; they merely occur in us or fail to do so.

The defender of a concatenation view of this sort would hold that, when the justificatory question is raised with respect to love, a satisfactory reply would give reasons just for the first, active, element of love, the judgment of value or the intention to act in certain ways with respect to the beloved. On this view it is really only this—a conclusion to which you can reason—for which you are answerable.³⁴ You might judge that the beloved is valuable or that her ends or happiness provide reasons for you to act with or without attendant feelings towards her. On the concatenation view you count as loving her only in the latter case, the case in which the feelings occur in you. What sets my conviction that my own child is of irreplaceable value, or my intention to advance her ends, apart from my similar conclusions about another child is just that the former occurs together with the feelings that make it figure as a component of love. But because these feelings are not themselves judgment sensitive I cannot be answerable for

them. I cannot choose or decide to have them, nor can I reason to them. At most I can decide to try to generate them in myself. They therefore account for our sense that love is passive, something that happens to us, rather than something that we do.

We can bring out one problem with this initially plausible suggestion by focusing on how to understand this passive component. Suppose that we think of these feelings simply as sensations, like flutterings of the stomach. As mere sensation they would lack any propositional or representational content, and would be nothing other than modifications of your body of which you are aware. This would place them solidly in the category of headaches, rendering them clearly passive. Now we can ask: what relationship between these sensations and the judgments of value renders the flutterings, but not, say, your concurrent headache, feelings *of love*? That they occur at the same time does not seem to be enough since it does not distinguish the stomach flutterings from the headache.

Perhaps a proponent of the view could circumvent this problem by appeal to a regular pattern of co-occurrence. But even if that strategy could work, it would still leave another problem: If love were a combination of a conviction of value and a bunch of contentless sensations, then you could perfectly well love a person without any experience of them. First, you could acquire the conviction that the person is irreplaceably valuable, for example by inference or by testimony. You could reason to this conclusion or otherwise adopt it on the basis of a conviction that you have sufficient reason to do so. Then you could stimulate the relevant feelings by some extrinsic means, like taking a narcotic along the lines of the love potions of fairy tales. In this way you could come to love a person that you have never met, but to whom you can only refer by definite description.

The problem here is that the picture under consideration packs all of the content of love into the judgment of value or the intention to act. The pleasant feelings associated with love are construed as altogether lacking in content. But feelings of love are not like that; they are not *mere* sensations. A sensation, like a headache, cannot be *toward*, *for* or *about* anything. But in order for sensations to count as loving feelings, feelings *of love* rather than as just aches or tickles, they need to have some deeper connection to love's object, and more generally to the contentful or cognitive components of love.

So to make the concatenation picture work, we need to understand how these feelings, in some way passive like a sensation, are also non-contingently related to the content of the judgments or intentions that comprise the active element of the attitude that we seek to understand. I don't think that there is any way to accomplish, or even to pursue, this question without reintroducing into the task of understanding what we are here calling "the feelings of love" the questions about how to combine love's active and passive elements. But to solve this difficulty would just be to answer the questions that I have been urging with respect to understanding the attitude of love.³⁵

We can see another problem with the concatenation approach if we begin with consideration with its active element. Above, I attributed to the advocate of this approach the view that this judgment or intention is subject to a standard exercise of evaluative control. But that would mean that the agent of the attitude could reason to it, and so we may ask: what argument can be given that concludes with the judgment or intention in question? When I love someone I regard her as irreplaceably valuable, but what *are* the reasons for thinking that this is so? What kind of argument could we present to someone who expressed genuine skepticism about this claim? Or what is the full case for treating her ends as giving me reasons to act, or her happiness or well-being as worth promoting?

Though I am not able to develop the case in detail here, I suspect that the vindication of such claims must appeal to our experience of particular persons as valuable, in something like the way

that many empirical beliefs rely for their justification on perceptual experience. This experience of an individual's value finds its most vivid instance in interpersonal love.³⁶ If this is right, the grounds or reasons for the purportedly active element of love are themselves taken from experience, again in a way that may be familiar from the idea perceptual beliefs. But then we face again the question about how to integrate this passive element into the active aspect of love.

So, when we attempt to conceive of love as a concatenation of decomposable active and passive states, the questions that we initially had about love proper simply rearise with respect to each of these states. Love has an emotive and phenomenological aspect, but it also has that sort of content that—while it cannot be reasoned to—can figure in rational relations of thought. These two aspects bear to one another a relation beyond that of simple co-occurrence. To make progress on understanding this relationship would be to make progress on the problem that I have been urging throughout the chapter.

Conclusion

I have argued that love is, on the one hand, an attitude that is properly responsive to, and evaluable in terms of, reasons. We are answerable for it; that is, it makes sense to ask one another, and to ask ourselves, why we love what we love. These questions are not only intelligible, but important. What we love is essential to our self-understanding and assessment of our character. This captures a sense in which love is a central or fundamental expression of our agency.

But, on the other hand, we seem to have no adequate way of accounting for the nature of our agency with respect to love. Love is not something that we do at will, nor a conclusion to which we can reason. More generally, we cannot settle the question of whether to love something or someone only on the basis of a conviction that there is reason to do so. We can, at best, try to manage our loves in response to convictions about reasons. This sets love apart from more straightforward expressions of agency, the judgment-sensitive attitudes of intention and belief.

So while we can sensibly or aptly be asked for reasons, or wonder about the reasons, for loving what we do, we cannot really be expected to give any fully satisfactory answer to this question. Thus the relationship between love and reasons is opaque, and this, in turn, is why it is difficult to settle on whether love is active or passive, whether it is or is not an expression of our agency. If we take our agency to be expressed in reason-responsive attitudes, then there is a case to be made for placing our loves within these bounds, and a case to be made for placing our loves outside of them. I have not here attempted to say how we can account for these two aspects together, but only argued that any satisfying view about love would have to do so. Neither a case for the active nor a case for the passive conception of love could be convincing unless it acknowledged and accounted for the power of the other.³⁷

Notes

- 1 Philosophical work on love standardly distinguishes among different sorts of love, characterized by its object. We can love people, but also animals, inanimate objects and ideals. Our language also allows the verb *to love* to take either a noun or a propositional phrase as its object. So I can love *you*, or I can love *that you are so kind*. These distinctions are worth marking, but offer no key to the resolution of the tensions that I explore here. Interpersonal love, love that takes a person as its immediate object, is the paradigm case on which I will focus. I intend what I say to apply across various modes of interpersonal love, including parental love, romantic love and love between friends, and I believe that it largely extends to love of something other than a person as well.
- 2 Love is not necessarily unique in its puzzling combination of these active and passive aspects. The features that I am arguing love has may be shared among members of a larger class of attitudes, such as

desires or emotions. I suspect that something along these lines is true, and in any case nothing I say here depends on asserting love's uniqueness. Nevertheless, because of the central role that love rightly plays in our self-understanding, it provides a particularly important case of the phenomena.

- 3 Cf. Frankfurt (2004). Frankfurt argues that what we love is central to our identity. He pairs this, problematically, with a passive interpretation of the nature of love.
- 4 Murdoch (1971).
- 5 Cf. Bagnoli (2003). Bagnoli argues that Kant has no interest in grading others morally and ethically; that question never arises for him. Even so, love has this first personal significance.
- 6 Anscombe (1963). This "justificatory query" could in fact be several different questions. For helpful disambiguation see Helm (n.d.). In addition to *which question* one is answering, there is a further ambiguity about whether the question asks for requiring or permitting reasons for love, that is reasons that would make failure to love irrational or merely those that would make love reasonable. Permitting reasons are enough to support the argument that I am making it here. Martin (2015), p. 698, suggests that we can explain how love "makes sense" by telling stories about the beloved, or about how the love came about, rather than giving reasons for it. I agree that such story-telling has an important role to play in answering *why* questions about our love, but doubt Martin's claim that such stories address a question that is neither the why of causal explanation nor the why of normative justification. Narratives may play either of these roles, or possibly both at once, but this is different from saying that they answer a third question, distinct from either of these.
- 7 For a very helpful discussion of issues concerning reasons for love see Kroeker in this volume. For a variety of positions on whether there are reasons for love and what these reasons might be see Frankfurt in this volume. Also Badhwar (1987); Delaney (1996); Kolodny (2003); Velleman (2006); Setiya (2014). Some, for example Badhwar, think that to love for reasons would be to love conditionally. The contrast is supposed to be loving you just for you, or for who you are, or for yourself alone. This equivalence makes sense if we think of reasons as non-essential properties of the beloved, properties that she might have failed to have and could lose. But recognizing the application of the why question does not commit us to thinking of reasons in this way.
- 8 Cf. Nagel (1970), pp. 29–30, 38, on unmotivated desires. I'm not convinced that there are any preferences of this completely brute kind. But all that we need here is that if there are such preferences love is not one of them.
- 9 Cf. Scanlon (1998) on judgment-sensitive attitudes; Smith (2005) on responsibility for attitudes; Moran (2001), pp. 113–120, on rational authority; and especially Hieronymi (2009) on evaluative control. I will have more to say about these distinctions below.
- 10 Murdoch (1971).
- 11 For defense of the claim that the content of interpersonal love cannot be fully captured in propositional form see Brewer (2009), Chapter 1.
- 12 For a discussion of how to understand this content see Hamlyn (1978).
- 13 See, e.g., Chisholm (2003).
- 14 Cf. Wolf (1993) on freedom worth having.
- 15 Cf. Hieronymi (2009), pp. 144–145, who characterizes the voluntary as that which we can do for any reason that seems good to us.
- 16 This is how Bagnoli interprets M in Murdoch's example. But this cannot be the whole story about M for reasons that I discuss below.
- 17 For a popular summary of some recent results regarding effective techniques for producing love, see Catron (2015).
- 18 Cf. Hieronymi (2006). The language of managerial and evaluative control originates with her. Liao (2006) is not sufficiently impressed by this distinction and sometimes fails to respect it. He does distinguish between direct and indirect *techniques* for bringing it about that we love. The latter is a matter of putting ourselves in situations likely to lead to love, and falls clearly on the side of attitude management. The former is a matter of giving ourselves reasons, and might include exercises in evaluative control.
- 19 See Kolodny (2003), p. 138, as well as Schapiro (2014).
- 20 Cf. Scanlon (1998), pp. 248–249, 277–294, on responsibility as attributability.
- 21 Hieronymi (2009). Hieronymi (2006), drawing on Kavka (1983), argues persuasively that we also lack volitional control over our intentions. But, for reasons I will explain below, we can understand our agency with respect to our intentions and with respect to our beliefs in the same way, but cannot assimilate love to this model.
- 22 Hieronymi (2009). On Hieronymi's view "certain attitudes embody one's answer to a question or set of questions," and "therefore one can exercise control or agency over such attitudes by coming to or

revising one's answer to the relevant question(s)," p. 141. An attitude *embodies one's answer to a question* if it is the case that if one has settled the answer to the question positively, then one has that attitude, and one has the attitude just in case one is committed to a positive answer to the question (p. 139).

The conception of evaluative control that I discuss in the text treats availability as a conclusion of reasoning as both sufficient and necessary for evaluative control. Hieronymi regards it only as sufficient (pp. 139–140, and n. 2). Love may fall under the broader notion of evaluative control for which this allows, and indeed Hieronymi affirms, though she does not purport to establish, that evaluative control applies to "certain emotions" (p. 139). I have no objection to this broader sense of "evaluative control," but if we adopt it then the questions about how to understand our agency with respect to love will reappear as questions about how to specify the necessary conditions for being subject evaluative control.

I also treat answerability, being subject to justificatory query about an attitude, as sufficient to indicate some sort of agency with respect to that attitude. Hieronymi expresses sympathy for this position. But she officially leaves open the issue of whether the normative status of being committed to an answer to a question, and so susceptible to justificatory query about it, requires having engaged in the activity of having settled the question, and believes that to answer negatively would be to suppose that one could be committed to, so answerable for, an attitude without that attitude functioning as an expression of one's agency (see n. 4, pp. 141–142).

- 23 One might ask what counts as direct experience of the person. It seems that you can love someone who has written you letters, and perhaps you could love someone about whom you have heard sufficiently vivid stories. So it does not seem to be necessary to encounter a person in the flesh in order to love her. Nevertheless, mere report of the reasons or a definite description sufficient for reference does not seem to be enough here. Cf. Setiya (forthcoming).
- 24 This may explain both the temptation to affirm and that to deny that there are no reasons for love (Kroeker, in this volume).
- 25 Murdoch (1971).
- 26 See, e.g., McDowell (2011); Burge (2003).
- 27 Moreover, the contents of this experience are arguably such that they cannot be fully captured in propositional form. Or, at best, any proposition that could capture them would do so only by making use of terms such as demonstratives that gain their content through reference to the perception. The large philosophical literature concerning whether the contents of perception are best understood as non-conceptual is relevant here. See, e.g., Evans (1982); McDowell (1994); Peacocke (1998, 2001); Brewer (1999); Heck (2000); Kelly (2001). For a helpful summary see Bermúdez and Cahen (n.d.).
- 28 For the latter view, see Schapiro (2014), pp. 14–15.
- 29 This lies at the core of Kant's claim that we cannot love someone voluntarily and so love cannot be commanded. Kant (1997), 5:82–86. Kant may be running together a notion of *voluntary control*, an attitude that you could have just be deciding to have it, and something more like *evaluative control* or *judgment sensitivity*, an attitude that you can determine by reasoning to it or otherwise settling the question to which it answers. But love has neither of these features.
- 30 Scanlon (1998), p. 22.
- 31 Though we may be accustomed to thinking of reason-responsiveness and judgment sensitivity as the same, the case of love reveals that this is an error. All judgment-sensitive attitudes are reason-responsive, but if what I have been arguing about love is right, then not all reason-responsive attitudes are judgment sensitive.
- 32 Martin (2015) argues for this sort of view.
- 33 See Kant (1996), 4:448–452, 6:399–403, 6:448–461; (1998), 4:397–400; (1997), 5:83–89. I discuss Kant's view of love in more detail, and explain why it is not satisfactory, in Ebels-Duggan (forthcoming b).
- 34 Martin (2015), p. 692, is clear in her view that the passive aspects of love, what she calls the "subrational motives," are not subject to any justificatory question.
- 35 The problem facing the concatenation view is an instance of the moral general problem facing all "additive theories" of mind that Boyle (2016) identifies. I think that Martin's (2015) theory of love suffers from these problems, problems about how the subrational and rational motives, being different in kind, could possibly interact. For more detailed discussion of this difficulty about Kantian inclination see Ebels-Duggan (forthcoming a). A second problem with Martin's theory is that she attempts to understand the active element of love solely in terms of maxims or intentions to act, indeed to bring about some state of affairs. I think that the judgment of value is a better candidate for the aspect of love

that may be under our evaluative control. I agree with Velleman (2006) that we will not be able to find any state of affairs, such that intending to produce that state of affairs would suffice for love. For a more complete case for this claim see Brewer (1999), pp. 62–65.

- 36 I develop this view in more detail in Ebels-Duggan (forthcoming c). Cf. Gaita (1991); Velleman (2006); Setiya (2014).
- 37 I am grateful to Mark Alznauer, Paul Boswell, Amy Flowerree, Jennifer Lockhart, Adrienne Martin, Martina Orlandi, Margaret Schmitt, Christine Tappolet, Aleksy Tarasenko-Struc, Stephen White and the members of Le groupe de recherche interuniversitaire sur la normativité (GRIN) in Montreal, Quebec for comments on and discussion of earlier drafts.

References

- Anscombe, G.E.M. *Intention*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- Badhwar, Neera Kapur. “Friends as Ends in Themselves.” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 48, no. 1 (1987): 1–23.
- Bagnoli, Carla. “Respect and Loving Attention.” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 33, no. 4 (December 2003): 483–516.
- Bermúdez, José and Cahen, Arnon. “Nonconceptual Mental Content.” <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/content-nonconceptual>.
- Boyle, Matthew. “Additive Theories of Rationality: A Critique.” *European Journal of Philosophy* 24, no. 3 (2016): 527–555.
- Brewer, Bill. *Perception and Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Brewer, Talbot. *The Retrieval of Ethics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Burge, Tyler. “Perceptual Entitlement.” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 67, no. 3 (November 2003): 503–548.
- Catron, Mandy L. “To Fall in Love with Anyone, Do This,” *New York Times*, January 9, 2015.
- Chisholm, Roderick M. “Human Freedom and the Self.” In *Free Will (Second Edition)*, edited by Gary Watson, 26–37. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Delaney, Neil. “Love and Loving Commitment: Articulating a Modern Ideal.” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1996): 339–356.
- Ebels-Duggan, Kyla. “Bad Debt: The Kantian Inheritance of Humean Desire.” In *Kantian Freedom*, edited by Dai Heide and Evan Tiffany. Oxford: Oxford University Press (forthcoming a).
- Ebels-Duggan, Kyla. “Inarticulacy and Reasonable Commitments.” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (forthcoming b).
- Ebels-Duggan, Kyla. “Love, Respect and the Value of Humanity.” In *The Value of Humanity*, edited by Nandi Theunissen and Sarah Buss (forthcoming c).
- Evans, Gareth. *Varieties of Reference*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Frankfurt, Harry. *The Reasons of Love*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Gaita, Raimond. *Good and Evil: An Absolute Conception*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1991.
- Hamlyn, D.W. “The Phenomena of Love and Hate.” *Philosophy* 53, no. 203 (January 1978): 5–20.
- Heck, Richard. “Nonconceptual Content and the Space of Reasons.” *Philosophical Review* 109, no. 483–523 (2000).
- Helm, Bennett. “Love.” <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/love>.
- Hieronymi, Pamela. “Controlling Attitudes.” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 87 (2006): 45–76.
- Hieronymi, Pamela. “Two Kinds of Agency.” In *Mental Actions*, edited by Lucy O’Brien and Matthew Soteriou, 138–162. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Kant, Immanuel. *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated by Mary Gregor. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Practical Reason*. Translated by Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated by Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Kavka, Gregory. “The Toxin Puzzle.” *Analysis* 43, no. 1 (1983): 33–36.
- Kelly, Sean Dorrance. “Demonstrative Concepts and Experience.” *Philosophical Review* 110, no. 3 (2001): 397–420.
- Kolodny, Niko. “Love as Valuing a Relationship.” *Philosophical Review* 112, no. 2 (2003): 135–189.
- Liao, Matthew. “The Idea of a Duty to Love.” *Journal of Value Inquiry* 40, no. 1 (2006): 1–22.

- Martin, Adrienne. "Love, Incorporated." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 18 (2015): 691–702.
- McDowell, John. *Mind and World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- McDowell, John. *Perception as a Capacity for Knowledge*. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2011.
- Moran, Richard. *Authority and Estrangement*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.
- Murdoch, Iris. "The Idea of Perfection." In *The Sovereignty of the Good*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1971.
- Nagel, Thomas. *The Possibility of Altruism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Peacocke, Christopher. "Non-Conceptual Content Defended." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 58 (1998): 381–388.
- Peacocke, Christopher. "Does Perception Have a Nonconceptual Content?" *Journal of Philosophy* 98, no. 239–264 (2001).
- Scanlon, T.M. *What We Owe to Each Other*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Schapiro, Tamar. "What Are Theories of Desire Theories Of?" *Analytic Philosophy* 55, no. 2 (2014): 131–151.
- Setiya, Kieran. "Love and the Value of a Life." *Philosophical Review* 123, no. 3 (2014): 251–280.
- Setiya, Kieran. "Other People." In *The Value of Humanity*, edited by Sara Buss and Nandi Theunissen (forthcoming).
- Smith, Angela. "Responsibility for Attitudes: Activity and Passivity in the Mental Life." *Ethics* 115, no. 2 (2005): 236–271.
- Velleman, David. "Love as a Moral Emotion." In *Self to Self*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Wolf, Susan. "The Importance of Free Will." In *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*, edited by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, 101–118. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.

LOVE, PRACTICAL REASONS, AND AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

Sandy Koullas

Love is a powerful source of practical reasons. It is not only a powerful motivator, but is also frequently called on as a justification of actions. But there are questions about the legitimacy of allowing oneself to be guided by this kind of reason. This is especially clear when love comes into conflict with other kinds of practical reasons—most notably, impartial reasons that are assumed to have overriding force, namely, the reasons of morality. The problem has been dealt with at length by philosophers in recent decades. In this chapter, I consider the contribution that might be made to the debate from an approach to ethics that is prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa.

The idea that humanity consists in a valuable sort of relatedness is arguably at the root of much of what is distinctive about sub-Saharan African philosophy. It shows itself in the metaphysics, epistemology, and, of course, in the ethics of the continent. In South Africa, the idea is signified by the Nguni word, *ubuntu*, but a similar idea is apparent in much of the philosophical literature originating in Africa. I sometimes use the word *ubuntu* in this chapter, but the view I am exploring should be taken to be one that is largely common to many African cultures.

I borrow Kwame Gyekye's justification for this sort of generalization. In the preface to *Tradition and Modernity*, he says:

In the light of the multiplicity of African cultures and the diversities among them, one need not generalize the details and nuances of an idea or practice worked out within one cultural context for other cultures. Yet what may be true is that in many instances the different cultural forms or practices can be said to be essentially variations on the same theme. There is no denying that contiguous cultures do influence one another; and the cultures of dominant groups have influenced those of smaller groups. This is the reason why a number of scholars recognize the existence of common features or commonalities among the cultures of Africa.

(Gyekye 1997: xii)

Ubuntu as a normative theory would have it that good actions and practices will be those that are expressive of the human capacity for communal relationships. Since relationships are so central to ethical thought on this view, we might expect that African ethics can secure a central role for *love*. So, African ethics may have the resources for a more satisfying solution to the apparent conflict between love and morality.

In this chapter, I consider an African ethical approach that sees *loving relationships* as the model for good ethical conduct, to see whether it may be a solution to our problem. My contention is that much hinges on the specific *kind* of loving relationship that is the ideal, and that without further clarification, referring to valuable relationships as ones of “love” may be misleading. The discussion will show that despite starkly different starting points, Western and African ethical systems are likely to yield similar verdicts on the sorts of practical reasons that there are, and are both likely to face the problem of incommensurability of a certain kind of love with morality. I begin by sketching a familiar problem concerning love and practical reasons.

“One Thought Too Many”

The problem is often associated with Bernard Williams, and has received a variety of interesting treatments in the last three decades. Williams imagines a scenario in which a man needs to choose to rescue one of two people in equal peril, one of whom is his wife. Should the man question the permissibility (from the impartial perspective of morality) of saving his wife, Williams’s famous criticism of him is that he would be entertaining “one thought too many” (Williams 1981: 18). Williams’s point is that even if a moral theory could justify his choosing his wife (as most in fact can), it is inappropriate even to entertain thoughts about the requirement of impartiality in such a situation. In the terminology of practical reasons, it seems that reasons of partiality—specifically, in this case, reasons of love—are strong and legitimate reasons, even if they conflict with an impartial moral system. The problem illustrated by Williams’s lifeboat scenario is that the reasons of love and the reasons of morality are bound to sometimes conflict. We might hope for an account that can resolve the conflict, or provide guidance regarding how to navigate situations in which the conflict arises, since both love and morality strike us as genuinely important sources of practical reasons. But a satisfactory resolution to the conflict is elusive.

Some conclude, after considering this sort of conflict, that morality is simply not always the most important set of reasons for action; sometimes, moral reasons are and should be trumped by practical reasons of a different kind (Wolf 2012). One problem with this sort of response is that it becomes difficult to make sense of the role and distinctiveness of moral reasons.¹ Others take an “extremist” position, insisting that morality is always the most important consideration (Kagan 1989). The problem with this approach is that it is so counterintuitive and unattractive. Still others attempt to address the problem by re-considering the nature of love (Velleman 1984), or the nature of morality (Railton 1999), or perhaps both, in order to explain away what they take to be a merely apparent conflict. The African approach to ethics that I present below would seem to offer a potential solution of the latter kind. According to this line of thought, there cannot be a deep conflict between love and morality, because love is an absolutely central notion in ethics. Though the approach is similar to Velleman’s, the emphasis on love in ethics would be even stronger on the African approach. Whereas, according to Velleman, love is *a* moral emotion, we might expect an African moral theory to construe love as *the* moral emotion.

We can describe the apparent problem of conflicting practical reasons as a tension between (1) the importance of strong, partial attachments such as we typically have to romantic partners or close friends, and (2) the importance of an impartial standard in contexts of justice, which might secure fundamental human rights and equality before the law.² More simply, we can describe the problem as an apparent conflict between (1) partial reasons and (2) impartial reasons. Both (1) and (2) are important to us, and we might hope that a satisfactory ethical theory can secure both. In what follows, however, I will suggest that both Western and African moral theories are likely to face difficulty in accommodating (1), while both would likely be able to

accommodate (2) quite easily, though the explanations in the two cases will be quite different. This result is surprising: one might expect to reach the opposite conclusions about (1) and (2) when coming at them from the perspective of an African ethical theory. One might have expected this result, since the core of an African ethical theory is the basic moral value assigned to interpersonal relationships. Before I show how this surprising result is reached, a quick orientation to the relevant ethical tradition, and how it compares with familiar Western ethical traditions, is needed.

Western and African Ethical Theories

Modern Western approaches to ethics are, for the most part, rooted in two features of individuals: persons (at least) have interests, and they have rights.³ Different ethical theories will interpret and emphasize these features differently. Consequentialists will generally emphasize interests, while deontologists will generally emphasize rights. Modern moral theories share certain core theoretical commitments, notwithstanding the evident differences between particular accounts. Modern Western ethical approaches predominantly arise from the idea of the *individual*—the ultimate explanation of why an action is impermissible, or why a practice or institution is just—will refer to the idea that the individuals possess interests and/or rights. Another common commitment of modern Western ethical theories is that they include *impartiality* as a central component in some way. Consequentialists will assert that each individual's interests should be given equal consideration in moral deliberation, while deontologists will assert that each individual's rights are just as important as any other's. In both cases, the impartiality component refers in some way to individuals.

In contrast to these familiar Western ethical approaches, an African ethical approach will construe human *relations* to be of primary ethical importance. There is a widespread commitment, among various sub-Saharan African cultures, to the value of community. One version of the view is signified by the Nguni word *ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* has no straightforward translation in English, but it signifies a concept of the essence of humanity being in relationships. The idea behind the word *ubuntu* is conveyed by the oft-quoted “a person is a person through other persons” or “I am because we are.” There is a growing body of philosophical literature interpreting and applying this idea as a normative ethical theory which might compete with established consequentialist or deontological theories. According to this kind of theory, the right way to act would be modeled on a certain kind of relationship. While there are many different interpretations of *ubuntu* and related ethical views, they largely share the central tenet that the value of human relationships is essential to ethics, and indeed, to the concept of humanity itself. Here are some examples of the way this kind of view has been described by various philosophers:

For Black Africa, it is not the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am”) but an existential *cognatus sum, ergo sumus* (“I am known, therefore we are”) that is decisive.

(Bujo 2001: 4)

Unlike Hobbesian subjects, who stand in isolation to define themselves as solitary, unattached thinkers, the human being in African thought defines the self with respect to the quality of his or her participation in a community of similarly constituted selves. Therefore, personhood is defined in relation to the community.... A sense of community exists if people are mutually responsive to one another's needs.

(Mkhize 2008: 39)

Ubuntu is the name for the acquired quality of humanity that is the characteristic of a fully developed person and the community with others that results. It thus comprises values, attitudes, feelings, relationships and activities, the full range of expressions of the human spirit.

(Shutte 2009: 97)

African ethics imply that morality is possible only through interaction with others. A person who is utterly alone might be more or less happy but not more or less dutiful. Morality, from a resolutely African perspective, arises only from relationships.

(Metz 2009: 340)

[According to an African ethical theory] an action is wrong insofar as it fails to honor relationships in which people share a way of life and care for one another's quality of life, and especially to the extent that it esteems division and ill will.

(Metz 2010: 84)

What all of these characterizations of an African approach to ethics have in common is their emphasis on *community*, and the value of the relationships between human beings. The core of an African ethical theory, then, will be the idea that basic moral value is borne by *relationships* of a certain kind: harmonious, communal, or loving relationships.

African Ethics and the Conflict between Partiality and Impartiality

It would appear, at this point, that an African ethical approach would offer a welcome alternative to Western ethical views for dealing with the problem of apparent conflict between reasons of love and reasons of morality. Rooted, as it is, in the value of relations between individuals, perhaps *ubuntu* would capture the importance of attachments like the one Williams calls to mind, and would do so by bringing it squarely within the realm of moral reasons. Thaddeus Metz has done significant work in constructing an explicit, principled moral theory out of the beliefs that constitute the core of a distinctively African ethical theory, and so it will be useful to consider his formulation in particular. The justification from a view like his would be: Morality requires that we act in such a way as to honor loving or friendly relationships.⁴ It goes without saying that it would dishonor our man's loving relationship with his wife if he were to toss a coin in order to decide which person to save. From this perspective, there is only one thing for the man to do: save his wife without a thought, since that is the best way to honor loving relationships. If he stops to deliberate about what to do, perhaps he is morally immature, or has some work to do in cultivating good moral dispositions. But the entire explanation, unlike in the Western approaches discussed, lies in the realm of moral reasons. So perhaps an African moral theory like *ubuntu* can gracefully avoid Williams's charge by assigning basic moral value to loving relationships.

So far so good. But remember the impartiality requirement of theories like utilitarianism and rights-based deontology: these theories emphasize equal consideration (under some interpretation) of all individuals, and with good reason. It is the impartiality of utilitarianism that guards against egoism. In moral deliberation, I should count my own interests as the interests of one person among many others, and no more. It is the impartiality of rights-based theories that guard against the sacrifice of one for the enjoyment of many. Indeed, impartiality seems to do much of what we want our moral theories to do: we want our moral theories to be able to ground just practices and institutions.

So, the problem that arises here is that if an African moral approach is at its core a requirement to honor loving relationships, it may not be able to secure justice. Justice would seem to require some kind of impartiality, and we may wonder whether an African ethical theory can make any sense of impartiality, rooted as it is in relationships. If giving up individual rights to equality before the law, for example, is the cost of adopting an ethical theory that assigns basic moral value to relationships, that is a serious cost indeed. A person without attachments might not be protected by such a moral system, and his interests would not be given much priority in moral deliberation. A related worry is that such a theory would have nothing to say in condemnation of corrupt government officials favoring their family members and political party members—a very serious problem in many African governments.⁵

There is indeed an interpretation of *ubuntu* which leads to this unwelcome conclusion, but as I will show, there is a better interpretation of the theory that does not. Properly understood, an African moral theory like *ubuntu* would in fact protect the innocent drifter, and would in fact condemn the sort of corruption I've just described. It can do this because on this interpretation, it in fact turns out to be an impartialist theory. The key is to reconsider the notion of *relationship* on which moral conduct should be modeled. Recall that Metz characterizes the basically valuable relationship as a friendly or loving one, one that consists in solidarity and goodwill. Let's have a closer look at his evidence for this understanding. Here it is worth quoting Metz at length:

To construe morality as the proper valuing of friendly relationships aptly reflects how many people south of the Sahara think and behave. For example, sub-Saharan Africans often think society should be akin to family. They tend to believe in the importance of greeting strangers. They typically refer to people beyond the nuclear family with titles such as sister and mama. They frequently believe that ritual and tradition have moral significance. They tend to think there is some obligation to wed and procreate. They usually do not believe that retribution is a proper aim of criminal justice, inclining toward reconciliation. They commonly think there is a strong duty for the rich to aid the poor. And, finally, they often value consensus in decision making, seeking unanimous agreement and not resting content with majority rule.

(Metz 2009: 342)

Now, Metz at various points in his considerable number of papers on the topic refers to the kind of relationship that captures these values as loving, friendly, communal, and as resembling that of an extended family. He is also not alone in these characterizations; they are frequent in the African ethical literature, as is shown by the quotes I provided in the previous section. It is my contention that running these descriptions together is problematic, and obscures the nature of the value at the basis of African ethical theories like *ubuntu*.⁶ In particular, I want to suggest that describing the relationship that serves as the model for relationships exhibiting *ubuntu* as “friendly” and “loving” is potentially misleading, particularly to readers with a Western background. Here I draw on some excellent analysis of African ethics by Bénézet Bujo.

Bujo argues that African ethics,

unlike Western models of thought, sees relatedness as the decisive issue; it is, however, impossible to categorize this as biological, since relatedness signifies *merely an openness* that goes beyond what is present and what is visible in a given situation.

(Bujo 2001: 3)⁷

He emphasizes the idea that in African thought, “one becomes a human being only in a fellowship of life with others” (Bujo 2001: 5). Importantly, however, Bujo points out that the relatedness that is the basis of humanity and of human value is not only not restricted to a biological, or familial, relation, it is also not restricted to the boundaries of a community or particular social group:

One who is not a member of my own group is ultimately also the “property of the other,” just as I myself am, and this means that I owe him respect and esteem. Thus one is ultimately related to all human beings.

(Bujo 2001: 6)

The phrase “the other” here can be understood to refer to God. This is something of a simplification of the metaphysical view that Bujo presents, but I think it is a harmless simplification for the purpose of my argument. The important point is that all human beings are ultimately related through a divine being.

Bujo supplies some examples that clarify the distinctiveness of this kind of view very well. He considers some aspects of sexuality that have historically been taboo in African cultures, and contrasts their rationales with their Western counterparts: The first is homosexuality. Without himself condemning same-sex relationships, Bujo notes that they are notably infrequent (or at least do not enjoy public recognition) and generally denounced in African traditional societies. Where a similar taboo has existed in the West, the rationale has usually been via the concept of “natural law.” In contrast, the African rationale is as follows:

One is a human being only in the duality of man and woman, and this bipolarity generates the triad man-woman-child, which leads to full community. Against this background, a man-man or woman-woman relationship would not only be looked on as an egotistic isolationism which dares not take the step to full human existence; it also leads to a sexist discrimination against part of the human race and shows an unwillingness to accept the enrichment that comes from heterogeneity.

(Bujo 2001: 6)

The second example is the taboo against incest. Once again, the standard Western rationale for this taboo (before scientific evidence) has been in the natural law tradition. In contrast, here is Bujo’s characterization of the African rationale:

Something similar must be said about the question of incest. The prohibition of incest has deep roots in the concept of community and is thus not to be legitimated (as in the West) on the grounds that incest is contrary to nature.... The gravity of [the incestuous person’s] action consists in the fact that both partners are unwilling to approach others outside their own familial or ethnic group in order to exchange or share their *blood* with them.

(Bujo 2001: 7)

One final example is important to mention. As we saw in a quote from Metz earlier, there is a widespread conviction in sub-Saharan Africa that there is some duty to get married and produce offspring. Once again, Bujo’s explanation is illuminating:

Africans urge against lifelong celibacy along precisely these lines: one who remains unmarried for life withdraws from solidarity with other human persons, offending

against the law of life. He is like a magician who ruthlessly destroys life, since a celibate is unwilling to take a share in the growth of life on the biological level and refuses to take his place in the duality of man and woman, which alone constitutes full humanity.

(Bujo 2001: 7)

The point of these examples is not to justify the convictions they explain—as Bujo notes, there is work to be done in questioning whether the foundational values have been correctly interpreted in these cases and others. Rather, the point is simply to highlight the distinctive kinds of arguments that would be offered from an African ethical perspective: these explanations all have to do with a notion of relatedness that is best understood as open, and very broad.

It should not be difficult to see how this sort of understanding of relatedness can underscore just practices and institutions, how it can protect outsiders and condemn corruption in government. Unjust practices and institutions will have the effect of closing individuals off to relating as widely and inclusively as possible with others. For individuals to receive unequal treatment before the law would be antithetical to the ideal of openness that Bujo describes. Corrupt government officials, similarly, in favoring those nearest to them would be closing themselves off to wider relations of solidarity.

One may wonder whether this shows that the African approach under discussion actually grounds just institutions, or merely institutions that have many of the same outcomes as just institutions.⁸ To some extent, this may depend on an analysis of justice. Justice certainly involves some kind of impartiality, and so if the African approach doesn't include impartiality, it presumably doesn't ground just institutions. In fact, however, I think that the notion of relatedness that Bujo describes is precisely a form of impartiality. The difference between it and the impartiality we find in dominant Western theories is that the African view does not begin with individuals. Rather, the starting point is the broadest level of relatedness—the human community.⁹ Furthermore, an individualistic starting point does not seem to be essential to justice, as long as rights for individuals are somehow secured. So, it seems we do have here a kind of impartiality that can ground just practices and institutions, which is rooted in the concept of valuable relatedness, rather than in the concept of valuable individuals.

But let us return to the idea with which we began: strong partial attachments of the kind we typically have to romantic partners and close friends. It looks like we can have an African moral theory that gives us what we want in terms of impartiality, but can it still give Williams what he wants in terms of partiality? As it turns out, I don't think it can. This is because the kind of relationship that is basically valuable in this kind of theory is very different from the kind of relationship Williams's charge calls to mind. The attachments we have to our partners and friends have certain distinctive features that attachments to family, for example, may not have. These relationships are in a sense *exclusive*, *selective*, or *discriminatory*. The sort of attachment to which Williams alludes is one that is deeply rooted in individualism. These relationships are typically chosen, or entered into voluntarily by individuals, in part on the basis of features of other individuals that are seen as distinctive, and special. It is crucial to relationships of this kind that we *favor* our loved ones over others; this is precisely why Williams thinks even considering the reasons one might have to save the stranger would be “one thought too many.” The idea is that to bring considerations of impartiality to bear on cases like this belies an inappropriate attitude to close relationships; it is to fail to value close relationships as one should. The point is that the value of these relationships lies wholly outside whatever reasons make up an impartial system. Insofar as an African moral theory can satisfy the impartiality requirement, it seems it might face the same problem as its Western counterparts regarding close partial attachments of the sort

Williams has in mind. The sort of relationship that lies at the foundation of an African moral theory is not selective in the way modern Western friendships and love relationships are.

It is not my claim that these sorts of relationships do not exist in non-Western societies; rather, my point is that this sort of relationship is very far from being the ideal that does foundational work in African ethics. To see that this is the case, consider some remarks from Bujo on the ideals of marriage and sexuality in African ethical life:

While Western marriage is primarily something brought about by a contract between two persons, African marriage is understood as a covenant between two families, each embracing a community of several generations.

(Bujo 2001: 18–19)

The African understanding of marriage questions the Western understanding, where marriage [is] lived individualistically and considered as nothing more than a private contract between two persons, without consideration for the community.

(Bujo 2001: 36)

African communities are interested in the sexual lives of all their members, since sexuality is not a private matter. The goal of sexuality is to keep together the community entrusted to us by our ancestors and to bestow ever new life on this community.

(Bujo 2001: 37)

We can see here that even marriage and sexuality are understood in a much more *open*, broadly inclusive, and almost public way in African ethics than in the Western liberal tradition. Recall again the rationale for the taboo on same-sex relationships and incest articulated by Bujo: in both cases, the primary reason against these expressions of sexuality are that they supposedly represent a withdrawing from community—closing oneself and one's partner off from wider relatedness. Now notice that it is precisely these features of close personal relationships prized in Western societies that characterize romantic relationships and close friendships. Robert Nozick, for example, describes a romantic relationship as two individual spheres partially overlapping one another—a clear image of two people partially open to one another but quite separate from the rest of the world (Nozick 1990). Such a relationship would not be very highly esteemed from an African ethical perspective.

So, where does this leave us? We have seen that the basis of the dominant modern Western ethical theories lies in features of individuals—either interests or rights, or some combination of rights and interests. In contrast, we have seen that the basis of dominant modern African ethical theories lies in relationships, or relatedness. I have argued that the kind of relationship at the foundation of these theories is a very broad and open one—it is a communal relationship potentially between all human beings. It is inclusive and non-discriminatory. One implication is that, like Western impartialist theories, African ethical theories are likely to protect innocent outsiders and condemn corruption, though for quite different reasons. Another implication is that, like Western impartialist theories, African ethical theories are liable to be in conflict with close partial attachments of the sort that we prize in our personal lives in the West (at least). Again, though, the explanations will be different in the two cases.

The Common Good

It is interesting that such similar normative conclusions are reached from such different starting points. One potential problem in the African approach presented so far is that Bujo's particular

analysis depends on a certain theological picture: according to Bujo's conception, all human beings are in fact related in virtue of the fact that they are all "property of the other," i.e., God. An important question to consider is whether we can secure the claim that all human beings are in fact related (in the sense of being in community with one another) without the theological component.

An alternative account of the broadest level of relatedness among human beings would be via the notion of their *common good*. The idea that a community is defined in part by their common good is ubiquitous in African philosophy and culture.¹⁰ As Kwame Gyekye puts it,

the notion of a shared life—shared purposes, interests, and understandings of the good—is crucial to an adequate conception of community. What distinguishes a community from a mere association of individuals is the sharing of an overall way of life.

(Gyekye 1997: 42)

There is, for example, a well-known image in Akan art and culture of two crossed crocodiles: the two crocodiles share a stomach, evoking the idea that though it may not be immediately obvious to them, what is good for one is good for the other. If a convincing case can be made that all human beings (at least) are related in virtue of their common good, then the notion of community may be able to ground impartial reasons without the need for a theological premise. Gyekye in fact pursues this line of thought, suggesting that the concept of a *global* community has an important role to play in moral and political theory. However, in order to secure individual rights and the value of autonomy, Gyekye favors a more "moderate" form of communitarianism than many other African philosophers. He sums up his position as follows:

There is some truth in the view that communalism or individualism as applied to a social arrangement is a matter of degree. For this reason, we should expect a human society to be either more individualistic than communal or more communal than individualistic. But, in view of the fact that neither can the individual develop outside of the framework of the community nor can the welfare of the community as a whole dispense with the talents and initiative of its individual members, I think that the most satisfactory way to recognize the claims of both communality and individuality is to ascribe to them the status of an equal moral standing.

(Gyekye 1997: 41)

Gyekye is fully aware that his moderate position is at odds with the views of many influential African political philosophers. While his intention to secure rights and the value of autonomy is an important one, Gyekye's particular account may unfortunately give up some of what is most distinctive and interesting about African ethical approaches. By affording the individual and the community "equal" moral status, Gyekye departs from a certain view of social life and its norms that seems distinctively African, and is quite promising: the idea that a broad level of community is the most important.

Metz has argued for a relational account of the moral status of persons, according to which a being has moral status in proportion to her capacity to enter into relationships of solidarity and good will (Metz 2007). While the account is certainly interesting, and quite different from the more familiar individualist accounts of moral status, the criticism I make of Gyekye's account applies here too. Both Metz and Gyekye, while not taking an individualist position on moral status, seem to be departing from the *very* strong emphasis that is often given to community in African philosophical thought. My suggestion is that this strong emphasis is worth further

consideration. Recall again the picture Bujo paints of the way community serves a normative function in traditional African thought. The idea seems to be that *openness* to relationships with other human beings is of the utmost ethical importance. Any behavior that closes oneself off to wider relations is to be avoided.

It would seem that such a view would reverse the order of accounts of normativity that begin with the individual and move outwards, such as the cosmopolitanism of the Stoics, and C.D. Broad's "self-referential altruism." According to this sort of view, one has special obligations to various others depending on their relation to oneself, with the closer circles being the most important. In contrast, the view suggested by Bujo's analysis is one where normativity comes from social relatedness, but the broadest circle of relatedness is the ethically primary one.

There may be very little difference between the African approach and ancient cosmopolitan theories in terms of normative implications, since the ideal in the latter is to bring the broader circles closer.¹¹ In both cases, inclusivity would seem to be recommended. There is still an interesting difference between the approaches, however, in terms of explanation, or starting points. The African approach seems to proceed from an ideal of very broad relatedness, while the ancient cosmopolitan approach seems to proceed from an ideal of close connections between individuals. A further difference between the African account and that of the Stoics is in the latter's emphasis on reason as a basis for world citizenship. The view Bujo suggests is seemingly less interested in universal reason than with a shared, or common, good for community members. In other words, according to a distinctively African view, the *human* community, and the common good for its members, is more important than one's immediate community, such as one's village, family, or culture.

Communal Love and Individualistic Love

For the account suggested here to work, the idea that there is, in fact, a community of human beings in this broad sense needs support. The idea that as human beings we share a common good will be crucial. A convincing account is needed that (a) we are all related in virtue of a common good, and (b) this common good gives rise to impartial practical reasons of the sort required by just practices and institutions. But what of the concept of *love* as a characteristic of communal relationships? Metz defends his use of the characterization as follows: "Note that the combination of sharing a way of life and caring for others' quality of life (or of identifying, or exhibiting solidarity, with others) is basically a relationship that English-speakers call 'friendship' or a broad sense of 'love'" (Metz 2012: 394). To be sure, shared identity and mutual good will are important parts of loving and friendly relationships. But when we think of friendship and relationships of love, we typically think of especially *partial* relationships and attachments. We think of favoring our loved ones *over others*, we think of loving *particular* individuals, and we think of a *privileged* or special relationship. These are certainly characteristics of the sort of relationship Williams's charge brings to mind. This notion of love would seem to be seriously at odds with the sort of African ethical approach I have been exploring here.

The observation that there is more than one notion of *love* is by no means new. The description of healthy communal relationships involving a broad sense of love, specifically as involving shared identity and mutual good will, does ring true. But one implication of the discussion here is that the apparent conflict between one kind of love and impartiality is not necessarily rooted in a strong individualist, liberal tradition. The kind of love in question—strong, partial attachments to romantic partners and close friends being obvious examples—poses just as much of a problem for an ethical theory that begins from a strong communitarian premise. Of course, I have not even touched on the question of which of these starting points is preferable. One

question that needs addressing concerns the coherence of the conclusions about partiality and impartiality in each perspective. It may be that the African approach, which takes the broadest relations as primary, has a more coherent story to tell about why strong partial attachments pose a problem for morality than Western, individualist approaches. But I leave this question for another occasion. It is at least clear, I think, that there is interesting potential for the theory of practical reasons in African philosophy, and that it deserves serious attention.

Notes

- 1 Indeed, the position Williams and Wolf arrive at is that “categorical desires” (of which love is an example) are necessary if we are to care about anything at all, including morality. So, morality cannot be more important than categorical desires in cases of serious conflict. I will not consider this line of argument further here, except to note that it might be that an African ethical theory, rooted as it is in relationships, would not be susceptible to Williams’s criticism of deontology and consequentialism as self-undermining.
- 2 Though law and politics as contexts of justice are an extension, or application, of impartial morality, I take them as a primary example here because they clearly illustrate the importance of impartiality. I note also that these contexts are not what Williams has in mind in the paper I have referenced; his target is impartial morality as a system of practical reasons.
- 3 For the sake of clarity and brevity, I limit my discussion of ethics to its implications for persons alone. Any satisfactory ethical theory is going to have to have something to say about non-human animals, and about the environment, and so on. Ethicists will disagree, for example, about whether non-human animals have rights, or interests, or about the appropriate ways for humans to relate to them. I will not delve into these issues here, though I will note that interesting work is being done. See, for example, Oruka and Juma (1994); Metz (2012); Behrens (2010).
- 4 See Metz (2007: 338): “An action is right just insofar as it promotes shared identity among people grounded on good will; an act is wrong to the extent that it fails to do so and tends to encourage the opposites of division and ill-will.” This is Metz’s development of the idea that an African ethical theory will require us to prize friendly or loving relationships.
- 5 The problem of corruption has been, and continues to be, discussed extensively in African philosophy. A variety of positions are maintained on the topic. Some argue that the notion of corruption has no place in African moral and political theory, while others hold that African ethical approaches do in fact have the resources to condemn corruption. In what follows, I pursue the second line of thought, since it seems to be the more plausible one, and also seems to be the dominant one in contemporary African philosophy.
- 6 I should note at this point that Metz has some interesting and strong arguments intended to establish that *ubuntu*, on his understanding, can ground human rights and condemn corruption. The paper just quoted is an excellent example. I will not take issue with these arguments. But, as I suggest below, a clearer statement of the value that is at the basis of a theory like *ubuntu* is needed.
- 7 My emphasis.
- 8 Thanks to Adrienne Martin for bringing this question to my attention.
- 9 It may be that there is a still broader level of relatedness that includes non-humans as well. As noted earlier, I am focusing here only on interpersonal ethics.
- 10 I note here that another prevalent notion in African philosophy, which is often evoked to ground rights, is the idea of human dignity. I do not pursue the idea here, as I find the idea of the common good a more interesting and distinctive feature of African ethical thought that need not rely on a theological commitment. African accounts of human dignity usually rely on theological assumptions, though there are some attempts to divorce the two. See, in particular, Gyekye (1997: 63–64) and Metz (2010).
- 11 Thanks to Richard Bett for pointing this out to me.

References

- Behrens, K. (2010) “Exploring African Holism with Respect to the Environment,” *Environmental Values* 19(4): 465–484.

- Bujo, B. (2001) *Foundations of an African Ethic*, New York: Crossroad Publishing Company.
- Gyekye, K. (1997) *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kagan, S. (1989) *The Limits of Morality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Metz, T. (2007) "Toward an African Moral Theory," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 15(3): 321–341.
- Metz, T. (2009) "African Moral Theory and Public Governance: Nepotism, Preferential Hiring, and Other Partiality," M. F. Murove, ed., *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, Durban: KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Metz, T. (2010) "Human Dignity, Capital Punishment, and an African Moral Theory: Toward a New Philosophy of Human Rights," *Journal of Human Rights* 9: 81–99.
- Metz, T. (2012) "An African Theory of Moral Status: A Relational Alternative to Individualism and Holism," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 15: 387–402.
- Mkhize, N. (2008) "Ubuntu and Harmony: An African Approach to Morality and Ethics," R. Nicholson, ed., *Persons in Community*, Durban: KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Nozick, R. (1990) "Love's Bond," *The Examined Life*, New York: Touchstone.
- Oruka, O. and Juma, C. (1994) "Ecophilosophy and Parental Earth Ethics," O. Oruka, ed., *Philosophy, Humanity, and Ecology*, Nairobi: ACTS Press.
- Railton, P. (1984) "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 13: 134–171.
- Shutte, A. (2009) "Ubuntu as the African Ethical Vision," M. F. Murove, ed., *African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics*, Durban: KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Velleman, J. (1999) "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109: 338–374.
- Williams, B. (1981) "Persons, Character, and Morality," *Moral Luck*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wolf, S. (2012) "'One Thought Too Many': Love, Morality, and the Ordering of Commitment," U. Heuer and G. Lang, eds., *Luck, Value, and Commitment: Themes from the Ethics of Bernard Williams*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

LOVE AND MORAL STRUCTURES

How Love Can Reshape Ethical Theory

J.L.A. Garcia

Dante Alighieri famously concludes his *Divine Comedy* by proclaiming his faith that it is love that moves the stars in their orbits. Whatever its importance in astronomy, a good case can be made that our love for one another drives and shapes our moral lives and features: that our virtues and vices, duties, and obligations, even what within our world is either desirable or undesirable, need to be analyzed in terms of that love. This entry explores how focusing on love as central to morality can illuminate, and provide strong grounding for, possibilities for morality's theory, shape, and dynamics that philosophers have usually overlooked or neglected.

Though our interest is secular, philosophical study, this point becomes clear when we think of love within the context of the Biblical command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Love, in the sense of the neighbor-love that God commands, is one of the chief sites of Western thought about love's place within morality. The philosopher needn't think of neighbor-love as a divine imperative. Indeed, one way of understanding what some have called "the Enlightenment project" is to view the ethical thinkers of 17th and 18th-century Europe, during which intellectuals (and, later, the wider society) became increasingly post-Christian, as striving to find some new authority—pure reason for some thinkers, human benevolence and sympathy for others—behind the moral norms familiar from Christianity's love commands. So conceived, the Enlightenment moralists wanted to retain Christianity's moral norms, and sought to find secure and secular backing for them, even as these thinkers largely moved away from or downplayed the Christian religion's claims. The most striking, lasting, and influential of these secularized versions of love-morality are probably the various forms of utilitarianism that developed and quickly proliferated, with their single and cardinal principle of benevolence (sometimes called "happiness" or "utility" in a special and confusing sense of the latter term).

Understanding morality in terms of love for persons as our neighbors—a conception here to be treated philosophically as a central part of Western moral traditions, rather than religiously as revealed truth—points the way toward moral theory that evaluates persons, their motivations and traits, and actions and omissions according to love, motivating us to ask, How loving was (or is, or would be) this action? What makes the response of some subject, *L*, to someone, *S*, and *L*'s treatment of *S* to be a relevantly loving response and suitably loving treatment? Note four things. First, we think love, especially when conceived as benevolence, is a moral virtue. If love is central to morality, then so too is virtue. Second, love connects and relates one person to another, or perhaps to a group. If being loving is what matters most, it follows that person-to-person relationships are

what matter most. These two points combine to suggest that another morally important question about action is, How was (or is, or would be) this action loving? i.e., Does what the agent seeks in acting fit the kind of relationship that she and the other share? Third, when one person loves another, then the first cares for the latter; she cares in a positive way about the latter's welfare. Whether you are being loving, including acting lovingly, and whether you are being unloving, even malicious, toward me thus depends on your stance (how you stand in your mind) with regard to my well-being. That means that behaving morally or immorally is not chiefly a matter of bringing about an optimal state of the world or pleasing the greater number, nor following dictates of pure reason, nor winning oneself a heavenly reward. Fourth, these implications show how attention to love directs our moral attention to what goes into an action, its motivational input, rather than on its output. Indeed, an action's results are irrelevant to whether it is a loving act. What makes an action loving is what is in the agent's mind, specifically what she wants and seeks for someone and how that aligns with the latter's well-being. In this way, the moral agent's attention is on the loved one's welfare, and not, as in some recent moral theories, on the overall value of a state of affairs, or on producing the greatest possible good in general.

For a subject to live morally, once love is placed at the center of moral inquiry, is for her to devote herself to people's well-being; for her to behave immorally is for her to act in a way that expresses her hostility, or indifference, to someone, whether this is a deep and lasting disposition of hers or just a passing, isolated, or superficial bit of ugliness. Treating love, and especially neighbor-love, as central to morality can thus be seen to raise several questions whose answers suggest novel ways of rethinking ethical theory. More specifically, they point to ways of thinking about the neglected topics of morality structures and dynamics. By "structures" here we can understand how morality's parts, different families of moral concepts—for example, aretaic (i.e., virtue) concepts; deontic concepts (such as those of the right and wrong, and the permitted, obligatory, and forbidden); and concepts of the desirable or valuable—stand in relation one to another. By "dynamics" we understand the flow of force/influence within morality, such as what it is in this virtuous or vicious attitude, for instance, that makes a certain state of affairs to be desirable, and a certain action to be obligatory or wrong.

How Love Can Shape Morality's Meta-Theory

The love that interests us here is love, chiefly benevolence, in one person for this or that person. So conceived, love generates and shapes a certain form of relationship between them, and often these relationships are or involve roles. These role-relationships differ one from one another in several ways, including the form of love for which they call (willing which goods for the loved one?), the level of good will they demand, and how important the distinctive type of good will is within the relationship. This variance generates a relativity that is crucially internal to morality. This is not the supposed cultural relativism thought to bedevil objective morals but, rather, a recognition that it is her diverse relationships with people that constitutes anyone's moral life.

Love is love for some person or persons, not for some overall good or the optimal state of affairs. Nor is it automatically true that the more I love you the more goods I try to get you. (Perhaps I want goods for you more intensely—for example—rather than simply wanting you to possess more goods.) So, a love ethic as such is neither optimizing nor maximizing and, for that reason, cannot be any standard form of consequentialism. (There are also deeper reasons, to which I turn below, for it to be anti-consequentialist.) At the same time, although obedience to someone's instructions can be an act of love for her (as it often is with a parent), that is not so for command of one's own reason. Nor need merely keeping a contract be loving. It follows that a love ethic fits no familiar form of so-called deontological ethics. Not Kant's or contractualist

variants, certainly. Moreover, Ross famously insists that none of his “prima facie” duties requires acting from any specific motives, and so cannot accommodate an ethics that revolves around love. I suggest that love’s centrality supports a virtues-based theory of moral action.

Stressing love, however, can open our eyes to a wider range of options for moral theory, even as it supports some options over others. Insofar as love is the core of morality, being immoral must consist in being unloving. It follows that to assess my reactions and actions, we must look chiefly to how they relate me to the well-being of involved parties, not to my own interest or those of society, nor to commands from pure (including divine) reason as a whole. So egoism, rationalism, social welfarism, and simplistic forms of divine-command ethics are all ruled out. As love is love of someone, being unloving and acting unlovingly must always consist in departing from love in respect to some person. Thus, any wrongdoing will amount to wronging someone; any failure in or violation of duty has to violate a duty *to* someone whom the agent is to love. There are no free-floating unassigned duties, *pace* Ross (again, and many others), as there can be no free-floating undirected love. Further, since love constitutes, and occurs within, a person-to-person relationship, it follows that love is a virtue someone has as occupying this or that relationship with somebody. Anyone’s virtues, and the duties that derive from them, are ones she has within certain salient role-relationships. Finally, since each person—as Christians might say, each neighbor—matters morally, it makes sense for an agent to approach cases in which she cannot act in a fully loving way to everyone—surely, these will comprise virtually all situations in she acts—with a resolve to set herself a floor beneath which she will not sink in responding lovingly to anyone. That differs from a resolve to maximize good across all person or to minimize overall evil. Similarly, the right-thinking moral theorist will look to the same factors in judging an action, which she should understand as the agent’s motivated behavioral response to relevant persons.

In these ways, closely attending to love can inform morality’s metatheory, revealing possibilities seldom noticed. It becomes apparent, for example, that morality can be seen as pervasively relational, though it is seldom viewed that way; that actions may matter for what goes into them, though theorists more often look to what results; that value-judgments and norms of action may rely on more basic claims about what is virtuous, while the opposite is more commonly assumed; that what is important is how a subject is oriented to the well-being of particular persons, not her stance vis-à-vis the greater good, supposed commands of pure reason (whether within one’s own mind or God’s), what principles others could reject, or various other options that clever theorists have advanced. Below I say a bit more about each of these options under the rubrics virtues-basing, patient-focus, input-drive, role-relativity, and serial consideration. Love, as benevolence, is a moral virtue and therein comprises states of mind, attitudinal stances, and a set of dispositions both to act and to react (emotionally, desideratively) in certain ways. Can virtue and, with it, vice, be fundamental in moral theory? Here are two ways in which such a view is attractive. One is that understanding what is impersonally valuable and disvaluable can be appealingly analyzed in terms of virtue and vice. Another is that wrongdoing and such other deontic concepts can also be similarly understood. On value, it makes sense to understand the way in which your being healthy, say, is valuable and desirable as its being virtuous of and in us to value and want it, while vicious of us to disvalue and spurn it. This way of thinking also both captures and helps solve a problem within a line of analysis that has followed on Brentano’s famous definitions of the good as what it is correct (*richtig*) to love and incorrect (*unrichtig*) to hate, and of the bad as what it is correct to hate and incorrect to love. The concepts of the correct and incorrect, after all—and so too those of the fitting, apt, appropriate, suitable, etc., that later thinkers substituted for them—are fresh evaluative concepts that raise all the same problems that goodness and badness do. In contrast, virtue and vice are merely related, familiar, and less problematic

conceptions of being good and bad, since a thing's virtues tend to make it good as something of its kind and at something it does, and its vices tend to make it bad as and at those same things. They require minimal additional theorizing and don't threaten the forms of "queerness" of which intrinsic value has been accused. We here employ the term "virtues-basing" to pick out this thesis that such concepts as that of impersonally valuable and disvaluable states of affairs and the so-called "thin" deontic concepts of morally obligatory, duty-fulfilling or duty-violative, right, wrong, licit, and permitted and forbidden actions (and omissions) should also be analyzed in terms of virtue and vice.

As I suggested, this thesis offers answers that are at least initially attractive to several long-standing problems in ethical theory. Such a conception of norms of moral action replaces "thin" talk of right and wrong with the "thicker" (more descriptively rich) and therein clearer idiom of virtue and vice, a change that Williams persuasively urged. It also promises to give Richardson the "transparency" he wants in moral norms. He thinks the way to settle moral quandaries (or, at least, to make progress when confronting them) is to "specify" one or both of the conflicting norms to see if it contains an implicit exception for the difficult case. To do that, however, we must work with norms that have enough substantive content that we can see their point, significance, limits. Now replace a "thin" and opaque norm that simply rules out lying with "thicker" claims, couched in the language of virtue and vice, that lying is as such deceptive, duplicitous, dishonest, manipulative, mendacious, and so on, and that, as such, lying stands opposed to the speaker's lovingly (benevolently) willing her audience the good of true belief. That move helps us see not just that lying is objectionable but how it is wrong; the new discourse specifies objections to it. If some lie is morally acceptable, this suggests, then it must be a lie that is not meant to deceive, is not two-faced, involves no real dishonesty to, nor manipulation of, the person(s) addressed. (Of course, it is unlikely that any lie can escape such viciousness, so I agree with Augustine and Kant that lying is inevitably immoral.) In contrast, stabbing someone is normally vicious, and therein wrong, because it is malicious, but a surgical incision is usually neither.

Sharpness is a virtue in a knife because its sharpness tends to make its distinctive work (cutting) go well, and therein its being sharp counts toward its being a good knife. Likewise, a knife's dullness is a flaw, a vice in it, in that a dull knife is to that extent a bad (poor) knife. In general, as Aristotle indicates, anything's virtues tend to make it a good instance of its kind, and its vices a bad, inferior instance. Suppose that moral virtues and vices work the same way, so that her having them tends to make someone a good *K*, i.e., good thing-of-kind-*K1*, or a bad *K2*, instance of kind *K2*. Your acting lovingly, as in virtuously helping someone, or unlovingly, as when you viciously harm her, presumably, must make you good or bad to her—that is, a good or bad *R* to her—and thus good or bad in some relationship that you stand in with her. Maybe it makes you a good or bad friend, or sibling, or co-worker, or fellow citizen, of hers. Then your virtues and vices are features that you have within and relative to some relationship between you and her. I introduce the term "relationship relativity" for the view that all of a person's moral features—meaning her virtues and vices, and the moral duties, obligations, and rights that, I hold, derive from them—are features that she has within role-relationships with various persons. This essential relationship-relativity goes beyond Darwall's proposal of theorizing a "second-person standpoint" to accommodate obligation and accountability, and helps realize Sheffler's quest for a kind of moral theory that hinges on moral reasons that are tied to relationships. Note that it retains the needed insight that morality is universal, connecting everyone to everyone, but it does so without the austere and problematic ideas that we can do wrong without wronging anyone; that we have bare duties owed to no one; that there are things someone ought or ought not to do or omit but are not such that she ought as a *K1* to do them or ought not to

them because she is a *K2*; that free-floating properties of value and disvalue have inexplicably settled on some things but not others (an idea that Santayana memorably derided); that my moral virtues and vices help make me good and bad but, unlike any other virtues, not good or bad in specific ways, within specific offices or functions, and to specific parties.

With respect to actions, various types of an agent's loving benevolence consist in character virtues, or in instances of virtuous motivation, that input her actions and omissions. We can give the name "input drive" to the claim that what determines an action's (im)morality is the agent's mentality in performing it. This idea, that what shapes our behavior's moral status is always what goes into it rather than what comes out of it, stands in sharp contrast to several forms of the consequentialism (and, more weakly, consequence-sensitivity) that many advocate. Whether consequences are understood narrowly as what is caused to occur, or quite broadly as the subsequent state of the whole world, they are conduct's outputs. Treating actions as morally important for their consequences (actual or probable), however, reduces their agents to mere generators of what is assumed really to matter, events and state of affairs. (Intended, expected, and sometimes even foreseeable consequences, in contrast, matter very much to an action's morality because of their obvious relevance to whether and how it is vicious. Of course, actual effects matter to responsibility, because they constitute a large part of that for which the action's agent must answer.) In contrast, attending to virtuous love as basic restores focus to the agent's personhood—her acting *for* reasons, *to* achieve goals, *from* some considerations, and in the *face* of certain others—and thence indicates that her actions chiefly matter morally as external expressions of what is internal to her. In this way, love's input-driven account of conduct's treats moral agents as human persons, and that stress on its motivational input as determining their behavior's deontic and other moral features helps us understand morality as both personalist and humanistic.

The kind of love we discuss here is love *of* a person *by* a person. As we mentioned, such love helps constitute some important forms of relationship between the lover and the loved. They might be wife and husband, sister and brother, mother or father and daughter or son; or they might be each other's friend, neighbor, co-worker, partner, mutual citizen, or simply fellow wayfarer on life's journey. Let us designate it "patient focus" when that mentality's morality is shaped by how the subject's motives and other attitudes stand with respect to the welfare (especially needs and interest) of the person(s) with whom she is related by and within relevant role-relationships. Plainly, not every way of being connected to someone counts toward constituting a person's moral life, but, just as clearly, some do. Perhaps we should say that the morally constitutive roles are the ones that have such features as these. They are somewhat lasting, are temporally and geographically common, are open to anyone in the right circumstances, generate and justify expectations so as in effect to assign functions or offices, and they are relationships that a human being is naturally disposed to have filled in her life without her being naturally averse to filling in someone's life. In any case, this patient focus offers an intuitively attractive and theoretically advantageous alternative to egoism, cultural relativism, social constructionism, simple forms of divine-command theory, and other ways of identifying the source and nature of our moral duties, virtues, and other features.

Regarding love as key to, and at the heart of, morality in the ways just sketched thus helps bring into view moral structures of two kinds. One is how what we may call the various families of morally crucial concepts and features—valuable and disvaluable state of affairs; forbidden, permitted, and required conduct; and what is virtuous and vicious—stand relative one to another. I have here contended that it is the last family, that of virtue and vices, that is fundamental, both grounding the other two families and being internal to them. The other kind of structure is the logical construction of moral claims. Focus on love helps us to see that no state

of the world is simply good or bad in an impersonal way, but only morally desirable or undesirable, valuable or disvaluable, in that anyone's wanting or valuing it is vicious, meaning that it tends to make bad to someone within some morally salient role-relationship she occupies relative to that person. Again, it illuminates the fact that no action or omission is simply forbidden, but only wrong (etymologically, twisted) in this or that way, by drastically deviating from what would be virtuous within this or that relationship, and thus to this or that person. Finally, it shows how virtues and vices are never intrinsically good or bad, as some have recently contended (Slote, Adams) but, rather, are features someone's having which counts toward her being bad within some person-to-person relationship; that is, it tends to make her a bad *R1* in regard to that person or a bad *R2* with respect to that one.

Contemplating love within ethical theory in these ways also reveals what we can helpfully call moral dynamics. By that, I mean the flow of moral features across various bearers. Thus, on the account proposed here it is the fact that your loving me as, say, your friend or neighbor (in the narrow, literal sense or with the Christians' universalist scope) that makes you a relevantly good friend and therein morally virtuous. Then, in turn, it is that latter fact that makes your health morally desirable (virtuous of any of us to want) and your illness morally disvaluable, vicious to value. From there, it is the viciousness of anyone's wanting, valuing, or otherwise favoring your being sick, or the viciousness of her caring nothing about your well-being, that normally also makes actions from such an attitude vicious and therein wrong (awry), contrary to what virtue requires and demands of you in her relationship with you. This approach contrasts with other models of moral dynamics, for instance the view that it is your being healthy's being good in itself that makes it my duty to maximize it (other things equal) or its being an imperative of pure reason to do good to you that makes wanting to prosper virtuous.

As here conceived, various forms of love are virtues in that they count toward the lover being a good instance of her relevant kind, even as sharpness tends to make the knife that has it a good knife. Unlike sharpness, of course, the types of goodwill are moral virtues. Why? My contention is that anyone's being good morally consists in her being a good friend to this person, a good neighbor to that one, a good steward with respect to herself, and so on. The classic account of virtue, however, is Aristotle's, and he held that the moral virtues make someone good as a human being. How should the theorist decide between the two views? The idea that being human is, as Aristotle supposed, much like playing the flute in that each has a *telos*, an immanent purpose or function, is widely rejected. In contrast, none would deny there is such a thing as being a better worse friend, neighbor, steward, etc. Whether or not we reject that idea that being human has a *telos* is correct, there is a bigger issue. It is intuitively appealing to think that moral success or failure amounts to benefitting or failing various people in different ways, and the role-relativity approach captures this well. More important, moral failure in particular usually, and perhaps always, has one or more victims, and the agent herself is seldom the central one. This fact is, again, well accommodated in the role-relativity approach, but less so in the Aristotelian.

At a deeper level, though, we might not need to pick one of these approaches to moral virtue to the exclusion of the other. If we highlight Aristotle's famous claim that humans are essentially social animals, and further specify that this means not just that humans need to be around others but that they flourish from having people fill certain roles in their lives, then someone's human flourishing will largely comprise her role-relationships. Still, as conceived here, your being a good friend, or neighbor, or spouse to me is virtuous in you mainly because of the way it advances *my* well-being, not yours. It is not clear to me that the Aristotelian approach, at least as it is usually understood, can capture this patient focus.

Love as Key to Social and Political Theory: A Snapshot of Racism

Placing love at the center of moral theorizing can also helpfully reshape our philosophical thinking on some social and political topics. Take racism. Reconceiving the core of racism as racialized and vicious distance from moral virtues of goodwill and justice is comprehensively illuminating. (See Glasgow's review of the recent philosophical literature and positions on racism's nature and immorality.) It explains racism's inherent immorality. Because our vice can infect not only our individual actions and beliefs, but also things we do with others, including establishing and operating social institutions, it accommodates the broad spectrum of things we know are racist. Thus, it unites personal racism with institutional(ized), and in principle even with systemic and structural racism. It ties anti-racism to concepts at the heart of Black activists' invocation of a Protestant Social Gospel, and captures Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s ideal of a "beloved community," understood as a society freed from race-based hostility, callousness, contempt, and indifference. Such a view can extend to explaining how my racism can come to contaminate your behavior as when you defer to me by refusing to serve or admit or hire or otherwise those to whom I object on racial grounds, though you yourself hold no independent brief against their race. Some contend that paternalistic racists disprove any such love-based account as that just suggested, on grounds that the racial paternalist feels and acts from love but nevertheless mistreats her victims. Against that, we should remember that love as good will requires willing goods to the loved, and personal love thus demands willing her that she have the goods normally peculiar to mature personhood: including those of self-governance and the breadth and forms of stewardship necessary to exercise her responsibility for herself. In short, the sort of person-to-person love that counts as a moral virtue must include respect for the loved one as someone possessed of special dignity and accountable for herself. The paternalistic racist treats her victims as if they were children and therein fails properly, adequately, or virtuously to love them since she does not will for them (and may will them not to have) among the most important goods.

By allowing that different levels and kinds of love are appropriate and owed within different relationships, this approach may fruitfully accommodate and illuminate a difference that Lebron thinks he finds between Martin Luther King, Jr. and James Baldwin. As he interprets them, King urged on African Americans something close to Christian *agape*, a disinterested love for everybody as neighbors that culminates in building "the beloved community," while Baldwin's discussion is more complicated. His focus is on the necessary but difficult task of Black people loving Whites. Though no longer Christian in his mature years, the former preacher still saw love as central to social relations, including race relations. Black people's civil rights would benefit them little in a society in which they remained objects of contempt, callousness, and hostility, nor would overcoming the many ways in which American culture encourages and reinforces those unloving attitudes be easy for White people. Baldwin was even less sanguine about the challenge to love that Black people face. Whites must be loved, he insisted, because "every human being is an unprecedented miracle." Despite the way White people treat Black, he wrote his nephew, "you must accept them with love." Still, that will often be what some call "tough love." For integration to mean anything, Baldwin continued, it had to mean that "we, with love, will force our brothers to see themselves as they are, to cease fleeing reality and begin to change it." So, as Baldwin sees it, Black people must strive, despite many Whites' resistance and hatred, to love Whites with genuine benevolence, the kind that seeks what is beneficial to the other, what she needs, even when the latter doesn't acknowledge that need and fights against doing and being what is good for her. In this love that comprises being there for the other, an oppressed person also affirms her own dignity and rights and therein loves herself.

Thus, African Americans need not choose between loving themselves with self-respect, despite the obstacles to it that racism poses, and a universal (respectful) love. Rather, anyone can and should feel and act with special affection for some people, even as they also feel some significant love for everyone else as well.

The wider phenomenon behind this last point has been called “differential ethical pull.” As conceived here, love is virtuous in regard to, and is owed, anyone, so the approach is universalist; but more love is owed some than others, so it is not impartialist. Rather, the ethical pull on one’s devotion varies from one person to another depending on her relationship to oneself.

In conclusion, moral(ly virtuous) love consists in willing good for the beloved’s sake. It is universal (directed toward each person), grounded in inherent fellowship as recognition of shared fate and projects and in our mutual vulnerability and dependency. It includes respect for the person loved and it both constitutes and occurs within relationships that constitute our moral lives. What I have tried to delineate above is how the virtues of love can lead us to new ways of theorizing moral life: seeing it to be based on virtues (many of which are forms of love), always relativized to certain vitally important role-relationships, focused on the well-being of the loved one, and as both categorizing and evaluating actions and omissions according to how loving they are, and in which way they are loving. That should lead us to a sharp shift in how we conceive the realm of our moral features, including what we hold to have impersonal value or disvalue, to shape our moral virtues and vices, and to constitute our moral duties and obligations.

Some Relevant Texts

- Adams, Robert M. (2009) *A Theory of Virtue: Excellence in Being for the Good*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baldwin, James. *Baldwin: Collected Essays*. New York: Library of America, 1998.
- Brentano, Franz. (2009) *Origins of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Darwall, Stephen. (2009) *Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Feltham, Brian and John Cottingham. Eds. (2010) *Partiality and Impartiality: Morality, Special Relationships, and the Wider World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Garcia, J.L.A. (2015) “From Neighbor-Love to Utilitarianism, and Back: Uncovering Some Structures and Dynamics for Ethical Theory.” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 89, 1–32.
- Glasgow, Joshua. (2009) “Racism as Disrespect.” *Ethics* 120:1, 64–93.
- King, Martin Luther. (1956) Address to Institute on Nonviolence and Social Change, December meeting of Montgomery (Alabama) Improvement Association, Holt Street Baptist Church.
- Lebron, Christopher. (2017) *Making of Black Lives Matter: A Brief History of an Idea*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Marsh, Charles. (2005) *Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice from the Civil Rights Movement to Today*. New York: Basic Books.
- Richardson, Henry. (1990) “Specifying Norms as a Way to Resolve Concrete Ethical Problems” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 19:4, 279–310.
- Ross, W.D. (1930) *The Right and the Good*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Santayana, George. (2007) *Winds of Doctrine: Studies in Contemporary Opinion*. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger.
- Scheffler, Samuel. (2010) “Morality and Reasonable Partiality.” In *Partiality and Impartiality: Morality, Special Relationships, and the Wider World*, 98–130. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Slote, Michael. (2001) *Morals from Motives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sommers, Christina Hoff. (1986) “Filial Morality.” *Journal of Philosophy* 83:8, 439–456.
- Williams, Bernard. (2011) *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. Abingdon: Routledge.

MORAL NORMATIVITY AND THE NECESSITIES OF LOVE

Harry Frankfurt

Prologue

We are accustomed, I suspect, to thinking that Descartes escaped from his self-imposed skepticism about knowledge by encountering the *cogito* and by then deriving from this encounter the principle that whatever is clearly and distinctly perceived is true. This is quite correct, as far as it goes. However, it overlooks—or, at least, it neglects—an important feature of the movement of Descartes’s inquiry.

What leads Descartes to appreciate the epistemological importance of the *cogito* is not—at least not explicitly, or in the first instance—a recognition that clear and distinct perception is an infallible and indispensable indicator of truth. What leads him to this critical step is, rather, his recognition that the *cogito* is something which he *cannot help believing*.

What he sets out to do, in the *Meditations*, is not—first of all—to find *truth*. His most immediate goal it is to find something which he cannot doubt—something altogether indubitable. He writes, “I shall proceed by setting aside all that in which the least doubt could be supposed to exist ... and I shall ever follow in this road until I have met with something which is certain” (Descartes 1641/1911, p. 13).

His first certainty is, of course, exactly what the *cogito* provides. Then, having made this discovery of its indubitability, Descartes is led by the *cogito* to his criterion for truth. And subsequently, as we know, he resolves his so-called “metaphysical” doubt by arguing that the God who created his mind could not have been so malevolent as to give him a mind with which he could not help but believe what is false.

The “metaphysical” possibility that *he might be deceived* by what he perceives clearly and distinctly is, I think, the possibility that his clear and distinct perceptions might be incompatible. He would thereby be vulnerable to the possibility of finding himself unable to avoid accepting an incoherent set of beliefs. His proof that the Creator is benevolent is supposed to establish a barrier against this anxiety.

But never mind about that. For now, I want only to call attention to the critically significant role in Descartes’s inquiry of his recognition that there are certain things which he simply cannot help believing. This provides a solid first terminus in his effort to avoid, or to escape from, his methodological skepticism and its corrosive doubts. Moreover, it offers a promising opportunity for relying on its example to articulate a reliable criterion of truth.

It is his encounter with actual indubitability, then, which puts at least a provisional end to Descartes's struggle with doubt; and it is this experience of *indubitability* which guides him to his ultimate epistemological principle, according to which whatever he perceives clearly and distinctly is incontrovertibly true. At bottom the only explicit guarantee of the reliability of clear and distinct perception is that what is clearly and distinctly perceived is indubitable: it cannot be doubted. What is clearly and distinctly perceived can be believed—given resolution of the metaphysical doubt—without any anxiety that confidence in that belief may someday be undermined.

Goals

I want now to begin to develop what has struck me as an analogous account of the role of indubitability in resolving our skeptical anxieties concerning the acquisition and recognition of moral truths. I propose to take what I regard as some initial steps toward the attainment of two particular philosophical goals.

The first of these goals is the elaboration of a thoroughly naturalistic account of moral normativity. By that, I mean an account in which moral normativity is shown to be derivable entirely from empirically recognizable features of common human experience. In effect, this would amount to a rebuttal of the widely held doctrine of the so-called “naturalistic fallacy,” according to which it is always illegitimate to try to derive an “ought” from an “is.”

My second goal is to delineate both the respect in which moral normativity is fundamentally a rational and objective matter and, on the other hand, the respect in which it is fundamentally subjective.

The secure attainment of these two goals would, together, reveal how moral normativity is essentially grounded sufficiently in compelling personal experience, while acknowledging, at the same time, the objectivity and rationality which moral normativity is generally supposed to enjoy.

Anti-Subjectivism

There are certain philosophers who maintain that moral judgments are susceptible either to decisive rational justification, or to decisive rational rejection, on—and only on—the basis of unimpeachably objective considerations. These philosophers insist that moral judgments must not be understood to depend essentially, for warranted affirmation or denial, on any ultimately subjective considerations—such as, for instance, facts concerning what a person desires, or facts concerning a person's inclinations or attitudes. They claim, in other words, that it must be possible to establish the acceptability or the unacceptability of a moral judgment entirely by the exercise of objective reason, without appealing at all to the occurrence or to the absence of one or another subjective state of mind.

Among the most prominent philosophers who have recently advanced and defended the anti-subjectivist position are Philippa Foot and Michael Smith. Foot's claim is that the subjectivist account of morality simply cannot be correct: “it just can't be ...,” she peremptorily declares,

that morality, in the end, is just the expression of an attitude.... [If that were what it is, then] whatever reasons might be given for a moral judgment, people might without error refuse to assent to it, not finding the pertinent feelings or attitudes in themselves.... [T]here is no way, if one takes this [subjectivist] line ... that one could

imagine oneself, saying to a Nazi, “but we are right, and you are wrong,” with there being any substance to the statement. Faced with Nazis who felt that they had been justified in doing what they did, there could simply be a stand-off.

“And I thought,” Foot concludes, “morality just cannot be subjective in the way that different attitudes, like some aesthetic ones, or likes and dislikes, are subjective” (Foot 2003, p. 34).

As for Smith, the threat of moral subjectivism appears to arouse in him an even more disturbing anxiety. He warns alarmingly of “the panic that we rightly feel when we reflect upon the possibility that we can give no privileged rational defense of moral concern” (Smith 1989, p. 103). To protect ourselves from experiencing this panic, he believes, we must maintain the conviction that human reason enjoys a legitimate and effective authority to evaluate moral judgments objectively.

Foot and Smith are evidently driven by a similar concern. They worry that if a subjectivist way of construing moral judgments were correct, it would be necessary to concede that there is no such thing as a genuinely solid and authoritative moral reality, which is independent of the subjective vagaries of the human mind and against which the truth or falsehood of a moral judgment might therefore be objectively measured. In that case, moral disputes could not satisfactorily be resolved on the neutral and impersonal grounds of reason. The acceptability or the unacceptability of a moral judgment could only be determined by referring for determinative evidence to the often conflicting feelings and attitudes by which various individuals happened disparately to be moved.

People are notoriously heterogeneous regarding what they like and desire or what they dislike and do not desire, what they are inclined to allow or to prohibit, what appeals deliciously to them and what they find appalling. The dictates of reason, on the other hand, are inescapably the same for everyone: whether a certain argument is valid or invalid, whether a certain proposition is or is not self-contradictory, whether a certain empirical state of affairs does or does not obtain—these matters are independent of what anyone (or, indeed, of what everyone) happens to think or to feel about them.

Foot and Smith believe that if morality were to lack a rational foundation, in a stable and objective moral reality, there would be no way to provide universally decisive justifications of moral judgments. By the same token, there would be no decisive way to refute, or justifiably to condemn, an opponent whose moral judgments were based on his or her own opposing attitudes or feelings. Both Foot and Smith are fundamentally troubled by the thought that if moral subjectivism were the correct account of morality, it would be rationally unjustified for us confidently either to endorse a moral claim or to regard the denial of that claim as a mistake. We would be unable reasonably to maintain that the moral views of even our most viciously inhumane enemies are erroneous.

The whole enterprise of moral advocacy would then collapse, terrifyingly, into an inchoate morass of idiosyncratic propensity and sentiment.

Self-Defense

Foot calls attention especially to what she alleges to be the importance of our being warranted to maintain confidently that the moral views of the Nazis were not right but wrong. Now, it goes without saying that Nazi morality was horrifyingly depraved, and that we were unequivocally justified in undertaking to expunge it and its executors from our civilization. But was it really essential, as Foot evidently believes it was, for us to have contended that the moral beliefs of the Nazis were erroneous, or wrong?

So far as I can see, it was not actually important for us to believe that the moral views of the Nazis were mistaken. The fact is, I believe, that—so far as opposing the Nazis goes—reasonable and adequate grounds of quite another sort were available to us, in supporting our appreciation that their views were dangerously repulsive or hateful. More generally, it is my view that we may be quite genuinely justified in considering a person's behavior to be drastically objectionable, and to regard ourselves as quite warranted in trying to repel it, without supposing that any of that person's pertinent beliefs is a mistake.

Consider this: it would widely be agreed that, if someone were attacking one of my beloved children, it would be entirely justifiable, or even mandatory, for me to defend my child—perhaps even violently—against the attack. This wide agreement that such a response would be justified does not rest, as I see it, on any judgment that the attackers must have made a mistake.

The fact that I love my child entails quite strictly that, when it seems to me that the child is in danger, I will be moved powerfully to protect it. This is, in part, what loving something means: it means that the lover identifies the interests of the beloved as the lover's own interests. Accordingly, for me to offer proportionate resistance to an attack on the well-being of what I love is rationally justifiable as constituting, in effect, an act of self-defense.¹

The trouble with the Nazis was not essentially that, with regard to issues of morality, they had made a mistake. Nor was it necessary for us to believe that they were in error in order reasonably to have considered ourselves justified in aiming to destroy them. The most conspicuously alarming trouble with the Nazis was not that they were in error. It was that they threatened irreparable injury to something—our culture and our ideals—which we love.²

Love

Foot is skeptical that a subjectivist morality can account for such transparently reasonable and compelling moral intuitions as that it was substantially justified for us to stand up to the Nazis. I believe that her doubts rest upon a narrow understanding of the kinds of subjective states to which a subjectivist theory of moral judgments must consider moral judgments to refer. She imagines, mistakenly, that subjectivism necessarily considers moral judgments to rest upon such states as “likes and dislikes”—in other words, upon attitudes and feelings which may be quite shallow and transient, which may merely happen casually to pass through our minds.

It would certainly be preposterous, as Foot correctly insists, to suppose that morality is supported by nothing more solid, or more steadily and more comprehensively authoritative, than ephemera of that sort. In my own subjectivist view, however, it is not at all on states of that kind that morality is grounded. What I maintain is that the sort of subjective state on which moral judgments are appropriately grounded is, rather, the state of love.

So, what is love? The conception of love I propose does not aim at encompassing every feature of the hopelessly disorderly set of conditions which people commonly think of as instances of love. The phenomena I have in mind include only what is, for my purposes, philosophically indispensable. Most especially, it is not to be confused with romantic passion, infatuation, dependency, lust, or similar varieties of psychic turbulence.

As I construe it, love is an involuntary, non-utilitarian, rigidly focused, and self-affirming concern for the existence and flourishing of what is loved. The object of love can be almost anything—a kind of experience, a person, a group, a moral ideal, a non-moral ideal, a tradition, whatever.

The lover's concern is rigidly focused, in that there can be no equivalent substitute for its object; the lover loves the object of love in its sheer particularity, and not as an exemplar of some

general type. The lover's concern is non-utilitarian, in that he or she cares about his or her beloved for its own sake, rather than only as a means to something else. The lover identifies himself or herself with what he or she loves, thus regarding the interests of the beloved as his or her own. This identification is involuntary, in that it is not under the immediate control of the will. A person cannot love—or stop loving—merely by deciding to do so, or by judging that it would be desirable to do so. Parmenides said that love is “the first-born offspring of necessity” (Burnet 1948, p. 177, fragment 13). We come to love because we cannot help loving. Love is a non-rational condition. It requires no reasons, and it can have anything as its cause.

Genuine love is certainly not a mere casual impulse. It is not a momentary flicker of sentiment or of inclination. To be sure, it may very well not be unshakably permanent; but, on the other hand, a person does not possess a natural capacity to initiate it or to dispel it immediately just by an exercise of will. Love is neither a product of voluntary choice, nor is it an instance of mere whimsy. It is formed deeply in a person's character and in the person's involuntary predilections—that is, in what the person is determined, by his or her own nature, to care about in a certain way; and it possesses, moreover, a native stability and endurance.

Furthermore, by virtue of the fact that love entails commanding requirements and constraints on the lover's behavior, it brings its own necessities and its own authority. It helps to define the limits or boundaries of the lover's will, and so to identify the essential shape of his or her volitional identity. Accordingly, love is (at least as I understand it) very far from being either transient or shallow.

Necessity

Against the view I have enunciated—that morality is grounded in love—Smith argues that what we love is too contingent a matter to support the kind of generic commitment morality requires. He speaks of the citizens of Leningrad who, during the Second World War, accepted horrendous burdens and sacrifices in defending their city against the Nazis. He suggests that although, to be sure, it might have been because they loved their city deeply that they were willing to accept those burdens and sacrifices, the love of their city would not have sufficed to justify what they did. It would not have sufficed, Smith argues, because the people of Leningrad could not have provided any satisfactory rational justification for loving Leningrad as they did. Of course, they could have given a general explanation of their love of Leningrad by referring to the fact that they had grown up there; but then, they would have had to acknowledge that they would probably have loved Berlin, and not Leningrad, if instead they had grown up in Berlin.

In Smith's view, the morally arbitrary contingency of what we happen to love makes it impossible to accept love as providing a sufficient authority for grounding a moral commitment that is truly binding. We presume that morality is in principle impersonal, and universal in scope. Accordingly, Smith maintains, we cannot understand its authority over an individual to depend on, or to be derivative from, particular contingent features of that person's circumstances.

Whatever an individual's contingent personal circumstances may happen to be, the individual is necessarily bound to comply with what morality impersonally and universally requires. And just as it is clear that the individual cannot elude these requirements in virtue of any contingencies, so it equally cannot be supposed that contingencies of any kind are the source of those requirements or their ground.

But—contrary to what Smith incorrectly contends—the insistent authority of love's requirements is not at all undermined or damaged by the fact that what a person loves is a contingent matter. It is true, no doubt, that the people of Leningrad might not have loved that city if they

had grown up elsewhere. But why should it be thought that their love of Leningrad was somehow, on that account, inadequately authoritative? After all, if the circumstances of our lives had been different, we might not have come to love the spouses and the children to whom—by our love for them—we are now actually bound. Acknowledging this surely does not mean that we must regard our present commitments to our spouses and to our children as less binding than they would have been if no other commitments had been possible.

Our devotion to our spouses and to our children, which is entailed by our love for them, is unquestionably immune from the fact that we might not have had that spouse or those children. A commitment is no less compelling because it is not a necessary fact that it has been incurred. A person's obligation to fulfill a promise is obviously not undermined, or in any fashion weakened, by the fact that the person might not have made that promise, but might have made some other promise instead, or might have made no promise at all.

The necessities entailed by a particular love are indeed only contingent necessities, since it is only a contingent fact that an individual happens to be bound by that particular love. But they are necessities nonetheless, from which the individual cannot escape merely at will. Thus, they bind sufficiently to satisfy the presumption that the commands and constraints of morality must be rigorously unavoidable. The necessity characterizing love spills over onto the beliefs and behaviors entailed by that love. Our sense of the inescapability of our love conveys itself to us in our apprehending that love's requirements are contingently necessary truths.

Universality

But it is not enough to point out that contingent love imposes necessities which, like the necessities imposed by morality, cannot voluntarily be either eluded or incurred. There remains the glaring fact that people do not all love the same things, and that some loves strike us as less rational than others. These facts may appear to imply that, if morality were to be based on love, the authority of the moral law would not be truly universal or rational. For it may seem that love is so various and so indiscriminate that it cannot avoid afflicting—with an ultimately inauthentic and unacceptable relativism—any morality that professes to derive indispensable and decisive support from love.

However, I think that there are actually certain things which all people do love and which they cannot help loving; and, in my view, it is precisely our love of those things that provides the source and the basis of our moral understandings. It is customary to be excessively attentive, it seems to me, to the variegated genetic and environmental determinants which account for what appears to be the radical distinctiveness of individual lives.

These determinants are supposed to ensure that there is no common human nature, and that each of us is unique. Now, perhaps we are indeed, in certain respects, all different. It may well be that, insofar as we are genetically conditioned and environmentally molded human beings, none of us is exactly the same as any other.

But while there may be no common strictly human nature, which each of us invariably shares, we do all share a common nature as human animals. There are, in fact, a variety of final goals—ends that move us in themselves—by which each of us is, in virtue of our nature as animal primates, innately conditioned. These are not merely means, in which we are interested because we think they will be helpful in enabling us to attain something else. They are final ends, which we desire for their own sakes. Moreover, we cannot help doing so; our desires for them are involuntary and stable elements of our nature. They may therefore appropriately be regarded as being, for us, objects of love. We do not love them because we have reasons for loving them. We love them just because that is how we are made.

Here are some of the ends-in-themselves which, by our very nature as human animals, we all seek and love: each of us naturally seeks to avoid bodily mutilation and harm, physical and psychological suffering, deprivation of what we need, and death; nor can we tolerate extended personal isolation, or prolonged and stupefyingly empty boredom. Furthermore, on account of our inborn tendency to imitate others and to reproduce something of their experience within ourselves, we have a natural empathy which leads us—in one degree or another—to care that these evils be avoided in their lives as well. We cannot help being charitably moved by vivid spectacles of the sufferings of others.

Avoiding each of these universally unwelcome conditions—and an enjoyment of their absence—is something to which we are by nature devoted. It is something which we love, and which we cannot help loving. It is a goal whose pursuit is, accordingly, authentically definitive (at least in part) of our true nature and of our true interest as human animals.

Of course, it goes without saying that circumstances may arise in which we would be willing, or even eager, to accept one or another among these normally and naturally hated evils. Under certain conditions, a person may agree to serious deprivation, or may accept death, or may voluntarily endure some other of the evils to which I have referred. In such cases, however, the evil which is desired or accepted is not loved. It continues to be counted as undesirable—as an evil; but in the circumstances, it counts as a lesser evil than some other, for the avoidance of which it is regarded as an indispensable means. It is not identified as an end-in-itself, or as an object of love, which is valued entirely for its own sake.

Now it seems to me that what we regard as the moral law develops as essentially an elaborated and refined prioritization and codification of principles or rules which are designed to lead toward the realization of these goals, and perhaps toward others comparably innate. This means that it is possible, after all, for a moral judgment or principle to be supported by reasons and to be objectively correct or mistaken: for, as a matter of objective fact, a principle or a particular judgment either does tend actually to the realization these final ends, or it does not.

Nonetheless, this is far from implying that morality is thoroughly objective. For the goals themselves, from which the constitution of morality essentially derives, are ends-in-themselves just because we love them. They are our final goals simply in virtue of various subjective states—that is, in virtue of certain inclinations, feelings, desires, and attitudes.

There remains, then, the critical question of whether morality can be justified, finally and rationally, by providing an acceptable basis for considering our love of these ultimate goals to be itself rational. For it is one thing to maintain that moral judgments can be evaluated objectively by measuring them against goals which are loved by everyone; but it is clearly quite another thing to maintain that it is rationally justifiable for us to love those goals instead of others. In other words, we must consider whether it is possible that morality—despite, or maybe even on account of, being grounded fundamentally on what we all naturally love—is basically not rational.

Rationality

A productive approach to dealing with this issue can be made, I believe, by considering Hume's contention that the dictates of morality are decidedly not rational. Hume makes this point in a famous example, with which he proposes to rule out there being any rational basis for our ultimate final ends. Even the most grotesque preferences, he insists in his example, are not irrational. More specifically, he says that "'tis not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger" (Hume 1739/1978, p. 416).

Now, it is true that this preference for destruction of the whole world involves no purely logical error. So far as logic alone is concerned, it is quite unobjectionable. Someone who

chooses to protect his finger from a trivial injury at the cost of unlimited destruction elsewhere is not thereby guilty of a contradiction, or of a faulty inference. In this purely formal sense of rationality, his choice is not at all irrational.

We would, of course, nonetheless condemn that choice. But how? What would we actually say of someone who embraced it? It seems clear to me that we would not merely complain against that person, as Foot would have wished us to complain against the Nazis, that we are right and that he (or she) is wrong. Most likely, we would not charge the person with making any sort of strictly cognitive mistake at all. What we would surely say is, rather, that the person “must be crazy.” In other words, despite the unassailability of his (or her) preference on strictly formal grounds, we would consider both it and him (or her) to be wildly irrational. Caring more about a scratched finger than about “the destruction of the whole world” is not just an error, or a blunder, or an unappealing quirk. It is lunatic. Anyone who truly has that preference is unmistakably a madman.

When we characterize the person in Hume’s example as “crazy,” or as a “lunatic,” or as “mad,” these epithets do not function, it seems to me, merely as vituperative rhetoric. They are to be taken more literally, as affirmations that the person is in some way not a rational creature. This means that there is, evidently, some commonly recognizable mode of rationality which is not essentially defined by a priori, formal necessities. Hume’s lunatic may be as competent as we are in constructing valid chains of inference, and in distinguishing between what is and what is not logically possible.

The irrationality in question is, apparently, not fundamentally a cognitive deficiency at all. People like the lunatic in Hume’s example are what I may call “volitionally irrational.” They suffer from a defect of the will, which bears on what are their final ends, and thus which bears on how they are disposed to choose and to act. In other words, it concerns what they love.

What leads us to consider people like these to be volitionally irrational is not that their preferences and final ends are simply different from ours. It is that the relative importance to them of protecting a finger and of destroying the world is altogether incommensurate with how much we care about those things. They are moved to bring about unimaginable destruction for a reason which strikes us as so inconsequential as hardly to justify incurring any cost at all. To the lunatic, an outcome from which we recoil in horror is entirely acceptable.

The critical point here has to do with possibilities: the lunatic is prepared to carry out voluntarily a choice which is for us *impossible*. It is a choice which we *could not bring ourselves* to make or to recommend. Manifestly, there are palpable analogies or parallels here between the contingent necessities of what I may call “volitional rationality” and the strictly formal, a priori requirements of pure reason. Both modes of rationality limit what is possible; and, accordingly, each imposes a corresponding necessity.

The boundaries of formal rationality are defined by the necessities of logic, to which no exceptions are conceivable. The boundaries of volitional rationality, on the other hand, are defined by the necessities of love. These volitional necessities do not effectively constrain our conceptual capacities. Rather, they constrain our will.

They limit what it is in fact possible for us to care about or to take as ends, what we are actually able to *accept* as reasons for action, and what we can really *bring ourselves* to do. Violations of the volitional necessities of love, unlike violations of the laws of logic, are not inconceivable. What stands in the way of violations of the requirements of love is, instead, that they are *unthinkable*.

It should be noted particularly that being volitionally rational is not a matter just of the choices which a person actually makes or which the person is actually inclined to make. It essentially involves being *incapable* of making certain choices. If someone undertakes to reach a coolly

deliberated and balanced judgment concerning whether it would be a good idea to destroy the entire world in order to avoid being scratched on a finger, that does not qualify the person as having demonstrated a conscientious rationality. Even if the person finally concludes that destroying the world to protect the finger is after all not such a good idea, the fact that it seemed appropriate for him (or her) to deliberate about it makes it clear that there is a serious aberration in the repertoire of what the person loves.

Rationality—properly understood—does not permit us to be open-minded, or judicially deliberative about absolutely everything. It requires that certain choices be, for us, utterly out of the question. Just as a person transgresses the boundaries of formal reason by supposing that some admittedly self-contradictory state of affairs might nevertheless be really possible, so a person transgresses the boundaries of volitional rationality by considering certain choices to be genuine options.

A person who is volitionally rational cannot bring himself (or herself) to do various things which, so far as power and skill alone are concerned, the person is entirely capable of doing. He or she is subject to a volitional necessity, by which his or her will is bound within certain limits. There are, in other words, intelligible courses of action which the person is constrained from deciding effectively to pursue.

The person may believe that a certain course of action would be appropriate, or even that it is mandated. The person may in fact decide on that basis to pursue that course of action. But, when the chips are down, he or she just cannot go through with it. The person cannot mobilize the will to implement the judgment. In virtue of the volitional necessities of love, by which the will of a person is bound, making a certain choice—or pursuing a certain course of action—is not genuinely among the person's options. It is simply unthinkable.

Realism

Now, what makes it unthinkable? Why are we unable to bring ourselves to decide upon, or to do, certain things? What accounts for our inability, or for our inflexible refusal, to include among our live options various alternatives which we are otherwise quite capable of adopting? What is the ground of the constraints on our will which volitional rationality entails? Descartes discovered that behind his inability to doubt certain things was clear and distinct perception. What lies behind our inability to make certain choices concerning action?

One view, endorsed by such philosophers as the aforementioned Foot and Smith, is that these volitional necessities are responses to a normative reality which is altogether independent of ourselves. On this account, certain things are *inherently* important. These things therefore provide us with objective reasons for acting in certain ways.

Their importance, and the fact that they provide those reasons, are not functions of our attitudes, or of our beliefs, or of our desires, or of subjective factors of any kind. They do not depend in any way on what we are *inclined* to accept as reasons for acting. In virtue of their supposed unequivocal objectivity, moreover, they possess an inescapable normative authority. It is the natural authority of what is real, to which all rational thought and conduct must seek to conform.

Advocates of objectivist moral theory ordinarily leave it very unclear by just what observation or procedure the independent reality of these reasons is supposed to become apparent to us. They generally simply assume that we do somehow recognize, with vivid clarity, that various things are inherently important. Once we have done that, we presumably cannot help accepting the authority of the reasons these things provide.

It is impossible for us to deny, or to hold back from acknowledging, the importance that is—so to speak—right before our eyes. After all, seeing is believing. Thus, what imposes

volitionally rational constraints on our will is, for philosophers like Foot and Smith, just the incontrovertibly compelling immediacy of reality itself.

This is the doctrine of “normative *realism*.” It holds that there are unambiguously objective reasons for us to act in various ways, whether we know those ways, or care about them, or not. If we fail to appreciate and to accept these reasons, we are making a mistake. The importance of reasons is inherent in them, according to moral realism, and therefore moral and practical reason are securely grounded in the independent reality of these governing norms.

My own view is different. I do not believe that anything is inherently important. In my judgment, normativity is not a feature of a reality which is independent of us. The standards of moral rationality are grounded, as far as I can see, only on ourselves. More particularly, they are not grounded on what we merely happen to care about. They are grounded, rather, on what we cannot help caring about and on what we cannot help considering to be important.

Our judgments concerning normative requirements can certainly get things wrong. There is indeed an objective normative reality, which is not up to us and to which we are bound to conform. However, this reality is not objective in the sense of being entirely outside our minds. Its objectivity consists precisely in the fact that it is outside the scope of our voluntary control.

Normative truths require that we should submit to them. What makes them inescapable, however, is not that they are grounded on some external and independent reality. They are inescapable because they are determined by volitional necessities which we can neither alter nor elude. In matters concerning moral normativity, the objective reality that requires us to be alert to the danger of error is a reality that is within ourselves.

Epilogue

I began this chapter with the suggestion that my account of moral normativity was, in certain respects, similar to what Descartes said in relating the outcome of his quest for certainty. We know, of course, that Descartes was not satisfied with discovering that there are certain things which he could not doubt. He wanted some reason to believe that those things are actually true. So, he went on to develop a proof that his mind was the creation of a benevolent deity who would surely not have handed him a mind which was irretrievably deceptive. This proof enabled him to be confident that those of his beliefs which were inescapably convincing could not be false.

So far as my account of moral normativity goes, I follow Descartes (though without argument) in presuming that respectable canons of volitional rationality do not lead to contradictory or incoherent moral judgments. I do not, however, follow his example in supposing that the confidence he seeks requires to be guaranteed by a proof of the existence of a benign creator. So what can I offer as a warranting credential for volitional necessities?

On this subject, I fear that I have essentially nothing to offer. What is fundamentally and indispensably needed is, as Descartes recognized, confidence in ourselves—confidence in the prudence and viability of our inescapable human nature. This confidence has been shaken, and perhaps even shattered, by the circumstances of our modern era; and we generally do not suppose that we have available to us a reliable Creator in whose benevolent design we can have a confidence which assures us that we may reasonably be confident in ourselves.

This pertains, incidentally, not only to the grounds of morality. Surely it must pertain also to the foundations of all thinking. How, for example, can we justify our conviction that *modus ponens* is a valid form of argument, and defend it against a person who simply cannot see it as we do? Perhaps we would not declare that this person is crazy; but we would certainly dismiss his testimony as due to some serious cognitive deficiency or defect. How could we warrant our

confidence in this matter, and in others like it? To be sure, we can probe for paradoxes and contradictions, and we can insist that *modus ponens* passes various critical tests of reliability. But ultimately we have nothing to rely upon other than the clear and distinct perceptions of our own minds.

What is supposed to give us confidence in *that*? I really don't know how reasonably to induce people who lack confidence in themselves to become more confident. I do believe, however, that in the end there is nowhere else to go.

There is, unfortunately, nothing more that I can say.

Notes

- 1 This reason for defending my child justifies my being powerfully moved to defend the well-being of the child, but it leaves open the possibility that there may be superior justification for me or for others to prefer some other course of action.
- 2 To be sure, actually threatening and attacking something we love was indeed an error on the part of the Nazis. If they had kept their moral views entirely to themselves, without trying in any imminently endangering ways to implement them, we would have had no particular reason to treat them as enemies. We could have regarded them instead merely with disdainful curiosity, rather than with violent hostility, as we actually do regard the members of remote societies from whose repulsively brutal local practices we recognize we have nothing to fear and whom we therefore feel no impelling need to fight.

References

- Burnet, J. *Early Greek Philosophy* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1948).
- Descartes, Rene. *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911).
- Foot, Philippa. "The Grammar of Goodness." *Harvard Review of Philosophy*, vol. 11 (Spring 2003).
- Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. First published 1739. Edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).
- Smith, Michael. "Dispositional Theories of Value." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volumes, vol. 63 (1989), pp. 89–111.

29

LOVE AND HATRED

Jens Haas and Katja Maria Vogt

In this chapter, we offer an account of the roles of love and hatred in motivation and of their respective normative status. Recent contributions argue that love supplies reasons: final reasons on one view, defeasible reasons on others.¹ A plausible account, we agree, aims to capture love's prominent role in motivation. Nevertheless, we argue, love provides neither final nor defeasible justification—for otherwise the same would apply to hatred, a line of thought we consider a *reductio ad absurdum*.

We start with an argument to the effect that love and hatred are opposites. Both are better understood if analyzed jointly. Our contention is not only that hatred too deserves philosophical attention. More strongly, we argue that the analysis of love is deficient if its opposite, hatred, is ignored. The motivational roles of love and hatred, our proposal continues, are in many ways analogous. Both are directed at persons, objects, activities, and (dis)values. Both fuel pursuits that are at the center of people's lives. Love and hatred come apart most distinctively, we argue, in their normative status. A compelling account of the normative status of love and hatred must appeal to whether an agent's conception of a good life tracks value. Neither love nor hatred provide final justification, but both can be locally justificatory. Whether a given instance of love and hatred locally justifies, we conclude, depends on its relation to an agent's conception of a good life.

Opposites

When love and friendship resurfaced as topics in ethics in the 1980s, philosophers were immersed in debates about the impartial stance that modern moral philosophy takes to be required. If we are to be impartial toward everyone, philosophers asked, where does this leave love and friendship?² The 1980s also saw a revival of interest in ancient ethics. Philosophers aimed to make the views of Plato and Aristotle relevant to today's interests. And yet, ethical theories which start from an agent's desire for happiness (as arguably Plato's and Aristotle's do) can appear to be not ethical theories at all. Surely, the thought goes, ethics should address how we are to interact with others. This objection, too, prompted renewed interest in friendship and love.³ Ancient ethics, it was argued, captures sociability by attending to the roles of friendship and love—and more generally, relationships and responsibilities—in human life.⁴ The two late 20th-century debates have much in common. In both instances, a prominent outlook in ethics seemed to neglect the

positive roles love and friendship play in human action. Work on love and friendship responds to this lacuna, which goes some way toward explaining how philosophers came to overlook hatred. In effect, only those attitudes were analyzed that have some claims to being ethically praiseworthy.⁵

Against this trend, one may insist that hatred should be studied because like love it is a real, and forceful, feature of everyday life. With respect to other features of social and political life, philosophers have argued that the study of ideals may not be sufficiently sensitive to real-life dynamics. For example, Elizabeth Anderson and others argue that racial inequality may not show up in traditional theories of equality. And yet it seems far-fetched that political philosophy be oblivious to it.⁶ Philosophy, then, should analyze entrenched inequalities directly, rather than suppose that all we need to know about inequality can be derived from an ideal theory of equality. Analogously, we submit, the study of hatred may lead to insights that the analysis of love by itself may not bring to light. With this proposal we do not set out to vindicate hatred. Instead we suggest that love is better understood if examined jointly with its counterpart.⁷

Why not go all the way and ask whether hatred is in itself a valuable attitude, if only it has the right object? The Christian tradition and modern virtue ethicists tend to hold that it is virtuous to love the good and hate the bad.⁸ Hatred, according to this tradition, is the attitude one *should* display toward the bad, just as love is the attitude one should display toward the good. Do we simply presuppose that this conception of virtue is misguided? One part of our response is terminological. We suspect that some proponents of the love/hate conception of virtue understand hatred in a less robust way than we do, taking it just to be a con-attitude. We concede that, on any plausible conception of virtue, a good person has con-attitudes toward the bad. The notions of love and hatred that seem compelling to us, however, pick out more forceful motivations. Hatred, we argue, is bound to have a deep impact on an agent's psychology, structuring her motivations to a significant extent. Accordingly, the idea that the good person hates the bad becomes rather implausible. Given the way the world is, an agent who hates vice has ample opportunity to do so, to the effect that the virtuous agent would be consumed by manifold and pervasive hatred. This, we take it, makes for an implausible conception of virtue.

The other part of our response appeals to everyday intuitions. Today hatred is often (and in our view rightly) seen as an attitude that negatively affects the agent's psychology as well as social and political interactions. Hatred, as these things are colloquially put, eats away at an agent's state of mind and at the social fabric. This idea is invoked, for example, when hate-crimes are found to be particularly heinous.⁹ The destructive effects of hatred appear to us reflective of its very nature; its bad effects do not show hatred to be bad in merely instrumental fashion.¹⁰ This is analogous to ways in which virtue shapes an agent's state of mind and psychology in positive ways. The effects of virtue are not mere instrumental reasons for valuing it. They reflect the very nature of virtue.¹¹ In this sense, we shall assume that hatred is bad, in a manner that blends the inherent and the instrumental: it is bad on account of the effects it has by its very nature. For now, we consider this a hypothesis. As we proceed to give an account of love and hatred and their objects, it may turn out that though in general hatred is bad, some instances of hatred are less bad than others; some may be harmless; and some may on the whole not be objectionable.

Love and hatred are opposites.¹² Perhaps the most basic thing to say in a joint theory of love and hatred is that they differ from each other via their relation to another pair of opposites: the good and the bad. With respect to the good and the bad, philosophers are sometimes attracted to the idea that the bad is merely the privation of the good.¹³ The bad, on this proposal, is not as fundamental a property as the good. Instead it is the absence of the good. On a scale, the thought goes, things are getting worse the more they fail to be good.¹⁴ Whether or not this idea is compelling is not our present topic.¹⁵ We invoke it in order to make an observation about

opposites: they can be thought to relate to each other in more than one way. With respect to privations, there are three options for how a pair of opposites A and B may relate: (i) B is A's privation, but A is not B's privation; (ii) A and B are each other's privations; (iii) A is not the privation of B and B not the privation of A. Love and hatred, we submit, are of the third sort: neither is the privation of the other. This matters for the method by which love and hatred are to be studied. If hatred is not the privation of love, an account of hatred cannot, or not entirely, be given in the terms that a theory of love supplies. This leaves space for asymmetry: love and hatred may differ in such a fashion that not every insight into love translates into an insight into hatred, and *vice versa*.

We propose that a joint account of love and hatred should cover what is analogous in both. Beyond this there are theoretical insights into love that have implications for hatred, and the other way around. And some features of love and hatred are specific to each. This asymmetry is important to our proposal. If there are situations where hatred is an appropriate attitude, these are situations where, to borrow an expression from Thomas Nagel, agents swim against the normative current.¹⁶ In less fancy terms, hatred's association with the bad taints such cases regardless.

Broad Notions of Love and Hatred

Traditional theories of love tend to focus on person-directed love. In our account, love and hatred for persons are important, though by no means the only genuine instances of love and hatred. Nevertheless, we take on board an implication that traditional theories of person-directed love share: one should not hate any person.¹⁷ This does not supply sufficient reason, however, to adopt the view that hatred is always wrong. For example, it is not clear that someone could not blamelessly hate, say, broccoli.

That is, a theory of love and hatred needs to cast the net more widely. One can love and hate not only persons, but also activities, objects, and (dis)values. For example, one can love hiking and hate mowing the lawn.¹⁸ One can love one's house and hate one's office. One can love justice and hate arrogance. Moreover, the relevant notion of objects is broad, such that it includes not only artifacts, but also natural entities, artwork, and culturally defined objects. One can love trees and hate snakes, love a given painting and hate a given song, love one's sports team's colors, hate a political movement's symbols, and so on and so forth.

Beyond this, love of pursuits is a central element of human motivation. In deciding what to do with one's life, one ideally finds something one loves.¹⁹ Often this is difficult, because circumstances limit one's choices, or because one may not know what one loves. Nevertheless, people often hope to find something—a line of work, a field of study, etc.—the pursuit of which is sustained by love. A designer may say she loves making clothes her clients look great in, a judge's face lights up when she talks about her love for the law, a gardener loves when trees and bushes and flowers grow and look a certain way, and so on. Insofar as love fuels pursuits, it shapes what kinds of lives agents aim to lead. Love as the motivation of pursuits is a complex and comprehensive kind of love. It typically involves other loves.

Consider the pursuit of being a good parent, one of the more widespread pursuits that center on person-directed love. A person may very much want to have a family. She may wish to have children, or adopt children, perhaps also wishing to have a partner with whom to share parenting. Related to loving her children, she loves activities where she spends time with them. She comes to love objects that relate to them, say, the music that her teenage kids introduce her to. She loves values related to raising her children as decent people, and perhaps also values related to the kind of learning and experience she gains from raising children. Or consider a photographer who for 50

years makes photographs in Yosemite National Park. He falls in love with the mountains at first sight and, with years of engaging as an artist with them, nature more generally. He loves the process of taking photos and printing the negatives in an ever more elaborate process, capturing the beauty of nature in prints that embody a distinct aesthetic.²⁰ Both examples—parenting and photography—illustrate, we submit, a recognizable and pervasive feature of human motivation. Love of persons, activities, objects, and values may blend in a person's pursuit.

In all these respects, hatred is analogous. Hatred too can fuel pursuits, as when someone is actively involved in a political group motivated by hatred of some other group. In such pursuits, hatred of persons, activities, objects, and values (or perceived disvalues) may blend, just as love of persons, activities, objects, and values may blend in pursuits of love. In the political case, the agent may hate not only members of an opposing group, but also activities she feels are imposed on her by this group; she may hate objects such as places or symbols associated with the opposing group; the values of the opposing group may to her be hated disvalues.

Love and Hatred: Analogues

Here, then, is our account of love and hatred insofar as both play analogous roles in motivation.²¹ It is intended as covering the broad range of cases of love and hatred we introduced, and is explicitly intended as minimal. More, and different things, will need to be said about different kinds of love—romantic love, love of activities, and so on. Moreover, it is not strictly speaking an account that puts forward necessary and sufficient conditions for love and hatred. This disclaimer matters because instances of love as well as instances of hatred can differ deeply from each other. Hence our elaboration on conditions (1)–(4) sketches tendencies and typical effects; it does not claim that each of these tendencies and effects applies equally to all cases of love and hatred.²²

When a person loves X, she

- 1 relates to X,
- 2 sees X in a positive light,
- 3 experiences X-related features of situations as salient and overriding,
- 4 has desires regarding X that affect her overall motivational system.

When a person hates X, she

- 1 relates to X,
- 2 sees X in a negative light,
- 3 experiences X-related features of situations as salient and overriding,
- 4 has desires regarding X that affect her overall motivational system.

Condition (1) states that, when someone loves or hates X, she relates to X. For example, an agent who loves justice relates to an ideal; someone who loves a birch tree in his garden relates to this tree; someone who loves painting relates to an activity and/or the activity's characteristic outcomes. On the side of hatred, an agent who hates arrogance relates to a perceived disvalue; someone who hates her country's presumed enemies relates to these enemies; someone who hates mowing the lawn relates to an activity; and so on. These relationships can be reciprocal, as when two friends or enemies love or hate each other, or unreciprocated, as when someone loves the house she built or hates mowing the lawn. They can be hierarchical, as when a parent loves or hates their child, or non-hierarchical, as when siblings love or hate each other.

Condition (2) states that love and hatred target perceived value: what is seen as good and what is seen as bad. We refrain from formulating (2) in terms of beliefs. Arguably it is possible to love something, and see it as good, without believing that it is good; or to hate something, and see it as bad, without believing that it is bad. For example, you can love your car and see it as good, and nevertheless realize that it is nostalgia which makes you hang on to a car that is so old that it has become unsafe; in other words, all things considered you believe it is not a good car. Similarly, one can hate broccoli and see it in a negative light and nevertheless refrain from believing that broccoli is bad. One may well realize that broccoli contains valuable nutrients. Yet still one hates broccoli. The way in which seeing in a good or bad light and believing to be good or bad can come apart matters because it is a resource for norms of love and hate. An agent may realize that she should shake off her love for an unsafe car or get over her hatred of broccoli. More generally speaking, one may feel normative pressure to adjust one's love- and hate-attitudes to one's considered value judgments.

Condition (3) says that the agent experiences features of situations that relate to what she loves as salient and overriding.²³ Here our account of love and hatred departs from an account of valuing and devaluing. Arguably, (1) and (2) also apply to these: one relates to an object that one values or disvalues and sees it as good or bad. Still, an agent can value healthy food without loving healthy food; one can value playing tennis without loving it; one can disvalue healthy food without hating it; and one can disvalue tennis without hating it. Love and hatred are not simply strong instances of liking and disliking. Think of the phenomenon of liking someone else very much, and yet not being in love with him; sometimes people deplore that they cannot make themselves love someone whom, by all accounts, they like immensely. The difference between liking and love, and disliking and hatred, is not merely one of degree; it is also one in kind. Love and hatred differ from other attitudes that are some mix of evaluative and desiderative by being, as we will put this, fervent. "Fervent" is a figurative word, too fancy—almost—for philosophical analysis. And yet it is precisely the phenomenon that "fervent" refers to that needs to be unpacked. Love and hatred are salient, steering attention and affecting what is in the foreground of one's awareness.²⁴

The salience of love and hatred is intact whether or not it manifests in tumultuous ways. Deep and lasting love can be serene; some of the most drastic instances of hatred can be cold.²⁵ Features of situations that relate to the beloved or hated object are motivationally overriding. To take care of a beloved child, one may rearrange one's whole life, in ways one would not have considered viable prior to being a parent. To be able to create one's art, one may leave one's country, where otherwise one would have much reason to stay. Both love and hatred can make an agent's concerns narrow. Think of the person who, madly in love, no longer keeps in touch with her best friends. Similarly, a person who hates may find herself consumed by her hatred, to the extent that other concerns no longer have a grip on her.

Condition (4), according to which love and hatred impact an agent's overall motivational system, is an alternative to views that focus either on occurrent desires or dispositional intentions.²⁶ Accounts that focus on one or the other underestimate, we submit, the roles of love and hatred in an agent's overall motivational system. First, love and hatred typically *structure* the agent's motivational system. They motivate pursuits, commitments, and other long-term features of agency. Thereby, they push other concerns to the periphery and inform any number of smaller-scale motivations. A person is likely to organize her life around what she loves: she becomes a researcher on wolves because she loves wolves; a parent organizes her daily schedule with a view to taking care of her children. The same applies to hatred. People may join secret organizations devoted to the destruction of what they hate; they structure their lives such as to avoid seeing relatives they hate; and so on. Second, love and hatred typically *color* an agent's

overall motivational system. Both exert an expansive influence on the agent's mood, affecting whether she is cheerful, subdued, tense, and so on, even in contexts that are unrelated to the object of love and hatred.

Third, the fervent nature of love and hatred makes agents *resourceful*. Efforts that, absent love and hatred, seem excessive or foolish occur to the agent as real options. To see the person he loves for barely a few minutes at the station, a soldier may spend his 24 hours of leave with traveling home and back to the front lines across half of Europe. To secure a safe future for the child she loves, a mother may find herself on a refugee boat that is barely seaworthy. Hatred, conversely, may lead an agent to engage in long-term plans of destruction that require ingenious strategies. Love and hatred make people not give up, even when it seems that there are no possible courses of action one can take. To the agent who loves or hates, some further course of action will occur.

In characterizing the motivations of love and hatred this way, we refrain from a claim that is often made: that love is a desire to benefit the beloved, or conversely, that hatred is a desire to harm that which is hated.²⁷ The former characterization is offered in discussions of person-directed love, and both seem suitable for a range of cases. They are not, however, on a sufficiently basic level to be part of a general account. For example, it is controversial what it could mean to benefit artifacts one loves; and it is not clear that one can harm the hated activity of lawn-mowing. Even love of God, which may in many ways be like an attitude toward a person, cannot plausibly be a desire to benefit God. The believer does not think that God needs to be benefited or can be benefited by her. Presumably, there could be similar cases on the human plane, cases where one does not take oneself to be in a position to benefit or harm a person who is loved or hated. In arguing that love and hatred are forceful motivators, we depart from two other theoretical options: to view love (and hatred) as constitutively connected to desired outcomes such as benefit (or harm) on the one hand, and to view them merely as emotions on the other.²⁸

Earlier we suggested that love and hatred are asymmetrical opposites. As far as conditions (1)–(4) are concerned, love and hatred play analogous roles in an agent's motivational system. It would be too strong a claim, however, to say that love and hatred are motivationally analogous in every respect and in every instance. For example, we said that love and hatred color an agent's overall mood. The specifics of this, we submit, can be asymmetrical.²⁹ An agent who has what she loves (is able to engage in an activity she loves, is in a well-going relationship with a person she loves, etc.) is inclined to be in a good mood, even while, say, running errands. An agent who fails to have what she loves is inclined to be in a bad mood, to the extent that quotidian activities can feel like a burden. The opposite does not straightforwardly apply to hatred. Temporal or local distance of a person, activity, etc., may lighten the hater's mood in such cases as hatred of lawn-mowing. Once the task is done, the agent might be on the whole in an improved mood. But in graver instances, it seems that only non-existence of the hated person, activity, etc., would put the agent into a better mood. While love's effect on mood seems to alter with access to the person, activity, etc., she loves or the lack thereof, hatred's effect on mood may alter only according to the more radical difference between existence and non-existence.³⁰

The Normative Status of Love and Hatred

Philosophers tend to say little about the normative status of hatred. The normative status of love, however, is a prominent topic, not least due to Harry Frankfurt's contributions. For the purposes of our argument, it would lead astray to reconstruct Frankfurt's views.³¹ Instead we engage with a type of position that we call *Final*.

Final: Love supplies final justifications.

According to *Final*, someone's love for her children supplies her with final justificatory reasons.³² A parent feels she *must*, for example, run to pick up her child in time. Such "musts," *Final* proposes, are not merely psychological; they do not merely capture the phenomenology of motivating reasons. Instead, the thought goes, they capture the necessity of final norms. That is, *Final* interprets psychological necessity as normative.³³ Though we take this to be a mistake, we think *Final* gets important ideas right. Like our account, *Final* takes love to structure a person's motivational system, providing her with manifold motivations for action. It situates love in agential thinking about how to live and in pursuits that come with commitments.³⁴

And yet *Final* fails. Its failure becomes especially salient once we ask what its implications for hatred are. *Final*, and here we invoke its best-known version by Frankfurt, relies on our lived experience of love.³⁵ The motivational force of love is felt to be uncompromising. The presumed finality of love's reasons appeals to this felt necessity.³⁶ Hatred, however, supplies an agent with just the same strongly felt necessity to act as her hatred commands. Hatred, like love, can be reflectively endorsed. Like love, it can make agents confident and wholehearted in their motivations.³⁷ And like love, hatred can supply agents with final ends, providing the agent with a plan for her life and eliminating boredom.³⁸ If this is what it takes for norms to arise, *Final* is subject to a *reductio ad absurdum*: it implies that hatred too is a final source of justification, a premise that even those who argue that hatred can supply reasons will reject.³⁹ What is needed, then, is a joint account of love's and hatred's normative status.

Should we expect a compelling theory to say that love and hatred offer the same kind of justification for actions? This is not unthinkable. An agent's hatred of broccoli may give her just as much reason not to eat it as her love of reading gives her reason to read. Or should we expect that love and hatred have different normative status, love offering a kind of justification that hatred does not supply? This thought too has plausibility. For example, someone's love for their child seems to be a good reason to spend time with the child, play with her, pick her up from school, and so on; someone's hatred for their child seems to be a bad reason to neglect her, leave her unattended, and so on. And yet, these considerations speak against the view that both love and hatred justify, as well as against the view that love justifies and hatred does not. An account is needed that ascribes different normative status to love and hatred, without excluding that hatred can supply justification. One way to do so is to propose that only love, not hatred, justifies in instances that are person-directed, while both justify in cases that are not person-directed.⁴⁰ But this is also too simple. Think of love for an abusive partner, which fails to supply justification, or hatred of artwork, which does not supply justification to demolish it. A compelling account of the different normative status of love and hatred must accommodate the intuitions that support the different examples cited. To develop such an account, consider first two unsatisfactory options.

Object: Love and hatred have different normative status on account of their objects, the perceived good and the perceived bad respectively.

Attitude: Love and hatred have different normative status qua the attitudes they are.

The problem with *Object* is that love's object is not simply the good, and hatred's object not simply the bad. Instead, love's object is what the lover perceives as good and hatred's object what the hater perceives as bad. In other words, people can love the bad and hate the good. What, then, about *Attitude*, the thought that love is inherently a good and hatred inherently a

bad attitude? Insofar as *Attitude* aims to account for the normative status rather than the roles of love and hatred in an agent's psychology, it fails just like *Object*: it simply presupposes that all instances of love are good, and thereby justificatory, and all instances of hatred bad, and thereby not justificatory.

The account that is needed, we submit, appreciates the plausible aspects of *Object* and *Attitude*. *Object* gets right that it matters normatively whether an agent pursues the good or the bad. It is in need of revision, however, insofar as the relevant normative force is in place only when the agent perceives as good or bad what in fact is good or bad respectively.⁴¹ *Attitude* gets right that a compelling account of the normative status of love and hatred must pay attention to the role that a given instance of love and hatred plays in an agent's overall motivational system. Based on these considerations, we propose a view that is realist insofar as it asks whether an agent's motivations track what genuinely is good; and that is at the same time concerned with motivations, insofar as we appeal to an agent's conception of a good life as what guides her small-scale actions and her pursuits.⁴²

Conceptions of a Good Human Life

Here, then, is our proposal regarding the normative status of love and hatred.

Good Human Life: Love and hatred have different normative status on account of their relationship to a good human life.

Suppose an agent spends much time in a remote area because she is developing a new device for tracking the nocturnal movements of wolves. Asked why she does this, she says she loves wolves and she loves learning about them. Another agent says she is up all night because her child is sick and in need of attention. According to *Final*, these replies illustrate the way in which love justifies: because of love for X, the agent does a, b, c; invoking her love, she seems to have said enough. And yet the impression that she said enough, and that no further justification is needed, is misleading. It arises because in our examples something of value is invoked. The pursuits of the researcher and the parent track something good: knowledge, the child's well-being, etc. Without too much optimism about the degree to which people agree on matters of value, we assume that these and similar things actually are good.⁴³ And without too much optimism about the goodness of human beings, we may say that this is rather typical of human pursuits. Lots of people want children and want their children to grow up well. Lots of people want to be good brothers and sisters and sons and daughters and friends and so on, supporting those they love. Lots of people want to do well in some craft or profession, producing good bread or safe journeys for passengers or enjoyable sojourns in cafés or new insights in science. Lots of people want to excel as athletes, produce artwork, or contribute to the political or social life of their communities. People take up these pursuits in the light of—however un-articulated—conceptions of a good life for them.

As people go about these pursuits, they may do many things imperfectly.⁴⁴ There are myriad ways to fail, more or less, in living up to ethical standards. Nevertheless, typical human pursuits aim at something of value. This is why the response "because I love X" can appear to be a final answer. When people are up all night to attend to a sick child or study wolves, the answer "because I love my child" or "because I love learning about wolves" puts a stop to demands for justification because these pursuits seem to us to track compelling conceptions of a good life. Replies to why-questions that fit this pattern are, in our terms, *locally justificatory*. By this we mean that, in a given situation, an agent has said enough by offering such justifications for her

actions. These replies, however, are not *fundamentally justificatory*. A more basic justification lies in the fact that the agent's conception of a good life tracks value.

Lives in which good parenting, good research, good paintings, and so on are central pursuits, fueled by love, seem good. They may not seem good in a demanding moral sense, or in the sense of being best. Perhaps a given agent could achieve more by doing something other than what she does. In everyday normative practices, however, we do not hold others to the standard of whether, had they made different choices, they could have achieved more. If the baker says she gets up at 4am because she needs to start baking, we take this to be a sufficient reason. This reason is backed up by the fact that making bread and cake is a valuable thing and by the fact that the agent is a baker. Ethicists and Miss America contestants often use much more ambitious examples when they aim to pick out valuable pursuits: finding a cure for cancer, devoting oneself to alleviating global poverty, world peace, and the like. For the purposes of analyzing how love and hatred motivate, however, more mundane examples suffice. It is a valuable thing to make nutritious and tasty food. And hence someone's love of baking tends to be a perfectly respectable source of motivation. If the agent were to get up at 4am to make poison, the fact that she is highly committed to her pursuits would not be justificatory. The chain of justifications stops with the goodness that typical human pursuits track. Local justification—the immediate reason an agent supplies for her action—fails to be normative if a pursuit does not track anything of value.

Suppose an agent loves to have a fine praline after dinner. Talk of love may be appropriate: she *really* cares, is unhappy if unwittingly she ran out of pralines, and so on. Nevertheless, this love is not at the center of her conception of a good life. On consideration, the agent would say she cares a lot more about her family, her job, and so on. Here love provides local justification. The agent's love tracks something of value, even if the value is comparatively trivial. The pleasure of enjoying a praline has been assigned an appropriate place, at the periphery of her conception of a good life.

The distinction between the center and the periphery of conceptions of a good life helps identify a type of mistake that undermines love's power to locally justify. Agents may love something that would be well placed at the periphery as if it was a central concern. Suppose that clean floors are valuable, but not in the same way in which the welfare of one's children is. Consider a parent who loves a clean kitchen so much that this makes her love for her children's welfare motivationally ineffective. This type of mistake occurs on a spectrum and can take the form of psychological disorder: think of a parent with compulsive cleaning behavior, scrubbing the floor while her children eat at the table. This parent's love of cleanliness is not a source of final justification. It is also not a source of conditional or defeasible justification. It is not the case that the parent has *some* justification, though not all things considered justification, to clean during family meals to make sure the floors are germ-free. If love for a lesser concern crowds out love for more important matters, making the latter impotent, it is not justificatory at all. For love to be locally justificatory, it must get the *location* of a concern right.

Consider again our agent who hates broccoli. Talk of hatred, let us stipulate, is not overblown: she goes out of her way to avoid eating it, cannot enjoy a meal if broccoli is anywhere nearby, and so on. Moreover, we take it (and perhaps the agent herself takes it) that she is making a mistake. Broccoli is a valuable source of nutrients; one may wish to be habituated to like it. This is a case of hatred for the good. Nevertheless, and for the reasons explained regarding love of trivia, we take it that "I don't eat broccoli because I hate broccoli" is a justificatory response. It is not a final response: the agent's reply is locally justificatory only because of its triviality. Someone can lead a perfectly good life without eating broccoli. A perfect agent may habituate herself such as to like everything that is in fact good for her. But we do not hold

people to such rigorous standards. If hatred of broccoli is at the periphery of someone's conception of a good life for her, while at the center are pursuits that track value, we think this is just fine. More generally, agents can love and hate in ways that involve mistaken perceptions of value, and nevertheless their love or hatred is part of a conception of a good life that, as a whole, tracks value. In such cases, love and hatred can be locally justificatory.

Consider next a case where an agent gets evaluative matters wrong in ways that relate to the center of her conception of a good life. She takes the good to be bad, hates it, and makes it her life's pursuit to fight against what she hates. A racist views a certain group of people in a negative light and hates them, while in fact—and here we invoke another moral judgment we take to be uncontroversial—all human beings have a distinctive kind of positive value. This hatred provides neither final nor defeasible reasons. It does not provide normative reasons at all.

Consider finally a pursuit fueled by hatred of the bad. Say, an agent is driven by hatred to remove an evil tyrant from power. Earlier we addressed the dangers of hatred and rejected the view that the virtuous person hates the bad. Along these lines, the agent may strike us as less than perfect. A better agent, perhaps, would fight tyranny without hating it. Nevertheless, when someone fights that which is truly bad, this pursuit tracks value. The agent who works toward removing a tyrant aims for improvements that affect the lives of many. The fact that she is motivated by hatred may not, ultimately, do away with this. Our account captures precisely this ambivalence. Insofar as the agent's conception of a good life tracks something good, her local justifications seem to provide reasons rooted in a conception of a good life we cannot simply reject.

Conclusion

When love and hatred are studied together, we argued, the goal is not merely to add an account of hatred to an account of love. Instead, it is to find resources for revising what otherwise may appear to be a plausible analysis of love. Specifically, it seems compelling that love has distinctive motivational force. Love structures an agent's motivational system and makes demands on the agent. And yet the same is true for hatred. This observation calls for a reconsideration of the view that love justifies. Love and hatred, we submit, can at best offer local justifications. These local justifications come with felt necessity: the agent feels that she must do such-and-such, on account of her love or her hatred. But this sense of necessity does not capture the normative status of love and hatred. Whether a given case of love or hatred locally justifies depends on its relation to an agent's conception of a good life. This proposal improves on theories of love that neglect love's opposite, hatred. It also improves on two normative views that appear too simple. On our account, it is not just fine to hate the bad. This view, we argue, neglects the pernicious power of hatred and is insufficiently attuned to the fact that agents are prone to make mistakes about what is and is not bad. On our view, it is also not the case that all hatred is bad. This view, we argue, neglects that certain instances of hatred seem harmless and that other instances of hatred fuel pursuits that track matters of the greatest importance, such as a country's liberation from tyranny. A plausible account of love and hatred, we submit, must accommodate the kinds of cases we analyzed.

Notes

- 1 Frankfurt (2006), Smith (2016).
- 2 Stocker (1976), Blum (1980), Cottingham (1983), Williams (1981), Railton (1984), Baron (1991), Friedman (1991), Scheffler (2001) and (2010), and Maguire (2016). For the view that love and morality are inherently in tension, cf. Cocking and Kenning (2000) and Nehamas (2002).

- 3 Cooper's (1977a) and (1977b) spearheaded this trend. In an interview on December 2, 2016, John Cooper was asked what prompted his interest in friendship. In reply, he said that John Rawls challenged Cooper's aim to make ancient ethics a viable interlocutor today. Rawls argued that it seemed the agent of ancient ethics is just concerned with her own life. Cooper, by his own account, wrote his influential papers in reply to Rawls's challenge.
- 4 Cf. Plato's *Lysis* and *Symposium*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* Books VIII and IX, and Stoic political philosophy (cf. Vogt 2008, chapter 3).
- 5 Though Frankfurt (2006) departs in many ways from standard approaches in moral philosophy, he too does not include hatred in his analysis.
- 6 Anderson (1999) and (2010).
- 7 Cf. Sunstein (2002a) and (2002b) on the question on disagreement and group polarization.
- 8 Cf. Augustine's *Letter* 211, Korsgaard (1999), Hurka (2001). G.E. Moore calls hatred a vice in *Principia Ethica* (1903, V §126); at the same time, he seems to think that if wickedness already exists, it is an appropriate object of hatred (V, §133). "Moral hatred" at times figures in the discussion of the Christian virtue of mercy. Cf. Murphy and Hampton (1988).
- 9 The law recognizes hate crimes as special cases, in part based on the assumption that such crimes have social and political repercussions beyond the immediate effects on the victim.
- 10 Plato's *Republic* argues that justice is by itself good insofar as it is good-making (cf. especially 357a–358a). This view cuts across today's distinction between inherent and instrumental value. There are effects of goodness that are reflective of its nature. To value goodness on account of these effects is to value goodness inherently.
- 11 This is how the goodness of virtue is spelled out throughout ancient ethics: as being good for the state of mind or soul of the agent who is virtuous and analogously, as being good for (sustaining, ordering, etc.) a society.
- 12 We shall use the notion of opposite in a way that observes the difference between contradictories and opposites. Love and non-love are contradictories; love and hatred are opposites. Elie Wiesel famously said that indifference is the opposite of love and the "epitome of evil" (*US News & World Report*, October 27, 1986). The question of how his notion of indifference relates to hatred goes beyond the purposes of this chapter.
- 13 Cf. Augustine's *Confessions* (2.8.16). Cf. *City of God*, Part 2, Book XII.6–7 on abandonment of the good and the evil will.
- 14 Another option for a scalar account has been defended by Broome (1999), who argues that the good simply is that which is better than something else. We are grateful to Ralph Wedgwood for discussion of this position.
- 15 On bad and evil, cf. Arendt (1968), Singer (2004), Shafer-Landau (2004), Russell (2014).
- 16 (1986, 182).
- 17 Cf. Korsgaard (1992), Velleman (1999), Vogt (2001), Millgram (2004).
- 18 Smith (2016) offers a wide-ranging list of objects of love.
- 19 Cf. Vogt (2017) on conceptions of a good life and the role of pursuits in motivation, esp. chapters 5 and 6.
- 20 Say, this photographer might be Ansel Adams.
- 21 This analysis is indebted to Scheffler's "Valuing" in his (2010) and to Plato's *Symposium* 199–207; cf. chapter 6 in Vogt (2017).
- 22 This disclaimer reflects that the ancient-inspired framework we employ is sensitive to human psychology. Accordingly, and to use an Aristotelian term, ethics is concerned with "for the most part regularities" rather than necessary or strict regularities. Cf. Vogt (2017, chapter 7).
- 23 Cf. McDowell (1979) on salience.
- 24 Aristotle says that things don't appear in the same way to the person who loves and the person who hates (*Rhetoric* 2.1.1377b30–1378a3). Brogaard (2015) engages with recent empirical work on related effects of romantic love.
- 25 An ancient example of long-standing hatred is Atreus's killing and cooking of Thyestes's sons.
- 26 Kolodny (2003, 151) characterizes the motivational aspects of love as "standing intentions."
- 27 Another formulation is sometimes used as almost equivalent: to love X is to wish X well for X's own sake.
- 28 For the view that love is an emotion, cf. Velleman (1999, 354).
- 29 We are grateful to Isabel Kaeslin for comments on this phenomenon.
- 30 Aristotle thinks that in hating X one desires that X does not exist (*Rhetoric* 2.4.1382a14–15).

- 31 We don't engage directly, for example, with Frankfurt's view that love is disinterested and directed at particulars (2006). On our conception of love, which includes love of activities, these are not candidates for being general features of love.
- 32 Love for one's children is one of Frankfurt's key examples. Cf. Vogt (2017, chapter 6) and Plato's *Symposium*.
- 33 "Love," Frankfurt says, "is the originating source of terminal value ... the ultimate ground of practical rationality" (2006, 55–6).
- 34 Part I in Frankfurt (2006) is entitled "The Question: 'How Should We Live?'"
- 35 On the role of lived experience in Frankfurt's argument, cf. Kolodny (2006).
- 36 In Frankfurt's (1982) example, Luther says "I can do no other" out of the necessity that comes from endorsing certain values, to the extent that this defines his will. Though this is not an example Frankfurt uses with respect to love, it displays the relevant phenomenology. The agent feels she "must" act in such-and-such a fashion.
- 37 This is how Frankfurt describes love (2006, 65).
- 38 On boredom, cf. Frankfurt (2006, 51–3). Frankfurt says that "[l]oving itself is important to us": it provides our life with final ends and meaning. And yet hatred too can provide a person, as this is sometimes put colloquially, with a reason to live.
- 39 We do not claim that Frankfurt lacks resources to respond to this line of argument. We make the lesser claim that *Final*, one prominent component of his views, has these implausible implications. Perhaps a defense of Frankfurt may appeal to the way love is rooted in our biology. Cf. Frankfurt (2006, 28–9). And yet, against this one may argue that out-group aggression has as much of a biological history as in-group love.
- 40 Cf. Kolodny (2010).
- 41 *Object* is a version of the so-called Principle of Recursion, according to which the pursuit of a good is itself a good and the pursuit of a bad itself a bad; Hurka (2001) and Bradford (2013).
- 42 This proposal is an Aristotelian alternative to the view that love is justificatory if and insofar as it does not interfere with basic moral norms. Cf. Smith (2016).
- 43 This assessment applies to general and *prima facie* value judgments that permit qualification in particular instances.
- 44 On further dimensions of pursuits, cf. Callard (2018) and Bradford (2015).

References

- Arendt, H. (1968) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Anderson, E. (1999) "What Is the Point of Equality?" *Ethics* 109: 287–337.
- Anderson, E. (2010) *The Imperative of Integration*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Baron, M. (1991) "Impartiality and Friendship," *Ethics* 101: 836–57.
- Berridge, K.C. and M.L. Kringelback (2015) "Pleasure System in the Brain," *Neuron* 86.
- Blum, L.A. (1980) *Friendship, Altruism and Morality*, London: Routledge.
- Blundell, M.W. (1989) *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies. A Study in Sophocles and Greek Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bradford, G. (2013) "Evil Achievements and the Principle of Recursion," *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics* 3: 79–97.
- Bradford, G. (2015) *Achievements*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brogaard, B. (2015) *On Romantic Love*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Broome, J. (1999) "Goodness Is Reducible to Betterness," in his *Ethics Out of Economics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Callard, A. (2018) *Aspirations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cocking, D. and J. Kenning (2000) "Friendship and Moral Danger," *Journal of Philosophy*: 278–96.
- Cooper, J. (1977a) and (1977b) "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship" and "Friendship and Good in Aristotle," reprinted in his *Reason and Emotion*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999, 312–35 and 336–55.
- Cottingham, J. (1983) "Ethics and Impartiality," *Philosophical Studies* 43: 83–99.
- Frankfurt, H. (1982) "The Importance of What We Care About," *Synthese* 53: 257–72.
- Frankfurt, H. (2006) *The Reasons of Love*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Friedman, M. (1991) "The Impracticality of Impartiality," *Ethics* 101: 818–35.
- Hurka, T. (2001) *Virtue, Vice, and Value*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Kahane, G. (2008) "Pain, Dislike, and Experience," *Utilitas* 21, 3: 327–36.
- Kolodny, N. (2003) "Love as Valuing a Relationship," *The Philosophical Review* 112: 135–89.
- Kolodny, N. (2006) "Harry G. Frankfurt: The Reasons of Love," *Journal of Philosophy* 103: 43–50.
- Kolodny, N. (2010) "Which Relationships Justify Partiality: General Considerations and Problem Cases," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 38: 37–75.
- Korsgaard, C. (1992) "Creating the Kingdom of Ends," *Philosophical Perspectives* 6: 305–32.
- Korsgaard, C. (1999) "The General Point of View: Love and Moral Approval in Hume's Ethics," *Hume Studies* 25: 3–41.
- Plato (1997) *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.
- Maguire, B. (2016) "Love in the Time of Consequentialism," *Nous*: 1–17.
- McDowell, J. (1979) "Virtue and Reason," *The Monist* 62: 331–50.
- Millgram, E. (2004) "Kantian Crystallization," *Ethics* 114: 511–13.
- Moore, G.E. (1903) *Principia Ethica*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Murphy J.C. and J. Hampton (eds.) (1988) *Forgiveness and Mercy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nagel, T. (1986) *The View from Nowhere*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Nehamas, A. (2002) "A Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art," *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* 23: 189–231.
- Railton, P. (1984) "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 13: 134–71.
- Russell, L. (2014) *Evil: A Philosophical Investigation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Scheffler, S. (2001) *Boundaries and Allegiances*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Scheffler, S. (2010) *Equality and Tradition*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shafer-Landau, R. (2004) *Whatever Happened to Good and Evil?* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shriver, A. (2014) "The Asymmetrical Contributions of Pleasure and Pain to Subjective Well-Being," *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 5: 135–53.
- Singer, M.G. (2004) "The Concept of Evil," *Philosophy* 79: 185–214.
- Smith, M. (2016) "The 'What' and 'Why' of Love's Reasons," in E. Kroeker and K. Schaubroeck (eds.) *Love, Reason, and Morality*, London and New York: Routledge, 145–62.
- Stocker, M. (1976) "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," *The Journal of Philosophy* 73: 453–66.
- Sunstein, C. (2002a) "The Law of Group Polarization," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 10: 175–95.
- Sunstein, C. (2002b) "Why They Hate Us: The Role of Social Dynamics," *Harvard Law and Public Policy Journal* 429: 429–40.
- Velleman, D.J. (1999) "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109: 338–76.
- Vogt, K.M. (2001) "Freundschaft, Unparteilichkeit und Feindschaft," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 4/2001: 517–32.
- Vogt, K.M. (2008) *Law, Reason, and the Cosmic City: Political Philosophy in the Early Stoa*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Vogt, K.M. (2017) *Desiring the Good: Ancient Proposals and Contemporary Theory*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, B. (1981) "Persons, Character, and Morality," in his *Moral Luck*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–19.

PART VII

Traditions

Historical and Contemporary



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

THE CONFUCIAN AND DAOIST TRADITIONS ON LOVE

David B. Wong

This chapter is about Confucian and Daoist views of love in the classical age (sixth to third century BCE). For the Confucians, love is the core of a central moral virtue. Family love is the foundation for developing an inclusive love for all human beings. Whether family love has priority over inclusive love when they conflict was an issue of contention between Confucians and their critics, and it is an issue that resonates to this day. Mencius defended the priority of family love by arguing that love must be guided by appropriate distinctions between its various recipients. For the Daoists, love as compassion for all creatures is a treasure of the Daoist sage and arises from attunement to the primordial formless source of all that exists. Daoists conceived Confucian distinctions, and all distinctions of language, as too rigid and coarse to properly guide love, and instead proposed that love should be a relatively unmediated response to the immediate presence of the recipient. Both Confucian and Daoist traditions are concerned to reconcile human beings with the loss of loved ones, but they have seemingly incompatible approaches to doing this. In this chapter I argue that one can rather regard these approaches as complementary: that it may be appropriate to emphasize one over the other in a given situation; or to synthesize the approaches so as to incorporate the strengths and to avoid the weaknesses of each.

Ren and Love in the Early Confucian Tradition

There is no virtue that is more important than *ren* 仁 in Confucian ethics. In the *Analects* (the *Lun Yu* 論語, thought to be the most reliable record of the teachings of Confucius, sixth to fifth century BCE), *ren* is the most frequent object of inquiry: what is it and who has it? It is associated with a wide range of qualities: filial and fraternal responsibility (1.2), reaping one's successes only after having dealt with difficulties (6.22), establishing others in seeking to establish themselves and promoting others in seeking to get there themselves (6.30), observing ritual propriety (3.3, 12.1), loving others (12.22), being deferential at home, respectful in handling public affairs, doing one's utmost in one's relationship with others (13.19), and being firm, resolute, honest, and deliberate in speech (13.27) (Ames and Rosemont, 1998; *Analects*, 2018). Given the variety within this range, the meaning of *ren* is plausibly construed as something like comprehensive moral excellence, the virtue that comprises all the particular virtues. While such an interpretation seems safe enough by covering all the admirable qualities associated with *ren*, a more satisfying interpretation would reveal more structure to *ren*.

One particular virtue, loving persons (*ai ren* 愛人 in 12.22), might lie at the heart of *ren*. Many of the other virtues, such as filiality and fraternal responsibility, establishing and promoting others in seeking to get there oneself, deference and respect, doing one's utmost in relationships with others, and observing ritual propriety (heartfelt observance of customs and etiquette expressive of care and respect for others), could be construed as particular expressions and appropriate enactments of one's love of others. Other qualities such as firmness and resoluteness are instrumental for realizing one's love of people and their humanity.

The relevant kind of love includes a conception of its recipient, which guides the agent as to how to express love appropriately. When asked what his heart's wishes are, Kongzi (or "Confucius" as he came to be known in the West) replies, "To bring peace to the aged, to earn the trust of friends, and to nurture the young" (*Analects* 5.26, my translation). Mengzi (fourth century BCE), or "Mencius" as he came to be known in the West, explicitly distinguishes the way one affectionately feels and acts toward family members from the way one humanely acts toward people generally, and also from the way one kindly acts toward nonhuman creatures (*Mencius* 7A45). One should feel intense gratitude to parents for one's life and nurture, not an attitude to be taken toward other people in general. Still, there are ways one is bound to act with care and consideration toward all human beings. To act kindly toward nonhuman creatures is not to inflict harm on them that is needless or disproportionate to the amount of benefit that is gained for human beings. These ideas about the need to differentiate love according to its recipient come under the heading of "love with distinctions." Confucianism came under vigorous attack by Mozi (fl. c.430 BCE) and the school of Mohism he founded. Mencius construes Mohism as rejecting Confucian love with distinctions, and to understand the nature of his defense of it one must start with his conception of how human nature forms the basis for moral virtues.

The Mencian Conception of the Cognitive and Affective Beginnings of Virtue

Mencius held that *ren xing* 人性 contained the "beginnings" or *duan* 端 of the moral virtues. They are not by any means fully developed virtues, but are inborn cognitive and affective tendencies that are the basis for developing the virtues through education and experience. The first beginning, *ceyin zhi xin* 惻隱之心 (compassion), can develop into *ren* 仁 (human-heartedness or the virtue of loving or caring for others). The second beginning, *xiuwu* 羞惡 (shame and dislike for inappropriate actions), can develop into *yi* 義 (often translated into English as "righteousness," and can be glossed as a firm and constant dedication to doing what is right). The third beginning, the feelings of *ciran* 辭讓 (deference and yielding), can develop into *li* 禮, observing customary ritual practices that signify respect and concern for others. The fourth beginning, *shifei* 是非 (dispositions to distinguish between "this" and "not this," with the connotation of "approving this" and disapproving of not this"), can develop into *zhi* 智 or wisdom.

The first three beginnings clearly have affective dimensions. For example, Mencius cites as a manifestation of natural compassion the spontaneous, unpremeditated alarm and distress that people feel when they see a child about to fall into a well (2A6). The affective dimension includes physiological changes in the body that ready it for action, movements in the vital energy stuff or *qi* 氣 that compose the mind and body. The beginnings also have cognitive dimensions. To respond to others' actual or prospective suffering one must perceive them to be in that condition. Furthermore, Mencius links compassion in a couple of places in the text (1A7 and 3A5, *Mengzi*, 2018) with perceiving the one who is suffering as innocent, as undeserving of the suffering.

The feelings of shame and dislike can involve the thought that one has failed one's own aspirations and standards for the self. One can feel shame on behalf of others, and these feelings also include the thought that it *would be* shameful to perform a certain action (see 6A10 on the beggar who rejects food offered with abuse). Deference and yielding are affective attitudes that one adopts toward one's parents or elders, for example, but also involve thoughts of what are proper and respectful ways of behaving toward them.

The fourth beginning, the capacity to make *shi/fei* distinctions, is plausibly conceived as the source of the cognitions involved in the other three beginnings. It supplies distinctions between who is suffering and who is not, who deserves it and who not, distinctions between meeting one's normative aspirations for the self or failing them, and distinctions between the proper or improper form of rituals.

Tian (literally "sky," usually translated as "Heaven" and something like the ordering force of the world) gives human beings the beginnings as part of their inborn nature. Mencius uses the metaphor of growing sprouts to convey the idea that they are only beginnings and not fully realized virtues (6A7). Just as sprouts need adequate sun, fertile soil, water, and the effort of the cultivator, so the natural beginnings of goodness need nurturing under the right conditions to become robust healthy plants of virtue. During childhood, it is the responsibility of the family to provide ethical teaching, models of steadfast commitment to right conduct, and a loving and secure environment. It is also the responsibility of the ruler to provide his people with opportunities for a reasonably secure livelihood, so that their hearts and minds are freed to focus on what is ethically important rather than mere survival or subsistence (1A7). When people become old enough to be aware of and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, desires, and conduct, then their own efforts at cultivating the sprouts become crucial. This does not mean that responsibility ceases to be shared with those who are most influential with the agent, but it does mean that the agent now has the capabilities of reflection (*si* 思) and self-control to assume a great deal of the responsibility for who he or she is.

The Interaction of Feeling and Reflecting in Growth of the Moral Sprouts

Reflective control makes emotions more intelligent, more responsive to what is needed by others and by the situation (6A14). "Watering" the sprouts through reflection is illustrated by Mencius' conversation with King Xuan in 1A7. The king asks Mencius whether someone like him could realize the virtues of *ren* and rightness. In response, Mencius asks whether it was true that the king had spared an ox being led to ritual slaughter for consecration of a temple bell. The king affirms that he did spare the ox, but he had been uncertain about his motivation. After sparing the ox he ordered a sheep to take its place in the ritual sacrifice. He knows that some of his people understood him to be motivated by cheapness (the sheep being less expensive), but Mencius tells him that it must have been his compassion instead, and that he ordered the sheep to be sacrificed because the ritual had to go on. He had seen the ox's fear, not the sheep's. At Mencius' prompting, the king is able to affirm that he spared the ox because he could not bear its trembling, like an innocent person being led to the execution ground. He says that when he heard Mencius speaking of the event, he came to grasp his own mind and at the same time felt a stirring. Mencius then reminds him that his people need to be spared from suffering and that it would be absurd to say that the king had the compassion to spare the ox but not to spare his own people.

Mencius has gotten him to turn over in his mind certain elements of his past and present experience so that patterns or analogical associations emerge. In this case, it is the association between the innocent man and the ox, and between the ox and the king's people, and the points

of resemblance are suffering and innocence. Analogical reasoning is one of Mencius' primary methods for arriving at reliable moral judgments. The idea is that one already has in one's memory a set of "baseline" cases in which one is confident that one has arrived at a reliable judgment. If one is puzzled about what to do in one's present circumstances, one identifies the baseline cases that bear relevant similarities and no relevant dissimilarities to the present case, and one then makes a judgment about what to do in the present that is relevantly similar to what was done in the past cases.

It is not just analogical *reasoning* from belief to belief that concerns Mencius in the ox case. Mencius is trying to make the king *feel* his duty in order to be moved to do something about it. To this end, Mencius is employing an analogy of feeling: appealing to what one has felt in a past case to evoke a similar feeling in a present case with relevantly similar circumstances. In contemporary terms, Mencius was trying to turn the King's cognition of his duty from "cool" to "hot." He is relying on the human tendency to re-experience a feeling when one recalls an emotionally significant event under the right conditions. The conclusion of the analogy Mencius is using with the king is not merely a judgment but a *felt* judgment. Mencius's conception of watering the sprouts involves both believing and feeling from analogy. Through analogy, insight can enlarge feeling. At the same time, insight can be made motivationally efficacious through becoming affectively charged. This is an instance of the characteristic interweaving and interaction between reflection, reasoning, and feeling that is one of the most distinctive features of Confucian practical reasoning.

It is not only self-reflection on one's thoughts, feelings, and conduct that is supposed to play key roles in this kind of transformation, but also the attentive and heart-felt performance of rituals (the role of rituals is highlighted in the *Analects* and in Xunzi, the last great Confucian of the classical age). Rituals include customary practices used to communicate and to enact ethically appropriate attitudes toward others and to cultivate those attitudes in the self. Many of them, such as ways of taking meals with others, of greeting others, of giving and receiving gifts, are ceremonies of civility that recur daily as part of the fabric of everyday life. To mindfully perform them is to strengthen the disposition to have the affective attitudes of respect and concern that they are meant to express. Other rituals are infrequent but powerfully evocative ceremonies that mark major life passages such as weddings, coming-of-age ceremonies, and the mourning and burial of family and friends or of others who have been important in one's life. Given the vivid significance conferred the events it is used to mark, it can have a memorable and lasting impact on the emotions.

Conflict Between Duties to Family and Duties to Those Outside the Family

Confucians recognize that there can be conflict between the welfare of parents and others, and to deal with such cases, one must develop and exercise the imaginative and practical abilities that would enable one to resolve those conflicts by honoring all the ethical considerations in play insofar as possible, and if not possible, then identifying which consideration has the most weight. There is a general presumption that in cases of intractable conflict, one must act on behalf of those within the family, but what this means in terms of action cannot be set out in general but determined according to the particular context, since the welfare of family members, as is true of the welfare of everyone else, has a moral dimension that involves their acting rightly toward others outside the family as well as inside.

For Mencius, the priority of duties to family is linked to the priority of affectionate family love: it is appropriate to feel differently about family than about others, though one should have concern for everyone. As discussed above, he holds that duties must be felt duties to be effectively

motivating: hence if one has special duties to family, the nature of one's concern for them should be special. In the *Analects*, Confucius makes it clear that an adult child's material support of older parents is the least to be expected, and that one's countenance when one provides that support, one's attitude, matters the most (2.8). Thus it is not only one's duty to do more for family, but also one's duty to cultivate a special kind of care for family, over and above the care one ought to have for everyone.

Mencius defends this doctrine of love with distinctions against two rival views he places on opposite ends of a spectrum defining the sort of concern one should have for others. On one end is a kind of ethical egoism (it is natural and right to act for oneself) that Mencius attributes to Yang Zhu (*Mencius* 3B9). On the other end of the spectrum is the ethical ideal of *jian ai* 兼愛, which Mencius construed as a kind of impartial caring and attributes to Mozi. What is right for Mozi, according to Mencius, is to be measured in terms of producing benefits and avoiding harm to all people, when the welfare of each is considered equally. Mozi traces the root of all conflicts to preference for one's own: one's state versus other states; one's city versus other cities; and one's family versus other families (chapter 16, *Mozi*). The solution to each of these conflicts, he proposes, is to regard these others as one regards their own. E.g., "If people regarded other people's families in the same way that they regard their own, who then would incite their own family to attack that of another? For one would do for others as one would do for oneself" (Ivanhoe, 2005b: 68).

Whether Mencius interpreted Mozi correctly has become the subject of lively debate. The Mohist ideal of *jian ai* might have evolved over time from the relatively undemanding requirement that one care for everyone to the prescription for impartial caring only in its later stages. Furthermore, its notion of benefits might have included relational virtues such as filial piety (see Fraser, 2016: 140), which Mencius does not seem to have acknowledged. If the latter is true, then Confucians and Mohists might have been closer than Mencius thought they were in their actual concrete prescriptions on how to act on care for others, even if their prescriptions for the attitude one ought to adopt for others differed.

Setting aside the debate over how the Mohists are most fairly to be interpreted, this essay addresses Mencius' criticism of Mohist *jian ai*, with the aim of clarifying his reasons for rejecting the attitude of impartial care he construed it to entail. As he construed it, *jian ai* resembles the impartiality requirement in modern Western ethics such as utilitarianism: in the tallying of the consequences that determines an action's rightness, each person's interests or welfare is to count equally. Mozi's admonition to treat other families, cities, and states as one's own seems to anticipate arguments such as Peter Singer's (1972) for strong obligations to contribute to famine relief in distant parts of the world. A contemporary argument against impartialist positions is that it is impossible to act on impartial caring. Steven Asma (2013), for example, has argued that human emotions are inherently partial toward particular people such as family, and that empathetic concern would soon exhaust itself if turned equally toward everyone. Mencius could be read as prefiguring such an argument when he challenges the Mohist doctrine of impartial caring by asking whether one really loves one's neighbor's child as much as one's brother's son (3A5).

One problem with the impossibility argument, however, is that there are real-life examples of people who have been motivated to act on something like impartial caring. Consider Gandhi, who endeavored and seems to have largely succeeded in treating his family simply as members of a community of all races and classes (Gandhi, 2013: Kindle location 3367), even as one of his sons pleaded for a special relationship with him. Or consider Sue Doag and Hector Badeau, who had two biological children and adopted twenty-two children for the reason that these were children who were unlikely to have been adopted by anyone else (McFarquhar, 2015: 224);

they persisted in expanding their adoptive family even when the ones who had already become their sons and daughters asked them to take no more children in.

Should such a flawed impossibility argument be attributed to Mencius? The argument's appeal to the idea that one's natural emotions are intractable does not sit well with Mencius' assumption that our emotions can be guided and reshaped by a sense of what is right. Mencius *expects* that emotions can be extended to objects that were not part of the original scope of the emotions, and that analogies of reasoning and feeling can play major roles in this process. When Mencius asks Yi Zhi whether one really loves one's neighbor's child as much as one's brother's child, he is referring to emotions that already have a cognitive dimension of moral judgment. The kind of impossibility to which Mencius is appealing is a contradiction between the moral perceptions and judgments one's sprouts dispose one to make and what is required by the Mohist doctrine of impartial caring.

This reading is supported by the course of Mencius' dialogue with the Mohist Yi Zhi. It begins with Mencius posing a question about the lavish way Master Yi buried his parents when they died. This went against the Mohist doctrine that all burials should be plain and simple so as to save resources that could go to meeting the needs of the living. Yi Zhi responds by quoting a saying from another Confucian work, the *大學 Da Xue*, "Great Learning" (2018: saying 11), to support impartial caring: that the ancients (the sage kings of old) acted as if they were protecting an infant. The model of how a king should care for his people is the way a mother cares for her infant. The implication the Yi Zhi draws from the saying is that even if one first learns to love within one's own family, one can then proceed to extend that love without distinctions to others. Indeed, Yi Zhi has a point. It is crucial to Mencius' conception of how one develops love for others outside the family that one starts with family love and extends it to the others. In 1A7, he tells King Xuan that if he treats the elders in his family as they should be treated and extends that to the elders of other families, and treats the young of his family as they ought to be treated and extends this to the young of other families, he could turn the empire in the palm of his hand.

However, Mencius differs from Yi Zhi in holding that the love extended to others outside the family cannot fully be the same kind of love as family love. When Mencius asks whether Yi Zhi really believes that one loves one's neighbor's child as much as one's brother's son, the word he uses is 親 *qin*, which is the term used for love toward parents and relatives. There are, he thinks, relevant distinctions that should be acknowledged and guide the way one loves these different children. This is not to deny that sometimes one should act toward nonkin in the same way as one acts toward kin. This is why Mencius pivots from the *Great Learning* saying about the "infant" to his own example of a child about to fall into a well, saying that the harm about to befall the child is not her fault. An innocent child should be saved, and it doesn't matter whose child it is. It's just that there are other times when one's relationship to a person matters to what one should do for that person.

In *Analects* 17.21 one of Confucius' least favorite students, Zai Wo, argues that the traditional three-year (lunar) period of mourning for a deceased parent should be shortened to one year. Confucius dismisses him by calling him un-*ren* and asks whether he had not been given three years' worth of love and nurture from his parents. For the Confucians, what happens in a relationship matters morally. What I as a particular person should do for the people who were my parents depends on what happened between us. That my wife and I should do certain things for our daughter that go beyond what I should do for another person who is unrelated to us partly depends on the fact that we decided to bring her into the world. The moral relationships that arise from these particularities do not cancel out what we owe to any other human being. Particular relationships and the humanity of others constitute independent sources of moral requirement.

Such cognitive discriminations between the different objects of love, which make different sorts of love appropriate toward different persons, are part of the cognitive dimension of the emotion, and are rooted in the inborn dispositions to make *shifei* distinctions. It is love that is guided by such distinctions that guides Yi Zhi, despite his commitment to impartial caring, to give his parents a lavish burial. It is love guided by distinctions that guides us to do some things for a nephew one wouldn't do for unrelated children. Mencius is not appealing to the brute force of an emotion that compels us to be guided by such distinctions no matter what our moral judgment is. The moral judgment is part of a properly developed natural compassion: it is the judgment embedded in the affective dimensions of the emotion that move us to perform compassionate actions.

The rest of 3A5 is consistent with this reading of Mencius' position. After pointing out that there are times when relationship makes a difference and times when it does not, Mencius states that *Tian*, the ordering force of the world, gives all living things one root, while Yi Zhi gives them two. The "one root" is constituted by the inborn cognitive and affective dispositions; Yi Zhi tries to override that root with the Mohist doctrine of impartial caring. Mencius concludes the story by telling of the ancients who had the practice of not burying their parents when they died, but instead leaving the bodies in ditches. When they saw the bodies being eaten by animals and bitten by insects, however, a sweat broke out on their foreheads and they could no longer look at what was happening. They went home to get baskets and spades to bury the bodies. Burying them was truly right (*shi* 是), concludes Mencius. He does not say that the sheer emotion that showed on their faces and in their demeanor prevented them from doing anything else. He says that the emotion moved them to do what was right.

The Complex Relationship Between Family Duties and Duties to Humanity

Even if one acknowledges with the Confucians that special relationships are an independent source of moral duty, distinct from the source of duties to human beings as such, and from the source of duties to other sentient creatures, that would not eliminate the problem of how to prioritize these different duties when they come into conflict. A family member may be ill or emotionally distressed, needing one's time, attention, and other resources, but one might also feel the pull of the urgent needs of many strangers.

Different Confucian thinkers have articulated different ways of dealing with such conflict. *Analects* 13.18 addresses a situation in which one's father commits the crime of stealing a sheep. Confucius rejects the idea that it would be right for a son to inform on the father to the authorities. Neither a father nor a son would inform on the other.¹ Whether Confucius' judgment applies to a crime of this type or to all crimes is left unclear. Mencius is asked hypothetically what Shun the sage king (for Mencius a model of filial piety and moral judgment) would have done had his father murdered a man. He says Shun would not have interfered with the arrest but afterwards would have abdicated as king as fled with his father (7A35). Shun's refusal to interfere with his father's arrest acknowledges the force of justice. But his abdication and subsequent flight conveys the idea that one's role as son ultimately trumps the duty to remain as king, and presumably, one's duty as a member of Chinese society to uphold the law. On the other hand, Xunzi makes it clear in his chapter *ZiDao* 子道 or "Way of the Son" that there are definite limits on the extent to which one should obey one's parents, that rightness and the Way can conflict with obedience to parents, and that when they do, a person should act on the former and not the latter.

If two independent sources of value and duty go into such conflicts, and if there is no master third source that can instruct us as to how to resolve them, we must try to muddle through each

such conflict, trying in the circumstances at hand to honor the duties that seem to arise and to mitigate whatever conflict remains. One might not agree with the particular way that Mencius thought Shun would have dealt with his father having killed a man, but it demonstrates the idea of trying to honor conflicting values through the particular actions one takes at different times. The necessity for muddling through such conflicts seems inevitable given the way the human world is and is likely to be in the foreseeable future. Even if one holds from a monistic consequentialist view that special duties derive from a more general impartialist duty to promote the greatest good, there will arise difficult questions on the practical level as to when these special duties should give way to the general duty. For example, one might hold that special duties derive from the fact that as individuals we cannot possibly promote everyone's good equally. Since our resources as individuals are too limited, everyone might be better off if the labor of caring for everyone is divided up, say, with family members given special responsibility for caring for each other; and social and political institutions should be set up to care for those who have no families or whose families do not have sufficient resources. Such an arrangement, however, does not address the situation when institutions are not able, for whatever reason, to fill in the gaps and leave some in desperate need. Then individuals might be faced with the dilemma of having to choose not to provide care or resources to family because the needs of others are more severe or simply because there are many such others.

It is possible to work in the longer term for the kind of change in cultural socioeconomic factors that can mitigate the severity of this problem. In the early Confucians' time and in ours, some people can take for granted that they will be able to provide for family and others close to them not only the basic necessities of life but much of what makes life fulfilling, while many others have to struggle to obtain even the basic necessities. One can support measures that reduce such harsh inequality. Confucian love with distinctions is broadly compatible with affirming substantial duties toward those outside the agent's circles of personal relationship. One of the oldest meanings of *ren* is connected to the concept of *ganton* 感通—opening oneself up to and being affected by the gods and ancestral spirits (Wang, 2012). Rituals of sacrifice to ancestors are an enactment of this connection, and in particular between the living and their ancestors. One of the innovations of Confucianism was to revise this meaning to opening up to and being affected by others in the living human community. Even though it is love with distinctions, Confucian love is all inclusive.

Even though *qin*, familial affection as such, is to be restricted to family, and even though it enjoys a general priority in cases of conflict with what is owed to every human being, it also serves as the indispensable basis for developing proper concern for everyone. One learns love most easily in response to those who have given one love and nurture, and then one works to extend that love outside the family. Family love is not the same as love of nonkin, but they have enough in common so that aspects of family feeling can transfer to nonkin. In *Analects* 12.5, Zixia says to Sima Niu, who laments that he has no brothers, that exemplary persons (who realize *ren* and the other virtues within their persons) have everyone in the world as their brother. Roger Ames has observed that the Chinese phrase for "everyone" is "*Da jia* 大家" which literally means "big family" (2001: 1). If being in a family is also to be part of a much bigger family, then the strain between the different forms of love can be mitigated within a Confucian ethic, given that one's good as an individual is seen as intrinsically tied not only to living well but doing well by the others to whom one has duties. Such a broader understanding of one's good as an individual and as a (small) family member can promote greater acceptance that a (small) family's resources must be shared with those in the big family. That kind of sharing can become part of the (small) family's wellbeing and one of the common projects of all its members, such that part of the intimate relationships within a family can be constituted by joint actions toward that end.

It might be thought that there is a tension or even incompatibility in two views I have attributed to Confucians: 1) duties to family and duties to human beings as such have different and independent sources of justification; and 2) love toward family members can be a basis for developing love of human beings in general. It might be thought that 1) and 2) together imply that 3) love cannot be a response to duty and 4) love cannot be a source of duty.² There is reason to attribute 3) to the Confucians if it means that love arises from the mere recognition of duty. However, as indicated above, Confucians held that we have duties to cultivate love of the appropriate kind for family and others outside the family. These duties will have different justifications: duties to love family are ultimately based on the special character of the relationships obtaining between family members; while duties to human beings as such are based on valued characteristics or potentials that human beings share in common. The Confucians on my interpretation would accept 4) insofar as one's duties do not arise from the sheer fact that one loves. However, love can be a source of duty in the sense that it can be required and subject to normative guidance. One can have duties to cultivate love toward parents, for example, by focusing on the reasons one has to be grateful to them. In fact, this demanding form of normativity applied to love is rejected by the Daoists.

Daoist Connection to All Things in the World

Confucians naturalized the earliest notion of *gantong* primarily in terms of human relationship and community. The classical Daoist texts, the *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi*, naturalized the notion to becoming attuned to a primordial source of all things, a source they characterized as *wu* 無, usually translated as nothingness or nonbeing. Chapter 40 of the *Daodejing* says, “The world and all its creatures arise from what is there; what is there (*you* 有) arises from what is not there” (Ivanhoe, 2005a: 142). The *Zhuangzi* presents a characteristically concrete metaphor for the formless source of all things: a great clod *da kuai* 大快 belching its breath which is called wind and making the ten thousand holes (the myriad creatures of the world) sound each in its own unique way (*Zhuangzi*, *Qiwulun*, “Making Things Equal” chapter). The clod metaphor implies that the formless source need not be conceived as literal or absolute nothingness, a void of non-existence, but rather something that is real but eludes any attempt to identify it as some *thing* with form. A good candidate for such a no-thing is *qi* 氣, the all-pervasive energy-stuff of the world from which all things with form emerge as more or less dense concentrations, like the waves that form from the ocean.

In the *Daodejing* attuning oneself to the formless source requires us to be aware of the distortions of language and concepts that inevitably mislead us into thinking of ourselves as entirely separate creatures. Even the forms things have are constantly changing like the shapes of waves that are in the continuous process of emerging from and returning to the ocean. We try to pin down what any individual thing is by naming or subsuming it under concepts and language, but they are too rigid to keep up with constant change. That is why things seem to be turning into their opposites. We try to “name” or identify who is a good person and who is a bad person, but our concepts of good and bad are too rigid: what is good always has some aspect of badness in it; what is bad always has some aspect of goodness. One who is attuned to the elusiveness of things will not let rigid preconceptions of who is a “good” or “bad” person interfere with perception of who the other person is and how one might work with that person. “The good person is teacher of the bad; the bad person is material for the good. Those who do not honor their teachers or who fail to care for their material, though knowledgeable are profoundly deluded” (chapter 27, Ivanhoe, 2005a: 176). The first of three treasures the Daoist sage possesses is *ci* 慈 (chapter 67). The word can be translated as compassion or love, with

semantic associations of tender nurturing from the mother. The source of the myriad creatures characterized as “raising and nurturing” them, “settling and confirming” them; “nourishing and sheltering” them (chapter 51, modified from Ivanhoe, 2005a: 187).

Note that the *Daodejing* does not use “*ren*” for the treasure of compassion or love. *Ren* is mentioned elsewhere in the text (chapters 18, 19, 38) and is associated with a well-meaning “virtue” that is invoked when things are going badly but only makes things worse. It is associated with a kind of moral preaching and social engineering based on a preconceived and rigid idea of what goodness is. One who is guided by an idea of *ren* overlooks everything about individuals that fails to conform to that idea but which might in fact be “material” for the good. Thus *ci* is a kind of primordial compassion or love that is not blinded by rigid moral preconceptions of what people ought to be like but which responds in gentle and receptive fashion to who people are. *Ci* is also usefully contrasted with Mencius’ compassion or *ceyinzhixin* 惻隱之心. Cultivating it on Mencius’ view is to guide its growth through distinctions: Confucian categories such as father, mother, son, daughter, member of the family, elder in the village. The Daoist stance is that how one responds with care to another cannot neatly conform to these categories. Compassion or love in the *Daodejing* is conceived as more open and responsive to the particular person than Confucian compassion or love.

In the *Renjianshi* 人間世 (“In the Human World”) chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, the theme of remaining open and receptive to others who might be conceived as bad persons by Confucians is illustrated by an imagined dialogue between Confucius and his favorite student Yan Hui. Yan Hui tells Confucius of his ambition to travel to a Chinese state and to reform a heedless young ruler. Confucius tells Yan Hui that he has too many plans, and that instead he must prepare himself to comprehend the ruler’s *qi* by “fasting his mind” (and it is likely that some kind of meditation practice is the reference here) so as to empty it of all preconceptions about the ruler and how he should be reformed. He can know how to work with the ruler only after Yan Hui sees who the ruler is. To know the ruler, Confucius tells Yan Hui, do not to listen with your mind but with your *qi* or the vital-energies of your body.³

Attachment and Loss

One of the most distinctive Confucian views of love is that it involves mourning deeply and at length for the loss of the beloved. Precisely because the ritual is public and performed with others, possessed of a history that was already ancient for the early Confucians, its performance brings home that one is mourning a loss suffered by many others. Ultimately the rituals serve to reconcile us to death, loss, and grief. On the other hand, Chinese landscape paintings inspired by Daoism place tiny human beings within vast systems of clouds, mist, waterfalls, streams, mountains, valleys, and trees. Looking at the life that pervades all things in these paintings, it is easy to see it as inspired by the concept of nature as an ocean of energy-stuff, giving rise to individual creatures as the ocean gives rise to waves, with each one destined to return to its home. Daoist sages identify with the whole and welcome their own return to it, and then their re-emergence as a rat’s liver or a fly’s foreleg (*Zhuangzi*, chapter 6). Yet the human perspective of being a small individual creature attached to other such creatures is also a moment in the many transformations of the whole. To reject that perspective is not to embrace the whole. Indeed, the central relationship of the *Zhuangzi* is between Zhuangzi and his philosophical sparring partner, Huizi, and in a passage of the text Zhuangzi acknowledges the loss he felt upon the death of his friend. Another story in the text acknowledges both Zhuangzi’s grieving upon the death of his wife, and his reconciliation to her loss. In the end, then, the text accepts two perspectives: the perspective of the individual human being attached to others and lamenting

their inevitable loss; and the perspective of the whole that absorbs all loss and delights in its new creations. In one passage of the 大宗師 *Dazongshi* (“The Great Ancestral Teacher”) chapter, the following is said of the Daoist sages:

Hence what they liked was one and what they didn’t like was one. Their being one was one and their not being one was one. Seeing it as one, they were followers of Heaven. Seeing it as not one, they were followers of humanity. When neither Heaven nor humanity wins out over the other, this is called being a true person.

(*Zhuangzi*, 2018)

The Confucians, starting from deep attachments and fully immersed in the human world, travel toward reconciliation with the transformations wrought by Heaven. The Daoists, starting from identification with the undifferentiated source of all myriad creatures, travel toward reconciliation with their own humanity. Confucian love is embedded with distinctions between its objects and guided by reflection. Daoist love seeks connection with that which transcends distinctions and reflection. Together, they constitute a yin and yang of love.

Combining Confucian and Daoist Approaches to Love

The Daoist idea that we are capable of adopting multiple perspectives on ourselves and our relationship to the rest of the world suggests how one might come to accept that one need not choose between the Confucian and Daoist approaches. We are complex creatures with needs that can’t all be satisfied at once. We love within a network of social practices and institutions. Much of the time, we need guidance on what to expect from our loved ones and what they expect from us. Confucian love with distinctions gives us that. Yet there is more than a little truth that who we are and what we want from our loved ones escapes the structure of distinctions we have established for ourselves. Daoism provides us with the alternative of suspending that structure and trying to tune into the immediate presence of the other person in front of us. As to the inevitable loss of those we love, Confucianism and Daoism appear to conflict, with Confucianism advising us to immerse ourselves deeply in loss in order eventually to accept it, while Daoism advises us to transcend our finitude. But perhaps these are not incompatible in the end, for we may be unable to transcend our finitude without first acknowledging it and embracing it.

Notes

- 1 Though most translators render the passage as saying that fathers and sons should “cover up” or “conceal” each other’s crimes, there is an argument that the passage is better translated as “not disclose” see (Huang, 2013: 144). There is also an argument for translating the word for “steal” as indicating extenuating circumstances of need accompanying the theft; see Zhu Xi (1985: 178).
- 2 Thanks to Adrienne Martin for raising this issue with me.
- 3 There is in fact some contemporary scientific theory that supports the idea that the results of learning about others and one’s environment are registered in the body (Damasio, 1994), and that in particular human bodies have nonconscious and automatic capacities to discern the emotions and attitudes of others from numerous and complex sensory cues that occur in the course of social interaction (see Lieberman, 2000 for a survey of such evidence).

References

- Ames, R. T. (2001). "Introduction." In H. Giskin and B. S. Walsh, *An Introduction to Chinese Culture through the Family*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1–8.
- Ames, R. T. and H. Rosemont, Jr. (1998). *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*, New York: Ballantine Books.
- Analects* (2018). In D. Sturgeon (ed.), *Chinese Text Project*. Available at: <http://ctext.org/analects> [Accessed 2 May 2018].
- Asma, Stephen T. (2013). "The Myth of Universal Love." *The Stone*, *New York Times*, 5 January.
- Damasio, A. (1994). *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, New York: Putnam; revised 2005, New York: Penguin.
- Daodejing* (2018). In D. Sturgeon (ed.), *Chinese Text Project*. Available at: <https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing> [Accessed 2 May 2018].
- Da Xue*, chapter of the *Liji* (2018). In D. Sturgeon (ed.), *Chinese Text Project*. Available at: <https://ctext.org/liji/da-xue> [Accessed 2 May 2018].
- Fraser, C. (2016). *The Philosophy of the Mòzǐ: The First Consequentialists*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gandhi, R. (2013). *Mohandas: A True Story of a Man, His People and an Empire*, digital ed., New York: Penguin.
- Huang, Y. (2013). *Confucius: A Guide for the Perplexed*, London: Bloomsbury.
- Ivanhoe, P. J. (trans.) (2005a). "Laozi." In P. J. Ivanhoe and B. Van Norden (eds), *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, 2nd ed., Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 161–206.
- Ivanhoe, P. J. (trans.) (2005b). "Mozi." In P. J. Ivanhoe and B. Van Norden (eds), *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, 2nd ed. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 59–114.
- Lieberman, M. D. (2000). "Intuition: A Social Cognitive Neuroscience Approach," *Psychological Bulletin* 126, 109–137.
- McFarquhar, L. (2015). *Strangers Drowning: Impossible Idealism, Drastic Choices, and the Urge to Help*, New York: Penguin.
- Mengzi* (Mencius) (2018). In D. Sturgeon (ed.), *Chinese Text Project* Available at: <https://ctext.org/mengzi> [Accessed 2 May 2018].
- Mozi* (2018). In D. Sturgeon (ed.), *Chinese Text Project*. Available at: <https://ctext.org/mozi> [Accessed 2 May 2018].
- Singer, P. (1972). "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1(3), 229–243.
- Wang, H. (2012). "Ren and Gantong: Openness of Heart and the Root of Confucianism," *Philosophy East and West* 62(4), 463–504.
- Zhu, Xi (1985). *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books*, Changsha: Hunan sheng xinhua shudian faxing.
- Zhuangzi* (2018). In D. Sturgeon (ed.), *Chinese Text Project*. Available at: <https://ctext.org/zhuangzi> [Accessed 2 May 2018].

31

LOVE

India's Distinctive Moral Theory

Shyam Ranganathan

“Love” (*bhakti*) has the same meaning as “meditation” (*upāsana*) and is marked by the character of immediate interaction (*śākṣātkara*), and which itself is dear above all things since the object known is such.

(Rāmānuja, Śrī Bhāṣya, I.i.1. “Small Pūrvapakṣa” pp. 15–17)

The means of attainment of Development (*Brahman*) is ultimate love (*parabhakti*), which is of the nature of meditation that has become an object of supreme attachment (to the meditator) and has acquired the vividness of clearest perception.... This ultimate love is to be attained through the path of devotion, which in its turn is aided by responsible action.... Love is a particular kind of knowledge (*jñāna*).

(Rāmānuja, Vedārthasaṅgraha §238)

But love is the same thing as joy.... Entities other than Development can be objects of joy only to a certain extent and for some time. But Development is such that cognizing of It is an infinite and abiding joy. Since the form of cognition as joy is determined by its object, Development itself is joy.

(Rāmānuja, Vedārthasaṅgraha §239–241)

You are Love sublime, the unsatiating nectar. You are, my, your servant's, Bliss and every kind of Happiness.

(Thirumalisai Ālvār, Nānmugan Thiruvandhādhī)¹

Introduction

In addition to the familiar moral theories of Virtue Ethics, Consequentialism, and Deontology, India presents us with one unique moral theory: it may be called “Yoga” (discipline, meditation) but also “Bhakti,” which is typically translated as “Devotion” but is also translated as “Love” (*MMW* 743). It has two expressions in the history of Indian literature. The first is in formal philosophy, as we find it in Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra* (second century CE), and the writings of

Rāmānuja (tenth century CE). The second is in informal philosophy in the popular literature of classical India that explores the adventures of the eternal couple, Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* (second century BCE to second century CE). In this literature, the ideas of Bhakti were explored symbolically, dramatically, and dialogically in argument form—often at the same time, as in the case of the *Mahābhārata*’s most popular portion: the *Bhagavad Gītā*. The tradition in its literary form explores the paradox of ideals of Love, such as the deity Viṣṇu, being at once the god of sexual passion or *kāma deva* (cf. *Bhāgavatha Purāṇa* 5.18.15) but also the Lord of Yoga (meditation) (*Gītā* 11.4).

In this chapter, I will focus on Bhakti, in its formal and informal manifestations in Indian philosophy. In order to understand how it is a distinct and basic option of moral theory, I will identify four basic options of moral theory by being explicit about my methodology in the study of philosophy. This will allow us to appreciate how the Indian disagreements on moral theory contribute to a philosophical exploration of love. It will also help us appreciate how Yoga/Bhakti (Love) is a unique, basic theoretical option that treats love as the basic conception of morality. In providing such an account, Yoga/Bhakti elucidates the moral unity of a diverse range of concerns that we talk about with the English term “love,” including strong evaluation of things (“I love that song”), relationships of friendship, familial bonds, and the intimacy of sexual partners.

But first, a bit about method. When we are attempting to study a tradition that is culturally removed from our context of scholarship, it pays to be responsible and to be clear about method. What method we adopt will inform not only our reading of Indian philosophy but also the options of philosophy as such.

By far, the most popular approach is *interpretation*: explanation of a perspective *P* by way of what the interpreter believes.² Interpretation relies upon our beliefs as the data for explanation. In contrast we could treat the challenge of reading philosophy as a logical puzzle. I call this method *explication*, which relies on the essence of logic: valid entailment. Valid arguments do not necessarily have true premises, or conclusions, and arguments that are composed of true premises and a true conclusion can fail to be valid. To explicate a perspective *P* is to treat it as entailing a theory about *t* (say “ethics”) that entails all of its controversial *t*-claims (ethical claims). Accordingly, the common concept of a debate (say about ethics) is what competing theories of *t* (ethics) converge on as they disagree. This is the method I shall adopt. If we interpret concepts, we define them by way of what we take to be true about them (so labels like “Virtue Ethics” or “Consequentialism” would be informed by our beliefs about examples of such theories). If we explicate concepts and terms, we identify them by their role in a disagreement that we can be agnostic about (so “Virtue Ethics” or “Consequentialism” would then be understood as referring to basic options of moral disagreement).

Interpretation will appear persuasive as it relies upon what we already believe. Explication leads to explanations that are controversial, so they may seem unpersuasive: they recast familiar terms that people have strong beliefs about in light of a controversy, and this naively counts against it. But there are two bigger problems with interpretation. First, if we insist upon employing our beliefs in studying an alien tradition (and in defining familiar options of philosophy), then it will always seem mysterious and inexplicable in proportion to its departure from our perspective—and it will always be the options from alien traditions that seem inexplicable as these play no role in the formation of our beliefs. Second, the main problem with interpretation is that it violates validity and is hence irrational because it prioritizes truth. Even if it was restricted to explanation by way of what *is* true (in fact), it would be irrational: truth is neither necessary nor sufficient for valid reasoning. Explication in contrast is based on validity. So while it may not accord with our beliefs (and may yield explanations that are substantively false), it is rational.

If we explicate the perspectives on ethics, we find that they each explain a theory that entails their controversial claims about ethics, and the common concept is what they converge on as they disagree: *THE RIGHT OR THE GOOD*. This is the basic concept of moral theory, and as John Rawls notes: “The two main concepts of ethics are those of *THE RIGHT* and *THE GOOD*.... The structure of an ethical theory is ... largely determined by how it defines and connects these two basic notions” (Rawls, 1971: 24). The right pertains to process and procedure, while the good pertains to outcomes. If we explicate Indian philosophy, we find that the concept at the heart of disagreements across theories of the ubiquitous Indian philosophical term “dharma” just is *THE RIGHT OR THE GOOD*. This is useful for us: for in understanding the options of Indian ethical theory, we will be able to not only appreciate the diversity of positions as they relate to the question of love, each itself some account of *THE RIGHT OR THE GOOD*, but also locate Bhakti, or Love, the moral theory as the attempt to account for *THE RIGHT OR THE GOOD* purely by way of Love.

Explication and Four Basic Moral Theories Including Love

The Good produces the Right. Roseland Hursthouse defined Virtue Ethics as the view that the virtues (states of goodness) give rise to right action (Hursthouse, 1996), and hence on this account, Virtue Ethics is a paradigm example of this first moral theory. One reason for objecting to this characterization is that one can prioritize virtue but deny that action is what follows from the virtues: the virtues may even give rise to an appropriate non-action or omission. Yet, the rationale for identifying Virtue Ethics with this first category is that Virtue Ethical theories credit states of goodness (the virtues) with living well, which is, in a broad sense, right. In the Indian tradition, the paradigm example of Virtue Ethics (that also denies that right action follows from the virtues but affirms that a well-lived life does follow from the virtues) is the ancient tradition of Jainism. According to the Jains, an essential feature of each sensory being (*jīva*) is virtue (*vīrya*) and this is clouded by action (*karma*). We ought to understand ourselves in terms of virtue, which is benign and unarmful, and not in terms of action, which intrudes on the rights of others. Jains are the historically staunchest Indian advocates of strict vegetarianism and veganism as a means of implementing nonharm. As Jains identify all action as harmful, they idealize a state of non-action, *sullekana*, which results in death: this is the fruit of Jain moral observance (Soni, 2017). Jainism so understood is a tradition of asceticism, which in the final analysis has no room for personal relationships of intimacy. Carried out with integrity, this involves sacrificing our own embodied life. As a theory of dharma, Jainism is a theory of ethics, or *the Right or the Good*. It is not a theory about love. Love might be justified on this account insofar as it leads us to be considerate of others, and not trespass on their wellbeing. But aspects of love that require action and our bodies are on the chopping block—according to classical Jain moral theory, we engage in such actions provisionally in states of clouded virtue, obstructed by action. The heroes (*jains*) that conquer action and attain freedom do so quite on their own.³

The Good justifies the Right. I take it that this category analyzes what is at the heart of Consequentialist theories. Accordingly, the right action or omission of action only has an instrumental value relative to some end, the good, and hence the good serves the function of justifying the right. Hence, an action or an omission of an action can be morally equivalent insofar as they are equally justified by some end. The right can be a rule, or a specific action, but either way, it is justified by the ends. The most famous example of this type of theory in the Indian tradition is Buddhism, which takes the welfare of sentient beings as the source of obligation (Goodman, 2009). Indeed, according to its classical formulation in the Four Noble Truths, it is *duḥkha* (discomfort, disutility) that is to be minimized by the elimination of agent relative evaluation,

desire, by way of a program (the Eight-Fold Path) that is justified by agent neutral utility. Yet, interpreted, the classical Buddhist doctrine seems like a hodgepodge of ethical commitments. For instance, the Buddha is recorded in the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*-s (I 189–190) as distinguishing between two kinds of dharmas (ethical ends)—those that are wholesome (such as moral rules), and those such as pathological emotions that are not. So it seems that “dharma” has more than one unrelated theoretical sense here. But explicated, we see how this is part of the project of Consequentialism: basic to (all) dharma is the end of harm reduction or welfare, but whereas some such dharmas (such as agent neutral moral teachings) justify themselves as means to harm reduction without undermining agents and or harm reduction, some dharmas (such as pathological agent relative emotions) cannot: in these cases, the basic essence of dharma manifested as something agent relative recommends the meditational practice of *mindfulness*.

The attitude of *mettā* (in Pali) or *maitrī* (in Sanskrit), on the Buddhist account, is this virtuous state of responding appropriately to various dharmas. These terms are often loosely translated as “loving kindness” but they literally mean *goodwill*, *friendliness*, *benevolence*—all virtues that arise from a concern for welfare as the primary source of obligation. It is manifested in compassion (*karuṇā*) that is the appropriate response to suffering, an attitude of delight (*muditā*) when disutility is minimized, and indifference (*upekṣā*) as the appropriate response to the source of discomfort—agent relativity (*Maha-satipatthana Sutta*).

Like Jainism, Buddhism is a theory of dharma, *THE RIGHT OR THE GOOD*, and not primarily a theory about love (bhakti). And like Jainism, it is ascetic: in the final push, we must transcend personal relationships of love, defined as they are by agent relative considerations. And whereas in the Jain tradition we find an absolute commitment to nonharm, that functions to justify love, the Buddha’s Consequentialism as he is reputed to have clarified (cf. *Vinaya Cullavagga* VII, 3.15–16) warrants a less stringent approach as all procedures are merely instrumental. Accordingly, anything is permissible (including the fruits of cruelty, and the rejection of those with whom we have special relations of care and affection) if it is a putative means to a general concern for welfare, or does not arise from desire, which undermines general welfare.

The Right justifies the Good. This is the inverse of the previous option, and while it may not be a popular way to think about the issue, it sheds light on the role of Deontological theories in moral disagreement. The goods of moral theory, on this account, may be actions, or omissions: the former are often called duties, and the later, rights—these are *moral choices*. Whatever counts as a moral choice is something good and worth preserving in one’s moral theory. Yet, the reason that they are theoretically worth endorsing has to do with procedural criteria that are distinct from the goods of moral theory. Hence, this category makes use of a distinction between the definition of moral choices (by definition, good), and their justification: “deontological theories judge the morality of choices by criteria different from the states of affairs those choices bring about” (Alexander and Moore, 2012). The right (procedure) is hence prior not only to the goods of moral theory (moral choices) but also their further consequences. This way of thinking about moral theory puts to bed a confusion—that if Deontologists consider the good outcomes in identifying duties or rights, they are thereby Consequentialists. This is a mistake that rests on a failure to distinguish between the substance of moral choice and the prior criteria that justifies them.

In the Indian tradition, famous deontologists abound, including the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā tradition, and the Vedānta tradition. The former is a version of moral nonnaturalism that claims that moral precepts are defined in terms of their benefic properties but justified by intuition (*śruti*) (which on its account is the ancient body of texts called the Vedas) while the latter is a dialectic that motivates a procedural approach to ethics by way of criticizing problems with teleology, namely that it apparently makes moral luck an irreducible element of the moral life.⁴ The Pūrva

Mīmāṃsā is the tradition in which ancient practices of animal sacrifices, largely abandoned and criticized, are defended as part of the content of good actions that we engage in for procedural considerations, though here too there is often an appreciation of the superiority of nonharmful interactions with non-human animals. Love in the form of relationships of special obligation (between partners, parents, masters, and servants) is cashed out in terms of duties and rights by this tradition in its *Dharmaśāstra* literature (Ranganathan, 2016). But here, too, love is not a basic moral principle. It is merely one of the many goods that morality has to justify.

The Right produces the Good. This is a fourth moral option that is radically procedural. Whereas the previous options in moral theory define the things to be done, or valued, by the good, this fourth defines it by the Right. It is also the mirror opposite of the first option. The salient example of this theory is Bhakti/Yoga (Love/Meditation). Accordingly, the right thing to do is defined by a procedural ideal—the Lord of the practice—and approximating the Lord brings about the good of the practice, namely its perfection. By being devoted to the Lord of the practice of being a person (both an act of meditation and love), we bring about our own perfection as people and thereby instantiate the ideal: Lordliness. Ethics is hence both radically agent relative but also unselfish, concerned always with another. Loving in general is an approximation to the Lord as the Lord is the normative genus of the category of people, and hence to know any individual is to approximate the Lord, but also because Lordliness makes possible value judgments and the determination of our own ideals in general, which we often express as love (such as when we claim “I love that *x*”). Whereas the previous three theories of dharma were simple theories of *THE RIGHT OR THE GOOD* that shed light on or justify some things that we might theorize about as love, Bhakti/Love, also known as Yoga/Meditation, is a theory about love, which is also a theory about morality. So whereas on the previous three options, the interests of morality exceed what we might identify as love, here, the putative elucidation of *THE RIGHT OR THE GOOD* is exhausted by the theory of Love. Love, approximating the ideal of ourselves as people, brings about our own good: love.

While Bhakti seems superficially like theism, it is not. Theists regard God as the paradigmatic virtuous agent, which is to say Good. Right action and teaching emanate from God the good. For Bhakti, the Lord is Right: goodness follows from our devotion to the Lord. Hence, our role is not to obey or follow God on this account, but to approximate the Lord as our own procedural ideal. The outcome is not only ourselves as fully actualized people but people with personal relationships intact.

Vedānta is a tradition of moral theory that straddles the third option of Deontology and a fourth option of Bhakti/Yoga. The Vedānta tradition motivates a move to procedural accounts of ethics by way of a complaint about teleological accounts: in prioritizing the Good, over the Right, they leave room for luck in morality, which undermines agents' moral freedom. The more procedural our account of ethics, the less room there is for what resides outside of our control: the outcome. The solution in this tradition is to marry ethics and metaphysics by identifying reality with Brahman, or Development: reality is hence not an end that could justify choices but a permanent means internal to the challenges of practical rationality: it is thereby identified with the paradigm Self (Ātmā) (Ranganathan, 2017b): all of life, experience, and reality is an unfolding of this paradigmatic Self: Development. Philosophers in this Vedānta tradition disagree about these topics, in part because they disagree about whether the objects of reality are properties of Development (Rāmānuja), illusions of Development (Śaṅkara), or adjuncts (Madhva). Yet, Love, Bhakti, the fourth moral theory, plays an important part in this tradition as a way to elucidate Development. Rāmānuja makes this identification a centerpiece of his theorizing. On this account, the Lord is the paradigm Self of Reality (Development), all of us and all things are Its attributes, and coming to understand It—Reality—is Love.

Love: Meditation and Intimacy

Love, the moral theory, traverses formal and popular philosophy and observances. Its popular symbolizations and celebrations are informed by the theory of meditation elucidated by Patañjali in his *Yoga Sūtra*.

Yoga, meditation, defined by its end, is the control of thought (YS I.2), metaphorically described as the purposeful calming of external waves of influence (*citta vṛtti nirodha*), or the control of the content of thought, which frees us as thinkers (YS I.3). It is an implicit criticism of ordinary pictures of thought as representations that we have attitudes such as belief toward. Real thinking gets rid of external influence, and constitutes an engagement in our own freedom as people (*puruṣa*-s) to see the world on our own terms but this requires controlling representation instead of believing it. And this epistemic autonomy is made possible by disciplinarity.

A discipline is a procedure that we can engage in from differing perspectives and places in the world: it is not restricted to any particular context and abstracts from contexts. To be disciplined in one's actions is hence to fall back on a procedure that transcends contexts, irrespective of extraneous factors. As a very basic example, we could consider the practice of counting our steps, as we walk: it is disciplined insofar as we apply the same practice of pacing our steps and counting them, as we move from our past steps.

When we engage a discipline, we can use it to compare differing perspectives. For instance, we can use a disciplined approach to observation from differing perspectives to compare what we see, and this can allow us to identify an object as something distinct from the various vantages from which it can be seen. The observations differ according to time and place, but the discipline is continuous and abstracts from specific contexts of observation. Discipline hence constitutes a common axis from which we can correlate and triangulate our varying and shifting perspectives as people and this allows us to isolate and control common objects of the common world (YS IV). Knowing what is objective and not merely an illusion is hence made possible by disciplinarity for in adopting a disciplined approach to life, we can distinguish between what seems to be the case but only from certain vantages and what explains our varied experiences from differing perspectives, namely objects. Yet, ethically, this act of knowing what is objective also facilitates our own isolation from a public world as something discrete and not continuous with the forces of external influence. When we know, we know by virtue of our control and what we come to control is our relationship to objects in public space. Thinking on this account is this act of disciplinary engagement, and our thinking is factual when it reveals the objects of controversy (that look different from differing perspectives) that we perceive from differing vantages. It counts as knowledge as this revelation is not an accident, but justified by way of our own disciplinary practice. The model can generalize to account for knowledge in various areas of disciplinary research while individuating disciplined research in terms of disciplinary differences. Mathematics, for instance, would be characterized by a disciplinary practice (including derivations of proofs) that allows mathematicians to triangulate on mathematical objects of inquiry from differing (mathematical) perspectives. Empirical science, for instance, would be characterized by a disciplinary practice (including testing) that allows scientists to triangulate on empirical objects and laws of nature. In philosophy, explication is the disciplinary practice that allows us to examine philosophical theories from our own various substantive backgrounds and yet converge on the objectivity of arguments and concepts of controversy. Here, we shall focus on the moral philosophical form of knowing brought about by disciplinarity: love.

The Yoga approach to being thoughtful and a person contrasts with a common approach: propositions are linguistic meanings and only linguistic beings (humans) are people, for only people can have thoughts so conceived. Patañjali's picture of thought departs from this in two

ways. First, it depicts thought as an approximation to thinking, which is disciplinary engagement—the same procedure from differing perspectives that allows us to track public objects. Second, as thinking is nothing that essentially requires semantic representation, such as linguistic meaning, animals (as well as objects such as the Earth, the Sun, and other celestial beings) that apparently do not have language but engage in a continuous procedure as they track public objects from differing perspectives are thoughtful beings on this account but also people. People are the kind of things that thrive when they are thoughtful and thoughtfulness is the disciplined engagement with a public world. The normative essence of this disciplinary engagement is the Lord.

Patañjali, in addition to defining Yoga (discipline, meditation) as an end (elimination of external coercion), also defines it procedurally (YS II). He defines it as three (basic) procedural ideals, which depend on one more fundamental procedural ideal: the Lord.

Īśvara, the Lord, is a special person defined by two essential traits: it is externally unhindered and hence self-determining, but also untouched by (its own) karma (action, choice) and hence unconservative (YS I.24). So not only is it free to determine itself (to engage in the same procedure), it is also unconstrained by its past choice, such as where to reside. Hence it is the essence of disciplinarity, for disciplinarity is this departure from past choices of vantages of observation, being unconservative, by way of our own self-governance. It is the self-determined practice (much like counting the distance we travel) that allows us to transcend contexts. Knowing the Lord on this model is an outcome of subjecting disciplinarity itself to disciplined scrutiny, and the outcome—what we triangulate on from various perspectives—is the Lord. But as disciplinarity is nothing apart from a rigorous practice that we undertake, subjecting this practice to disciplinary scrutiny reveals to us something about our own procedural essence.

Objects of intrinsic value are defined by an intrinsic trait that gives them value. We could call this literally the trait of self-determination, or *self-governance*. Moral patients have an interest in being free from their own past doings and choices (insofar as such doings can be deleterious to their welfare). We could call this freedom from the past *unconservativism*. People are the curious category of things with an interest in both features of the Lord. They are hence valuable for extrinsic and intrinsic reasons. What it is for people to thrive is to actualize these procedural ideals of unconservativism and self-governance in harmony: when either suffers, so does their health and welfare. When actualized, they allow people to relate safely to other things in a dynamic public space, and the procedure they display is discipline (Yoga). Knowing people by way of their interest in their own Lordliness is to hence know people in their ideal form. It is to know them not in terms of their failings, but their procedural ideal.

The first of three basic procedures of Yoga is hence *Īśvarapraṇidhāna*: this is the approximation to the Lord, popularly known as bhakti (love). The second procedure is *tapas*: this literally means “heat producing.” It is a metaphor for going against the grain, doing something different, being unconstrained by past choices: it is unconservativism. The third procedure is *svā-dhyāya*, which literally means “self-study,” which Patañjali describes as including the project of identifying one’s own ideals (*iṣṭadevata*) (YS II.44). As to inquire is to triangulate on the objects of inquiry, and thereby control objects of inquiry, to study oneself (and one’s own ideals) is to self-govern. So, the three essential procedures of Yoga constitute an analysis of the Lord: by loving the Lord (*Īśvarapraṇidhāna*), one further analyzes the Lord into the ideals of unconservativism (*tapas*) and self-governance (*svā-dhyāya*) (cf. YS II).

What is rarely noted is that this picture of Yoga is immortalized in Hindu depictions of three deities: Ādi Śeṣa (approximating the Lord), Viṣṇu (unconservativism), and Lakṣmī (self-governance). Ādi Śeṣa, the cosmic snake of innumerable heads and spines, is depicted as floating over an endless ocean of external waves of influence, which are calmly subsiding: this ocean of

external influence is Yoga depicted as an end, as something that calms down. But this cosmic snake provides a place for Viṣṇu to recline—the God who objectifies himself as the disk, mace, sword, and other potentially harmful manifestations, but manifestations that do not constrain or bind him. He is hence free from his own past choices: unconservatism. And with him at his feet as he lies down is the Goddess Lakṣmī, the Goddess of all things with intrinsic value. She is depicted as a lotus (Padma) and as sitting on herself and holding herself, thereby self-governing. In this graphical depiction of the analysis of the Lord, we find the two components of the Lord romantically involved with each other. But it is also a depiction of the three procedural aspects of Yoga literally floating over the ends of Yoga. It is a graphic representation of the radical priority of the right over the good—itsself an object of popular Indian devotional practice, but one that is an analysis of love itself. It shows Love of the Lord (Ādi Śeṣa, the Cosmic Snake of many perspectives), converging on the essence of disciplinarity by subjecting his own practice to disciplinary scrutiny (from all vantages), thus holding and hovering over the Lord as two lovers (Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī), romantically and eternally floating over an ocean of external influence.

The association of Viṣṇu and Yoga starts with the earliest articulations of the philosophy of Yoga, where success in bringing about the end of Yoga is depicted as an approximation to Viṣṇu (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* II.3). Viṣṇu in his famous avatar of Krishna is known for an extended dialogue on the battlefield with his childhood friend, Arjuna, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, where he defends a procedural approach to morality, and bhakti. Arjuna, a warrior, is despondent: he and his brothers (the Pāṇḍavas) have been the repeated objects of terror and villainy by their cousins (the Kauravas) who refuse to leave them in peace, and hence as warriors they must fight to defend themselves and those in their charge. At the outset of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Arjuna formulates various teleological arguments against fighting: the prospects of victory are bleak, and even if successful it would come with great cost—not to mention that he would have to fight kin who are on the opposing side by way of professional loyalties and not moral allegiances. As Buddhists might reason, Arjuna argues that we should be concerned with compassion and renounce desires for conquest or victory that cause suffering. Arjuna reasons (as Jains might) that while the Kaurava's are vicious and their viciousness motivates them to war and conflict, the sin would be his if he were to stoop to their level and return the fight. He also argues that deontological obligations that constitute the social norms of his community would also be a victim of war: war undermines the social fabric and contributes to lawlessness and hence it should be avoided (*Gītā* I). What is quite apparent from the literary exploration of these ideas in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the larger epic the *Mahābhārata* is that the Kauravas bank on the Pāṇḍava's upstanding moral character, their concern for compassion, and also their fidelity to good moral rules (call all of this *conventional morality*), to gain the upper hand in their tyranny over the Pāṇḍavas, who, constrained by conventional morality, are prohibited from ridding themselves of the Kauravas. Arjuna's reasons for being reluctant to fight are proof that it worked.

Arjuna's lament also shows that theorizing by way of the outcome brings luck into the picture: the good, as the coveted outcome, is nothing that one can control. In multiparty conflicts such as a war, the outcome is a function of everyone's choices, and not merely one person's choices. Moreover, exemplary goals (winning against tyranny) are unusual and have a low expected utility: thinking about these objectives as motivating or justifying a course of action leads to despondency.

Krishna's response is extensive and takes up the remaining seventeen of eighteen chapters of the dialogue. In short, Krishna argues that we should adopt a procedural approach to moral reasoning, and especially Yoga: we should focus on our own procedure and by perfecting it, we bring about the good (cf. *Gītā* 2–4). He recommends that via devotion to Him (Krishna) Arjuna can gain victory. Moreover, he even recommends that we simply put aside our naïve

expectations about moral behavior: all of that (conventional morality) goes out the window when we are devoted to the Lord, but the result is our mutual freedom from evil (cf. *Gītā* 18:66). In the subsequent chapters, Krishna guides the Pāṇḍava's to victory over tyranny, allowing them to reinstitute a moral order of friendship and love, and the demon that is sacrificed is conventional morality.

One of the surprising outcomes of the moral theory of Love as it is explored in the literature is that Love is not the same as compassion; nor is love a worry for our own moral purity or constraint by good rules. Love involves taking sides, getting dirty in conflict, protecting those in our care, but also sticking up for ourselves. The right side of a conflict chooses the procedural ideal of the Lord, unconservatism and self-governance. Tyrants in contrast are focused on ends, including even the goods of moral theory, which force a handcuff of virtue on their opponents. In the short term, tyrants seem to get their way by taking advantage of good people, concerned as they are to minimize suffering and play by the rules: but at the cost of their own unconservatism and self-governance. They are forever stuck with past choices by way of their schemes, and they lose any self-determined worth as they become mere functions of their own tyranny. Love wins because it does not play by conventional morality: in being devoted to the Lord, we seek out what we have in common as people (regardless of our gender, sex, species, or shape), and this unites us against tyranny.

The philosopher who draws on the yogic ideas of Bhakti and the literary explorations of the three essential procedures of the Lord as Ādi Śeṣa, Viṣṇu, and Lakṣmī, and combines it with the Vedānta theory of Development as elucidating the paradigm Self, is Rāmānuja, perhaps the most influential of Indian philosophers in India today (Potter, 1963: 252–253). For Rāmānuja, Brahman (Development, Reality) is the paradigmatic Self: the Lord. And this Lord is further analyzable into Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī (Carman, 1974: 238). While we are not de facto Lords of our life or reality, we are yet expressions of Lordliness insofar as we are expressions of Development. The Lord is to us as we are to our bodies: an inner normative constraint (*antaryāmi*) (Rāmānuja's *Gītā Bhāṣya* 18:15; *Vedārthasaṃgraha* §95). While some parts of Development are impersonal, like material things defined by intrinsic attributes, or moral patients with an interest in being free from their own past, as people we are both. Individual people mirror the cosmic structure of Development, and the cosmic structure is that Lordliness as a procedural ideal at the heart of Development (*Śrī Bhāṣya*, I.i.1).

The yogic approach to thought sheds light on this analysis of reality. Reality is factual, and the facts are true thoughts. Thought on the Yoga account is an exercise in disciplinarity and hence reality (true thoughts or more clearly, true thinking) is a species of the Lord, the ideal of disciplinarity. Hence, reality instantiates the Lord; and we too, as facts, instantiate the Lord. Hence, on Rāmānuja's account, to know (*jñāna*) about things (*bhūta*) is thereby to appreciate their essential morality (*dharma*) (*Śrī Bhāṣya*, I.i.1). As parts of reality we are already very much a function of Lordliness, but to know the Lord, our essence, is to love. What we uncover on Rāmānuja's account of reality, which we know as a species of disciplinarity, is itself the essence of Love: the Lord. Unpacked, it's the eternal couple floating over the ocean of external influence.

Already on Patañjali's account of meditation, we see that knowing others (friends, partners, parents, children, family, regardless of their species) is a version of knowing the Lord insofar as the Lord is the genus of people as procedural ideals of their own life. When we thrive, we thrive by our own unconservatism and self-governance. Hence to know other people is to know something by way of the Lord, and this approximation to the Lord is love. Even "love" as a matter of strong valuation ("I love corn on the cob") is included here as self-governance, the essential trait of the Lord, for it involves determining our own ideals and objects of affection.

There are hints in Patañjali's Yoga that this loving approximation is reciprocated by the Lord: it is the earliest of teachers, and apparently responds to our petitions (YS I.26). But on Rāmānuja's account, the relationship is not just moral: it is physical. We are bodily expressions of the Lord, and hence just as people are intimately involved in their own lives, the Lord as the normative essence of reality—our higher Self—approximates us, as individuals. This parental disposition of the Lord to us on Rāmānuja's account shows how and why he was convinced that Love itself is joy. Knowing is already a species of exercising one's own unconservativism and self-governance. But when we love, the object of love, the Lord (unconservativism and self-governance), is itself the means that we instantiate through our activity, and hence what we are privy to when we love is ourselves as loving individuals, objectified in the Lord. Love not only brings us closer to others, it reveals our own self in its Lordliness, healed of any trauma or imperfection of the past, while eternally free to determine ourselves—not as a static abstraction, but active Development.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explicated four basic moral theoretical options as they appear in Indian philosophy. Each option consists in an account of the basic concept of ethics, *THE RIGHT OR THE GOOD*. Three of these basic options make room for the familiar options of Virtue Ethics, Consequentialism, and Deontology understood by way of their role in a disagreement about *THE RIGHT OR THE GOOD*. Each of the three Indian versions of these theories did not identify Love as a basic moral principle or end, though all elucidated some aspect of Love. The Jain Virtue Ethics sheds light on the moral importance of nonharm in loving relations, but also expects us to give up action and our body—which mediate love relations—to free the moral purity of our inherent virtue. The Buddhist Consequentialist theory elucidates the moral role of compassion and benevolence in love, but provides no moral protection for personal relations or special obligations of care, in the grand scheme. The Deontological *Mīmāṃsā* approach does identify special obligations between partners, friends, parents and children, masters and servants as the goods of moral theory to be preserved and cherished for procedural reasons, but love as such plays no basic theoretical role on this account. In contrast, the moral theory Love treats the phenomenon of love itself as the basic theoretical elucidation of the concept of *THE RIGHT OR THE GOOD*. The right is defined by a procedural ideal—the Lord—and approximating it brings about our good. This approximation is itself love, and what we love, the Lord, is analyzable into the procedural couple of unconservativism and self-governance: this constitutes the basic normative essence and interest of persons. To know persons is to love them as expressions of Lordliness: themselves defined by a normative interest in their own unconservativism and self-governance. As this is our common cause and normative ideal, loving others brings us into intimacy with what is our own good. Perfecting love brings about this good: our freedom from external influence as people who love each other.

Notes

- 1 Translations of Rāmānuja and the *Yoga Sūtra* (Penguin, 2008) are mine. For translations see Rāmānuja (1968, 1996). Translation of Thirumalisai Ālvār is made available by Dr. N. Ranganathan.
- 2 For a review of the ubiquitous employment of interpretation in the study of Indian ethics, see Ranganathan (2017a: 52–55).
- 3 What I have set out here is not an ethnographic account of Jainism: it is an explication of Jain moral theory especially as found in classic philosophical sources. An ethnographic account that describes Jainism by way of accurate observations of self-identifying Jains, including Jain monks and nuns, is no

doubt possible and one will find many departures in this practice from what I have explicated. But that would be an interpretation: explanation by way of what one takes to be true.

- 4 The *Mīmāṃsā* tradition predates G. E. Moore in defending a criticism of naturalistic moral semantics (Ranganathan, 2016). And while Moore appears to make use of intuition in his account of Ideal Utilitarianism, there is an important difference. Moore is a Consequentialist: “Thus ‘right,’ ‘duty,’ and ‘virtue’ are different ways of labelling actions (or dispositions to act) that are useful as means to good ends” (Preston, 2017). For the *Mīmāṃsā* tradition, these are the good ends, justified by the intuition. They are to be valued intrinsically and not instrumentally.

References

- Alexander, L., and Moore, M. (2012) “Deontological Ethics,” in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter edition, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2012/entries/ethics-deontological>.
- Carman, J. B. (1974) *The Theology of Rāmānuja: An Essay in Interreligious Understanding*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Goodman, C. (2009) *Consequences of Compassion an Interpretation and Defense of Buddhist Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hursthouse, R. (1996) “Normative Virtue Ethics,” in R. Crisp (ed.), *How Should One Live?*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 19–33.
- Monier-Williams, M. (1995) *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged, with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages* (“greatly enlarged and improved” ed.), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.
- Patañjali. (2008) *Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra: Translation, Commentary and Introduction* (S. Ranganathan, Trans.), Delhi: Penguin Black Classics.
- Potter, K. H. (1963) *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Preston, A. (2017) “George Edward Moore (1873–1958),” in J. Fieser and B. Dowden (eds.), *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, www.iep.utm.edu/moore.
- Rāmānuja. (1968) *Vedārthasaṅgraha (edition and translation)* (S. S. Ragavachar, Trans.), Mysore: Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama.
- Rāmānuja. (1996) *(Śrī Bhāṣya/Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya) Vedānta Sūtras with the commentary of Rāmānuja* (G. Thibaut, Trans. Vol. 48), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Ranganathan, S. (2016) “Pūrva Mīmāṃsā: Non-Natural, Moral Realism (4.14),” in S. Ranganathan (ed.), *Ethics 1*, <http://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/ahl.php?csrno=27>: E-PG Pathshala, University Grants Commission, Government of India.
- Ranganathan, S. (2017a) “Philosophy, Religion and Scholarship,” in S. Ranganathan (ed.), *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Ethics*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 35–58.
- Ranganathan, S. (2017b) “Three Vedāntas: Three Accounts of Character, Freedom and Responsibility,” in S. Ranganathan (ed.), *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Ethics*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 249–274.
- Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Soni, J. (2017) “Jaina Virtue Ethics: Action and Non-Action,” in S. Ranganathan (ed.), *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Ethics*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 155–176.

LOVE IN THE JEWISH TRADITION

Lenn E. Goodman

Love, in modern parlance, is typically thought of as an emotion, a powerful passion that may bind one person to another possessively or protectively, calmed, perhaps, by friendship or respect, but often either slaked or fired by physical union or the desire for it, or turned explosive by the denial or alienation of such union—or grown old by boredom or disappointment. Love, in these terms, is often thought mysterious or paradoxical, not least for its swift transformation into hatred, or for the many questions raised about its demands. What sacrifices does love merit? Can its intimacy be shared without degeneration into mere concupiscence, or evaporation into a rhetorical trope? Is love selfish when it demands exclusivity, or prudish when it expects privacy or trust?

To understand love in the context of Jewish philosophy and the canonical Jewish sources may require some rethinking of these conventional ideas and the problems they generate. One won't get a full or rich idea of love as understood in the Hebrew Bible and the traditional and philosophical sources inspired by it simply by tracing down in a concordance the usages and contexts of Hebrew words like *ahavah*, the usual word for love, and tracking their counterparts elsewhere—although *ahavah* is the term used when God calls on all Israelites to love Him with all their hearts and souls and might (Deuteronomy 6:5), and again when the recipients of God's law are commanded to love one another as they love themselves (Leviticus 19:18). But if we follow the logic and dynamic of the Hebrew concept of *hesed* we'll get a far clearer idea of what love means in biblical contexts and the rabbinic and other Judaic thinking responsive to the Torah's values and prescriptions—not least when we trace the linkage of divine to human love as Judaically conceived.

Love biblically and in the trends of thought the Torah inspires, Jewish and non-Jewish, is more active than notions of a pure (or impure) emotion suggest. It may have the intensity we associate with a passion, but rarely the passivity that the Latin and Greek cognates of the word “passion” signify. Often the Hebrew word *hesed*, rather than *ahavah*, conveys a fuller, richer idea of what love means normatively in Jewish thought and life. *Hesed* is more a character trait than a passion, and it's active in the sense that generosity and grace are active. Its counterpart in Greek is *agape* rather than *eros*; *caritas*, in Latin; *ren* in Chinese, the virtue often called “human heartedness” in translations of classic Chinese texts. What's distinctive about the Hebrew treatment of this universal ideal is that *hesed* means “grace” or “favor” when applied to God, but “piety” and “devotion” when exercised by human beings: One answers God's favor not by seeking to repay

it (as if finite creatures could somehow benefit the Transcendent); rather, one shows one's gratitude by the grace and favor one shows others.

This chapter will review the treatment of love in this active sense, as articulated in the Hebrew Bible and explored in the work of Moses Maimonides (1138–1204), the outstanding exponent of Jewish philosophy in the Middle Ages. We open with consideration of God's love as portrayed in the biblical narrative, understood as grace. Grace here is generosity beyond desert. It is typified by the act of creation, described in the opening passages of Genesis as God's free bestowal of being—not only the gift of existence but also of the powers to realize the potentials inherent in that gift. For creatures capable of recognizing the gift, that is appreciating the beauty and goodness of creation, God's generosity is requited not by returning it, but by sharing what they have received. Paradigmatically, the pious and devoted (*hasidim*) manifest their commitment and love of God in the *hesed* (kindness, active love) they show their fellow creatures. The Torah, Judaically conceived, is not a storybook but God's law, studied, taught, and pondered as the handbook of such devotion, spelling out how Israel in particular, as individuals and as a community, can and must manifest love of God, respect for nature, and love of their fellow human beings. Understanding God's law in this way allows us to thematize its rich array of norms and prescriptions. Concrete obligations of care for the poor and helpless, typified by the widow, the orphan, and the stranger, afford paradigm cases of the ways in which God's love is to be acknowledged and requited. So the Torah's laws in these domains bring its moral concerns sharply into focus.

For Maimonides, it is vital to recognize that beyond its concerns with interhuman norms and practices, the Torah is also concerned with our relationship to God, the spiritual dimension that will allow Israel to become a holy nation and a light to the world. This spiritual concern is understood by Maimonides in intellectual terms, for the Torah does not distinguish the heart as the seat of human commitments from the heart as the seat of understanding. Our highest goal, even beyond the life of moral virtue that the Torah's laws seek to render a matter of personal habit and communal custom, is to know God, thus realizing the inner affinity with the divine that Genesis refers to poetically by saying that humanity, male and female, was created in God's image.

Given divine transcendence, it might seem highly problematic to make knowledge of God the highest human goal. But we can learn of the Creator, Maimonides argues, by study of His works. Detailed scientific study of nature, he maintains, will show us God's wisdom and grace in the intricacy and efficacy of its design and the generosity of its construction. Discovering those themes in nature, he urges, will not only put us in touch with the concrete manifestations of God's wisdom. It will also model the paths of *hesed* we too are meant to follow. So the intellectual love of God, although it guides us toward our highest goal, bears moral fruit as well. Knowledge of God, as the prophets promised, will yield human wellbeing and peace among nations. As Maimonides puts it,

Knowledge of the truth banishes hatred and spite.... Thus the promise: *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard couch with the kid ... the cow graze with the bear ... the suckling babe play [by the viper's den]* (Isaiah 11:6–8). And the cause is named: Strife, enmity, and struggles for power will end when mankind knows what God really is: *They shall not harm or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea* (Isaiah 11:9).

(Guide III 11, Munk 3.17a)

God's Love

God's first epiphany to Moses, at the burning bush, has the immediacy of urgency. God calls him by name: *Moses, Moses!* The response from Moses, *Hineni*, "Here I am," affirms his readiness to hear—and serve. God, for His part, is ready to act, having heard the outcry that signals Israel's long delayed awakening. There's love in the words Moses hears: *I am thy father's God, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob ... I have indeed seen the affliction of My people in Egypt and heard their cry about their taskmasters. I do know their pain!* (Exodus 3:4–7). The voice Moses hears echoes his own concern, and God identifies Himself existentially: He is the God of Moses' father and ancestors; He calls Israel His people. Israel's outcry means that they can and will no longer bear the sufferings of bondage in Egypt. The end of Israel's patience marks the end of the people's passivity.¹ God's response raises Moses' own concern to a higher plane: The incident in which Moses had moved from passive witness to active, if ineffective, agency, secretly lashing out against a slave-driver's cruelty, presages a new, public role for Moses. God's love is clear in this first Mosaic epiphany, both in His identification with Israel and in His elevation of Moses' role and motives. That He addresses Moses uniquely, in this moment of crisis, renders God's love pointedly particular.

Not so at Sinai. Here God addresses all Israel, making public, as it were, what had begun in His epiphany to a solitary and fugitive shepherd. The original call was to leadership and liberation. But the message at Sinai portends a law and a way of life, a mission not just for Moses but for the nation he has led to freedom. God's Law, epitomized in ten pronouncements, is proclaimed to all Israel, although each person is addressed intimately, in the second-person singular. God demands exclusivity, using the language of possessive love to describe His covenant: *I, the LORD thy God, am a jealous God* (20:5). Condign threats of multi-generational consequences should any Israelite betray God's trust address a people whose hopes focus on their progeny—for the children had been the targets of Pharaoh's genocidal policy (1:15–22). Offspring, not Egyptian afterworlds, mean the future to liberated Israel. Loving those who love Him and keep His laws, God visits upon those who spurn those laws consequences touching their offspring to the third and fourth generation (20:6). God does not say He hates those who hate Him but that their progeny will suffer by rejecting His ways, following in their fractious parents' footsteps.² But the love God promises far outweighs the threats: God's favor (*hesed*) extends thousandsfold to those who love Him (20:6). All those addressed at Sinai, including generations yet unborn, must reflect on the ethos personal choices build. A sound ethos, God promises, outlasts the scar or rut of vices, thousandsfold. The disproportion points to God's hallmark: grace displayed in nature.

It's from the act of creation and its tenor, most visible in the flourishing of life, that Israel is to know the grace that is the expression of God's love: God gratuitously gave being to the world, and the world was good—starting with light, and then the cleaving of day from night, earth from sky, land from sea. "All being is good," Maimonides writes, generalizing on the Torah's sequenced cases (*Guide* III 10, Munk 3.17): grasses, fruits, seed-bearing plants. The heavenly bodies, no longer gods, mark time's passage, presiding but not ruling over the hours and seasons (Exodus 1:14–18). Birds and sea life, even creeping creatures, are good. God blesses them all with the power and the charge to procreate and fill the earth with life (1:11–12, 22, 28). Blessing fuses with necessity, joyously embraced. We know something of God's love when we witness earth's fecundity, land, sea, and sky teeming with life.

Grace (*hesed*) extends beyond desert, for there was no original entitlement to being, life, or consciousness. All are free gifts. But from the epiphany at Sinai we also know that God's love is not unconditional: God expects a response. Gratitude, one might say, almost reflexively. But, more perspicuously, observing His commandments: *hesed* is requited not by its return—for

creatures cannot repay the gift of being—but by devotion (*ḥasidut*). This devotion is most alive in love of one's fellow creatures: The clearest mark of piety in the Hebrew tradition is benevolence—or better, beneficence, the act, not just the attitude of love. This, too, is *ḥesed*, emulating God's goodness. The theme is stable in Mosaic culture: Ben Zoma (second century) famously says, "Who merits respect? One who respects his fellow creatures" (Avot 4.1). And Spinoza is still the Torah's child when he equates piety with humanity.³

When Moses meets his God at the cleft in the rock (Exodus 33:12–23), he is facing a new crisis, although God remains unchanged. Israel has lost confidence in Moses and prevailed on Aaron to cast a calf in gold. This the people have now worshiped and credited with their liberation! Moses has begged God not to abandon Israel. Mingling pride with selfless love, humility, and courage, he has refused God's offer of another nation of his own and won God's forgiveness of Israel's ingratitude. He has shattered the tablets of God's law, has both blamed and excused his brother for succumbing to Israel's wantonness, and has set his fellow Levites against everyone active in Israel's rebellion (32:1–35).

What he asks for now are tools of leadership, addressing God with surprising informality—as the Torah acknowledges:

The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one man speaks to another.... "Look, You tell me to lead this people, but You've yet to tell me whom You'll send with me. You say You know me by name and tell me I've found favor with You. Well, if I have found favor with You, pray teach me Your ways, so that I'll know You and retain Your favor. Remember, this nation is Your people."

(33:11–13)

Again responding to a need, God promises that He will *make all My goodness pass before you* (33:19). Shielding Moses in a cleft in the craggy mountain face, He proclaims His absoluteness, reiterating the name He had revealed at the burning bush. But now He describes Himself:

merciful and gracious, patient and abundant in love (ḥesed) and truth, extending grace (ḥesed) thousandsfold, bearing with wrongdoing, sin, and transgression, yet not clearing the guilty but visiting the misdeeds of parents on their children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.

(34:6–7)

Having re-carved the tablets of the Decalogue, Moses has now heard the traits he must emulate: Mercy and love predominate, but justice, here called truth,⁴ will be served, balancing God's generosity with an accountability embedded in the physical, personal, and social natures of all beings.

The Rabbinic Tradition: Requiring God's Love by Loving Our Fellows

How, the Rabbis ask, can one hope to emulate God? They answer in terms of *ḥesed*. So when the Torah urges one to *walk in the LORD's ways* (Deuteronomy 13:5), Rabbi Ḥama ben Ḥanina (third century) understands the imperative in moral terms: As God clothed the naked, you should clothe the naked; as He visited the sick, you should visit the sick; as He comforted the bereaved, you should comfort the bereaved; as He buried the dead, you should bury the dead. Acts of *ḥesed* are ready and open routes to God. For God clothed Eve and Adam when they left Eden (Genesis 3:21), visited Abraham as he recovered from his circumcision (Genesis 18:1),

blessed Isaac after Abraham's death (Genesis 25:11), and buried Moses (Deuteronomy 34:6). *Imitatio Dei* begins in acts of kindness. Its biblical locus classicus is God's commandment, *love thy neighbor as thyself* (Leviticus 19:18).

The neighbor, here, is not just the person next door or across the street but one's fellow human being, who is to be treated as a brother, as Geoffrey Chaucer explained. The universality of the mandate was, characteristically, no mere abstraction but an outlook schooled by hard experience: *One law shall ye have*, God commands, *stranger and homeborn alike. For I am the Lord thy God* (Leviticus 24:22; cf. Exodus 12:49). God's absoluteness demands fairness. But legal and civil uniformity is the least of God's demands. The stranger is the archetype of the fellowman, and love of the stranger is the paradigm case of the love Israelites must show their fellow human beings:

When a stranger dwells with you in your land, you may not discriminate against him (lo tonu oto). The stranger who lives with you shall be treated the same as you. Thou shalt love him as thyself. For you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God.
(Leviticus 19:33)⁵

Historical experience gives God's command its existential edge. Israel returns God's love by loving the stranger, the widow, and orphan, whom God loves (Deuteronomy 10:18–19). The mandate has legal as well as moral consequences biblically. The stranger, for example, shares in the produce reserved for the poor (Deuteronomy 14:29). One who loves God must love the stranger and others who are in reduced or desperate circumstances. Attitude and practice go hand in hand here to strengthen one another.

The words linking these thoughts—of God's sovereignty and the obligation to live in love of Him—are recited twice each day by every observant Jew:

Hear, O Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Take to heart the things I command thee this day. Go over them with thy children. Speak of them at home and on the road, when thou liest down and when thou risest up. Bind them as a sign upon thy hand, and let them be a marker between thine eyes. Inscribe them on the doorposts of thy house and on thy gates.

(Deuteronomy 6:4–9)

Notice the *And* linking the first verse to the words that follow the proclamation of God's sovereignty, linked indissolubly to its implementation. The resultant watchwords are, indeed, inscribed in parchment and posted in cases marking the doorposts of a Jewish home.

But the Torah expects something rather broader, of which the ritual is the emblem: We are to make God's commandments visible in our lives, expressing loyalty to God's commands and commitment to His laws. The symbols are reminders by which we exhort ourselves to sustain that commitment, much as the fringes on the *tallit* or prayer shawl worn by traditional men in worship and the fringes displayed on the garments even of small boys are reminders to self and others of a commitment to the full complement of God's commandments, recalling the reminder ordained while Israel still traveled through the desert in the days of the Exodus (Numbers 15:37–41).

By telling us to bind God's laws upon our hands, then, the Torah ordains loyalty in word and deed, committing our actions and guiding our intentions by God's Law, as a brace might strengthen and steady one's grip as we press hand and arm to the bow we draw in plotting our actions. And the "frontlets" between our eyes, similarly, announce that God's law will guide us,

as a sight would guide the bowshot that marks the course we mean to follow. Loyalty does not displace the ritual that bespeaks it. But neither does the ritual displace the life the verses mandate. Mindfulness of God's commandments, living by them and assuring their continuity across the generations and their visible presence in daily life, is Israel's way of recognizing God, devotion rendered actionable, loyalty to God's covenant manifested in a way of life.

The practices that stake out the parameters of that life are both moral and ritual, but the ritual commandments typically serve to give voice to the intellectual and to underscore the moral norms expressively and, in so doing, aim to habituate virtues and to foster an ethos where the human virtues, as biblically and rabbinically conceived, will flourish. A paradigm case singled out by Maimonides is the biblical commandment, *When you see your enemy's ass sprawling under its load and would rather not relieve it, you must in fact relieve it with him!* (Exodus 23:5). Seizing upon the Torah's specifying that the fallen beast belongs to an enemy, Maimonides ascribes the Torah's insistent prescription not to a concern with keeping traffic moving but to its deeper interest in human character. The point, he argues, is "to abate the force of anger and spite."

In the same way and in more general terms the Torah forbids vengeance and the attitude that breeds it, bearing a grudge (Leviticus 19:18). The Torah, indeed, goes further, linking that prohibition to a more positive, more general, and more open-ended command: that we love one another as we love ourselves (again Leviticus 19:18). But this goal, at the moral heart of accepting the divine challenge to become holy as God Himself is holy (Leviticus 19:2) is not left hanging in the air but is made concrete by a host of specific laws and ordinances ranging from respecting the sexual privacy and inviolability of one's close kin (Leviticus 18) to the demand for *perfect and just weights and measures* (Deuteronomy 25:15)—*For everyone who deals dishonestly ... is loathsome to the Lord thy God* (25:16). The far side of divine love is seen in the biblical prohibitions of murder, theft, and false witness, well known from their inclusion in the Decalogue. But there too are found commandments against covetous attitudes and requiring that one honor one's father and mother. Less familiar, perhaps, are the commandments to *rise up before a hoary head* (Leviticus 19:32) and the general prohibition against price gouging and misrepresentation in sales (Leviticus 25:14 with Babylonian Talmud Bava Metzia 49b and Maimonides' Code, the Mishneh Torah, Laws of Sale 18.1).

In legal terms the Torah's pursuit is justice, without regard to wealth or status.⁶ We can see the general tenor of the Torah's articulation of the ideal of justice in its rules of evidence in a criminal case, in the fact that no property crime is treated as a capital offense, in the demand that fugitive slaves not be returned but must be harbored (Deuteronomy 23:16–17). Such laws are clearly ethical in intent. But the biblical focus on character is perhaps even clearer in the repeated prohibition against seething a kid in its mother's milk (Exodus 23:19, 34:26, Deuteronomy 14:21), for cruelty is not accepted as a way of expressing love of the God of Israel. The moral theme shines through even more vividly to modern eyes in the command to dismiss a mother bird and not take the bird and her young at once (Deuteronomy 22:6–7). But perhaps it's clearest of all in the seemingly simple commandment: *Thou shalt not curse the deaf or place a stumbling block before the blind* (Leviticus 19:14). For here the demand, as the two concrete instances reveal, is against taking advantage of another's weakness. Thus, the Rabbis understand the commandment to forbid tempting someone to violate his commitments or to act against his own interest. Similarly it's seen as forbidding one to play practical jokes on others at the expense of their dignity, to exploit another's ignorance, or any weakness, or simply to tender bad advice.

Maimonides finds most biblical commandments to aim at the refinement of the character of those who receive the Law, and he distinguishes a divine from a human law not by the light show with which the legislative program is delivered but by its aims: A human law pursues human interests in peace, prosperity, and security. But a divine law, he argues, seeks the moral perfection and

spiritual/intellectual enlightenment of its recipients, in keeping with God's higher goals for humanity (*Guide* II 40). The Torah itself makes a similar claim when it pictures God exhorting Israel by describing the Torah, as received and observed, as manifest evidence, plain to all nations, in the justice and wisdom of its laws, of an abiding intimacy between the people and their God (Deuteronomy 4:7): Yet, as Maimonides urges, the inculcation of a life of moral virtue is not the sole higher objective that differentiates a human law from one that is divinely given and that builds the covenantal relationship that allows humanity to live with God as if within a loving marriage.

The moral life, in the Judaic ideal of love, is linked to the spiritual and intellectual, which Maimonides conceives as the fruit but also the spiritual root of that life. We turn, now, to the intellectual side of the love of God.

Maimonides and Love of God as an Intellectual Endeavor

Maimonides begins his magnum opus, the fourteen-volume *Mishneh Torah* codifying the vast body of biblical and rabbinic law, by reaffirming that law's theistic groundwork:

The Foundation of all foundations and mainstay of every science is the knowledge that there is a prime Reality who gives being to all that is, in heaven, on earth, and anywhere between.... Were it conceivable that He fail to exist, none of these would exist. But assuming nothing else existed, He alone would exist. His reality would not be negated by their nonexistence. For all things depend on Him. But He—blessed be He—does not depend on any or all of them. So His reality is unlike that of any of them. This is what the prophet means by saying, *The Lord God is Truth* (Jeremiah 10:10)—He alone is real; nothing else has a reality like His—as the Torah says, *There is none but Him* (Deuteronomy 4:35)—nothing, as it were, is real but Him.... This Being is the universal God, Lord of the earth.

(Mishneh Torah I 1.1–5)

God is the anchor of all reality, so knowledge of God will ground all knowledge and every norm of the code Maimonides opens here. Artfully inscribing the four letters of the name that proclaims God's absoluteness in the key words of his opening sentence, Maimonides closes the passage by citing God's earthly sovereignty—just as he does in the closing lines of the *Guide to the Perplexed*, lest it seem that a transcendent God who rules the cosmos would neglect the earth. And, since the Tetragrammaton proclaims God's absolute perfection at the summit of reality (*Guide* I Introduction, Munk 1.7a; I 15, Munk 1.22a), contemplation of that perfection stands forth as the highest form of worship.

Such worship, Maimonides argues, becomes possible “only after one has reasoned things out”—How, after all, can one serve a God one does not know?—“Once you know God and His acts as reason requires, you can undertake to devote yourself to Him, striving to draw nearer and strengthening the bond that links you to Him, which is reason” (*Guide* III 51, Munk 3.124b). Most importantly for us, this worship, conditioned on knowledge and awareness of God, is how we are to love God. Perfection inspires love, and the Torah makes clear, Maimonides argues, that the love God commands is an intellectual love. For it assigns that love to human hearts, the seat of reason:

As it says, *Thou hast been clearly shown that I am the LORD.... Know this day and take it to heart [that the LORD is God in heaven above and on earth below. There is none else!]* (Deuteronomy 4:35–39).

(Guide III 51, Munk 3.124b)

The appeals are intellectual because the quality of our love of God rests on the adequacy of our idea of God:

The Torah is clear that the higher worship I've highlighted ... is reached only once awareness is won, as it says, *loving the LORD thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul* (Deuteronomy 11:13) (*Mishneh Torah* I 2.1). Love, as I've explained several times (*Guide* I 39, III 28) is in the measure of one's awareness, and it is from love that the worship springs that the Sages, too, call "worship of the heart."⁷ To me this means turning every thought to the Highest and focusing on Him alone, so far as possible. That is why you find David so emphatically urging Solomon to devote himself to these two things: striving to know Him and to serve Him once known: *And thou, Solomon, my son, know the God of thy father and serve him ... if thou seekest Him He will be found of thee.*

(1 Chronicles 28:9)

The awareness David urges is always conceptual, not imaginative. For imaginative notions are not called knowledge but only *what springs to your fancy* (Ezekiel 20:32). The thrust, clearly, is that having known Him one should devote oneself wholly to Him and ever direct one's mind to passionate love of Him.

(*Guide* III 51, Munk 3.124b–125a)

The intellectual love the Torah commands and commends, then, is also passionate. One should love God, Maimonides stresses,⁸ as a man loves a woman, the perfect symbol of that love being found in the Song of Songs—and the consummation of that love, in God's acceptance of the seeker, finds expression in the image of God's kiss (*Guide* III 51, Munk 3.128a–129b).⁹ Intellectual love of God, then, is not cold or sterile but, like the procreative drive, at once a divine commandment, a blessing, and an urgent natural imperative embedded in the psyche.

But if love of God is, at its root, an intellectual love, how, Maimonides asks, can one find a pathway to it? If God's perfection is absolute (hence, unconditioned and indeed infinite), is it not beyond our ken? Maimonides' answer: We must turn our gaze toward nature, where the impact of God's goodness is patent and invites ever new discovery:

the true beliefs that foster our ultimate fulfillment are presented biblically only in broad strokes, pressing straight to the conclusion: God's existence and unity, knowledge and power, will and timelessness. These conclusions are given full definition and articulation only after many more ideas are gained.

(*Guide* III 28, Munk 3.60b–61a)

The ideas to be filled in

comprise the full range of scientific theory, grounding the inferences that are the Torah's higher goal. It does not detail them, as it does those conclusions. But it does invoke these sciences in general terms when it speaks of *loving the LORD* (Deuteronomy 11:13, 22, 19:9, 30:6, 16, 20).¹⁰ You can see this confirmed when one is called to love Him, *with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might* (6:5).

(*Guide* III 28, Munk 3.61a)¹¹

Piety and science here are far from enemies needing reconciliation. Worship and inquiry are of a piece. The thought may look revolutionary from post-positivist perspectives, where piety and

science are so frequently set against one another and similarly from a post-romantic or post-pietist perspective, where the heart is expected to have reasons that reason knoweth not. But radical as the idea is in such well-picketed landscapes, the thought was not wholly revolutionary when Maimonides broached it and called scripture to witness in its behalf. Piety here is love, the reflex of God's *hesed*, and it pursues the love of God through the quest to fathom His wisdom and grace in creation and thus to know the Maker through his work, much as we might seek to know a poet through his poem.

Reflecting on the scientific work of role models like Aristotle and Galen, Maimonides unfurls as his pennant their broadest, most universal conclusions about nature, finding in the natural sciences the pathways of the intellectual love of God: "As I explained in *Mishneh Torah*, such love flourishes only when one understands all existence as it really is and sees His wisdom there" (*Guide* III 28, Munk 3.61a). Here is the passage Maimonides cites from the foundational first book of his code of Jewish law:

When one studies God's works, the great and wondrous objects of His creation and sees in them His infinite and peerless wisdom, he will immediately love, praise, and celebrate Him and yearn to know His great name, as David said, *my soul thirsts for God, for the living God* (Psalms 43:2).

(Mishneh Torah, Hilkhoh Yesodei ha-Torah 2.2)¹²

Longing to know God's name was the psalmist's way of voicing the thirst to know God Himself. Such love, for Maimonides, is our aspiration to pursue our true and highest goal in life.¹³ We cannot know God's ipseity. Only God Himself knows that. Hence God's telling Moses, *thou canst not see My face* (Exodus 33:20). But we can know nature. In the encounter at the cleft in the rock, God shows Moses His "back" (*ahorai*, literally "My afterwards"). As Maimonides reads this, God shows Moses the hallmarks of His creativity in the wisdom and grace of creation—all that a thoughtful and receptive naturalist would see and understand of nature as God's work.

The intellectual love of God, as described here, does, in a way, make contact with the object of its quest: To see goodness and wisdom in nature is not to absorb or be absorbed by God, but the mind does touch something here that is of God. This, clearly, is what underlies the elation a scientist or mathematician, poet or painter, might feel in a moment of discovery—a sense of touching and being touched by the divine. We can see this in Einstein's scientific epiphanies; in the moral truths discovered, lived, and taught by a Gandhi, Schweitzer, or Mother Theresa, and in lesser epiphanies, too—a kind of contact warmly acknowledged or firmly masked, depending on the recipient's openness and intellectual courage in recognizing and welcoming the intimate moment in which divine love meets and is met by the active outreach of human love, completing the circuit that links the outflow of *hesed* with its return as devotion, *hasidut*.

Spinoza touches on the moment in which that circle closes in some of the most challenging lines in the *Ethics*, confronting the mystery of divine love and human aspiration, also best known as love. In such moments God's universal love and a human being's needy, even petulant love reciprocate one another. The divine kiss consummates the rational mystic's quest, God's quest for man (as Heschel put it) finds what it was seeking, and the all-too-human hunger for immortality touches its true home. The soul of the adept, not without preparation, has become a mirror brilliantly reflecting what the angles of its faceted face allow it to see. In Spinoza's words: "The mind's intellectual love of God is the very love of God by which God loves Himself." (*Ethics* 5P32C, P35–36)—and "in loving Himself, God loves mankind, so that God's love of humanity and the mind's intellectual love of God are one and the same" (5P36C).

Intellectual Love and Moral Virtue

To become the kind of leader God calls him to be, Moses needs to cultivate grace and justice in himself, modeled on the grace and justice God reveals to him in nature. All human beings, in the same way, are called to emulate God by cultivating our own justice and grace, and the intellect that links us with God: the facets of our humanity that warrant our being said, poetically, to be created in God's image. Our thirst to know God is slaked by discovering His grace, wisdom, generosity, and justice in nature. The quest to perfect our humanity through the intellectual love of God, then, bears moral fruit when we emulate God's grace and justice—and, indeed, God's care and creativity. The intellectual aspiration recurves here to the moral—but, ideally, without abandoning the contemplative peak that remains its inspiration (*Guide* III 51).

Tracking Aristotle's categorization of worldly and more intrinsic goods, Maimonides lists four kinds of human attainment—wealth, health and fitness, moral virtue, and the virtues of reason. Like Aristotle, he sets the intellectual above the rest. All other goods, if they are real goods, are properly instrumental and put to work as means to intellectual perfection, which finds its pinnacle in knowledge of God, where love finds its truest consummation. But here, as in other schemes of spiritual fulfillment, the intellectual pinnacle proves not irrelevant to the moral in turn. Having acknowledged the Peripatetic background of his schematization, Maimonides writes:

Our prophets taught us the very same ideas, laid out just as the Philosophers did, declaring wealth, health, and character not what one should boast of or yearn for. The attainment we should covet and take pride in is knowledge of God—real knowledge. As Jeremiah says, naming these four attainments: *So saith the LORD, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the hero glory in his might, nor the rich man glory in his wealth, but let him who would glory glory in this: that he understandeth and knoweth Me—[that I am the LORD, who worketh grace, justice, and righteousness on earth—for in these do I delight," saith the LORD].*

(Jeremiah 9:22–23)¹⁴

Note how he ranks them as the vulgar do: To them, the highest attainment is the rich man's wealth, then the strong man's power, then the wise man's wisdom, meaning moral virtue, for the virtuous are esteemed by the masses, whom the prophet addresses here. Hence the sequence. The rabbinic Sages read the verse just as I have in this chapter: Wisdom unqualified, named our ultimate goal in every context, is knowledge of God. But the goods vied for and cherished as real attainments are nothing of the sort. Likewise, all those biblical practices—the acts of piety and morality so helpful in our human interactions—hold not a candle to this ultimate goal but only pave the way to it...

Jeremiah does not stop at naming our highest goal, knowledge of God. Were that his intent he'd have said, *but let him who would glory glory in this: that he understands and knows Me*, and stopped there—or "understands and knows Me, that I am One"—or "have no shape," or "that there is none like Me," or the like. But what he said one should be proud of is awareness of *Me*—knowledge of God's attributes, meaning His actions, as I've explained. The verse specifies the actions we must know and emulate: grace, justice, and righteousness (*hesed, mishpat, tzedakah*).

What the verse means, then, is that the human attainment one may rightly glory in is clearly to reach, so far as one can, an awareness of God and His care for His creatures,

giving them being and looking after them as He does. The life of one who wins such awareness will show constant grace, justice, and righteousness, emulating God's acts.

(Guide III 54)

Knowledge of God and cultivating the moral virtues go hand in hand, then, giving both intellectual and moral content to the biblical commandments to walk in God's ways (Deuteronomy 13:5) and to be holy in our lives, as God is holy in His (Leviticus 19:2)—commandments that Maimonides reads in the spirit of Plato's admonition, that we must become as like to God as humanly possible (*Theaetetus* 176). Maimonides' reading deepens the intellectual tinge he finds in the idea of *imitatio Dei* without losing the deep moral colorations found by the Rabbinic Sages. The intellectual does surpass but does not eclipse the moral. For the moral duty imparted by enlightenment makes human grace and charity the most clearly visible expressions of the knowledge our love of God has won.

For Aristotle, Plato's imperative to emulate the divine has taken a turn that describes its summit at the intellectualist climax of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where reflection is revealed to be the highest, most godlike, most distinctively human, and most self-sufficing of our activities. Aristotle does not echo the caution Plato links to his call to *homoiosis Theoi*, the admonition that we must make haste to flee this world of woes. Aristotle does not abandon his ideal of the *phronimos*, the man of practical wisdom, conceived as very much the public man—perhaps at his best as a leader, but, in any case, active in society and its deliberations, his intellectual virtue of *phronesis* placed in service to guide and regulate his moral virtues.¹⁵ Even so, for Aristotle, the summit of human activities remains intellectual.

Maimonides follows Aristotle, in taking contemplation to be our highest activity and God to be its highest object. He too sees leadership as the noblest fruit of enlightenment, and he too looks to the study of nature as our high road to the discovery of God's wisdom. But when he thinks of leadership Maimonides thinks not of figures like Alexander or Antipater, as Aristotle might—nor of Saladin, for that matter—but of Moses, whom he consistently calls by his traditional epithet, Moses our Teacher. Leadership, to Maimonides, means guidance, as it did to his prophetic namesake. For the very word Torah means guidance. And the guide is the *phronimos*, whose life is one of moral virtue as well as intellectual enlightenment.

Accordingly, when Maimonides reads of Jacob's dreaming of a ladder anchored on earth but rising to the heavens, with God Himself atop its summit, he naturally assimilates the symbolism to Plato's ladder of love in the *Symposium* and to Plato's more schematic image of the Divided Line in the *Republic*. The biblical "angels" here become messengers of a more earthly, human cast. And once they've ascended to the heights, their mission is to return (for the angels in Jacob's dream are said to descend again after ascending, as Maimonides stresses). Their charge is to lead and guide and teach, insofar as they are able, those who remain earthbound, much as Plato's enlightened escapee from the Cave is challenged to return to his fellow troglodytes.

Maimonides' messenger, filled, perhaps even brimming, with philosophic wisdom, now bears the responsibility to share his understanding, reaching his fellows not by way of pure concepts that they might find too challenging, but through symbols—poetic language and rhetoric, laws, rituals, and institutions—that will give them all a glimpse of the light he has seen and help them share some portion of it. Here Maimonides links the moral and the intellectual yet more tightly than Aristotle or the ancient rabbis did. The flux that makes his weld strong enough to hold is love, the intellectual love of God, transmuted to moral love, but not vanished—and not sullied by the descent any more than it was burnt away by the rise of mind and spirit.

Notes

- 1 Mendel of Kotzk (1787–1859) takes up the phrase *siivot Mitzraim* (Exodus 6:6). He reads in this word an allusion to all that Israel has suffered in Egypt in both senses: There was agony but also passivity. Only when Israel will no longer accept and bear the ratcheting burden of oppression is the nation ready for liberation.
- 2 Relying on Leviticus 26:39, which he understands to read, *and also by the sins of their fathers, with whom they shall decline*, Saadiah Gaon (882–942) takes divine punishment to be visited on a wrongdoer's offspring “only if they follow his example.” See his commentary on Job 21:19 in Saadiah Gaon (1988), *The Book of Theodicy*, translated by L. E. Goodman, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 301. Saadiah's reading is supported by Deuteronomy 24:16, Jeremiah 31:29–30, Ezekiel 18:1–4, and the Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 7a and Makkot 24a.
- 3 Spinoza, E5P4S, 2P49, 3P29S, Defs. 43, 4P18S, 4P37S1; ed. Gebhardt 2.283 ll.25–26; 135–136, 162–163, 202, 223–224, 236.
- 4 For justice as truth, see L. E. Goodman (2001), *In Defense of Truth: A Pluralistic Account*, Amherst, NY, Humanity Press, 405–410.
- 5 As I explained in Goodman (1996), 100, “The term ‘discriminate’ is not out of place here. The Rabbis gloss the Hebrew as forbidding not just persecution and injustice but offensive speech and invidious attitudes. Nor is the reference to God otiose. It names the arbiter who holds the stranger dear.”
- 6 See Jeremiah Unterman's systematic comparison of biblical with other ancient Near Eastern systems of law, *Justice for All: How the Jewish Bible Revolutionized Ethics*, Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press/Jewish Publication Society, 2017.
- 7 See Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 2a, J. Berakhot 4:1, Sifri Deuteronomy 11.13, Mekhilta R. Shimon bar Yoḥai chap. 23.
- 8 Thus his use of the Arabic word *'ishq*, erotic love. And see *Guide* III 28, Munk 3.125a l. 13; cf. II 4, 10, Munk 2.13a, 21b.
- 9 For the rabbinic application of the image in speaking of the deaths of Moses, Miriam, and Aaron, see Babylonian Talmud, Bava Batra 17a.
- 10 That God is worthy of love is a broad, general truth. (So there are facts about values!) Just what this means and *how* the love of God is to be cultivated are matters for a lifetime's exploration. Maimonides sees extensive study of the rational sciences, including mathematics, logic, and the natural sciences as anchoring that love.
- 11 As Maimonides explains, “when it says, *thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart* (Deuteronomy 6:5), in my view this should be interpreted as, ‘with every power of your heart’, for all our bodily powers stem from the heart. The point, then: you should devote your every act to knowing Him, as I explained in my commentary on the Mishnah and in the Mishneh Torah.” *Guide* I 39, Munk 1.61a.
- 12 Cf. Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot De'ot 3.2.
- 13 Maimonides, *Eight Chapters on Ethics*, edited and translated by Joseph I. Gorfinkle (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912; repr. New York: AMS, 1966), chapter 5.
- 14 The three goods subordinated by Maimonides are none of them nugatory, but all are instrumental: Knowledge of God is our ultimate goal. Wisdom of a lesser sort is itself instrumental, as distinguished from the true, higher wisdom it must serve. Applying Maimonides' rabbinic glosses of wealth as contentment, and prowess in the sense of health here, as the self-control by which health is guarded, we see Maimonides subordinating all the virtues, moral and intellectual, to one's ultimate purpose: The moral virtues restrain and the intellectual virtues guide the appetites and passions. But all human strengths, of character and mind, should serve one's highest fulfillment. In a stunning synthesis, Maimonides has taken up Plato's account of the four cardinal virtues and Aristotle's thesis that our humanity finds its highest realization in intellectual apprehension of God and fused these two accounts of the well-guided soul with the biblical admonition to love God with all our hearts and souls and might (Deuteronomy 6:5). For the love of God commanded in the Torah reaches its peak, on Maimonides' account, as an intellectual love, consummated in the knowledge of God (*MT*, opening passage) that allows us to emulate Him to the fullest extent humanly possible (Leviticus 19:2; Plato, *Theaetetus* 176b). Justice may still preside over the virtues, allowing reason to integrate them and coordinate their strengths. But it is wisdom, as Jeremiah intimates, that rightly rules.
- 15 See Goodman, “Moral and Intellectual Virtue,” in Audrey Anton, ed., *The Bright and the Good* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2018).

References

- Babylonian Talmud, cited by tractate and page.
- Goodman, Lenn E. (1996) *God of Abraham*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goodman, Lenn E. (2001) *In Defense of Truth: A Pluralistic Account*, Amherst, NY: Humanity Press.
- Goodman, Lenn E. (2018) “Moral and Intellectual Virtue,” in Audrey Anton, ed., *The Bright and the Good*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Goodman, Lenn E. (Forthcoming) Maimonides *Dalālatu ‘l-Ḥā’irīn* (*Guide to the Perplexed*), translated with commentary by L. E. Goodman and Phillip Lieberman.
- Maimonides (completed, 1167) *Eight Chapters on Ethics*, edited and translated by Joseph I. Gorfinkle, New York: Columbia University Press; repr. New York: AMS, 1966.
- Mishneh Torah*.
- Saadia Ben Joseph al-Fayyumi. (tenth century) (1988) *The Book of Theodicy*, (Commentary on the Book of Job), translated by L. E. Goodman, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Spinoza, B. (first published, 1677) (1925) *Opera*, edited by Carl Gebhardt, Heidelberg: C. Winter.
- Untermann, J. (2017) *Justice for All: How the Jewish Bible Revolutionized Ethics*, Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press/Jewish Publication Society.

LOVE IN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

Ali Altaf Mian

Introduction

The theme of love pervades Islamic discourses about self, society, and the cosmos (Chittick 2013; Ahmed 2016). Since their seventh-century beginnings, the textual traditions of Islam—the Qur'an, the Prophet Muhammad's sayings (collected in books of *hadith*), the biographical accounts about Muhammad and the early believers, works on ritual rules and social norms, philosophical translations and treatises, poetic compositions, texts on mystical theology, and a range of other writings—have supplied Muslims with diverse perspectives on the idea and practice of love. The two most frequent words for love in this literature are *mahabbah* and *'ishq*. The Arabic word, *mahabbah*, resonates with the Greek words, *philia* and *agape* (friendship and divine love, respectively); a suitable English translation for *mahabbah* is compassionate love, though we should note that it also implies romantic love. The second term, *'ishq*, is comparable in connotation to limerence and eros and might be rendered as *passionate love*. The Qur'an mentions believers' intense love for God (Q 2:165); it also suggests a strong link between divine love and obedience to the Prophet Muhammad (Q 3:31). A *hadith* holds that “the nobility of faith demands that you love and hate for the sake of God ... desire for others what you love for yourself, shun them from what you despise for yourself, and speak of goodness or keep silent” (*Musnad Ahmad*). The early courtier-turned-Sufi saint Shibli (died 945) reportedly said, “Love is to give preference to *the one* you love over *what* you love” (al-Nisaburi 1999: 56). These are three illustrative passages from a rich pool of perspectives. In this essay, I examine some of these perspectives as they appear in Islamic philosophy (*falsafah* and *hikmah*). At the outset, however, it is important to address the recent politicization of love in the context of the Islamophobia that is visible in mainstream media representations and governmental practices in Europe as well as the United States of America.

In the contemporary moment, the perpetuation of the idea that hate and violence characterize Muslims serves multiple political functions: it shores up electoral wins; it justifies closing borders to immigrants and refugees; and it validates the racist desire for demographic purity. The attribution of hate to Islam and love to Christianity reinforces the myopic historical and political vision known as “the clash of civilizations.” According to many neo-conservative politicians and Christian fundamentalists, as well as some secular pundits, a large-scale clash of arms and values is imminent between “the Christian West” and “the Islamic East.” It is therefore hard to speak

of love in anything Islamic, including *falsafah* and *hikmah*, without encountering this political use of love and hate. To refute the depiction of Islam as a religion of hate, many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars as well as activists turn to Islamic texts on love, such as the Sufi poetry of Rumi. Given this context, it is important to point out that love and hate carry political purchase in both anti-Islamic xenophobia and pro-Islamic apologetics.

While I have alluded to the politics of love and hate surrounding Islam in contemporary Euro-American discourses, this essay does not intervene in such debates. Instead, it presents brief summaries of how some key Islamic philosophers elaborate the idea and practice of love. It is important to study and examine Islamic philosophical ideas on their own terms, instead of enabling a contemporary political motivation to determine the contours of historical and philosophical inquiry. Hence, a different set of questions preoccupy me in this chapter: What is the meaning of love in Islamic philosophy? Is love a function of the appetitive soul or the rational soul? What might Islamic philosophical views on love reveal about Muslims' social and political visions? But first, one must ask: Where does one find love in Islamic philosophy, and, before that, what is Islamic philosophy?

Looking for Love in Islamic Philosophy

In order to appreciate the depth of thinking that went into Islamic philosophies of love over the past fourteen centuries, it is important to begin with an expansive conception of philosophy. Many Muslim thinkers view philosophy as "wisdom" (*hikmah*), which seeks to study and understand the underlying realities of observable and non-observable objects of knowledge. *Hikmah* is usually divided into practical and theoretical sciences. The practical sciences refer to subjects such as ethics, household management, and politics, while the theoretical sciences include subjects such as logic, physics, and metaphysics (as well as theology). The Muslim thinkers who wrote on these subjects over the last 800 years or so were in fact building on an earlier tradition of *falsafah*.

In recent years, scholars have debated whether "Islamic philosophy" is an apt phrase to describe a very hybrid set of perspectives elaborated by diverse authors. The historical record indicates that the philosophical movement of classical Islam beginning in the late eighth century was not an exclusively Muslim endeavor. In fact, Christian scholars were at the forefront of translating Greek philosophical and scientific works from Syriac into Arabic (under the patronage of the 'Abbasids, the second dynastic empire of Islam). It is well known that classical Muslim philosophers such as al-Kindi and Farabi learned their philosophy from Christian scholars; moreover, numerous Jewish scholars critically engaged with the writings of Muslim philosophers and theologians. There were active communities of philosophers and philosophically minded scholars until the Mongol conquests of the 1250s; however, even after this catastrophe, a tradition of Islamic philosophy persisted most noticeably in Persian-speaking regions and was incorporated into seminary syllabi in places as diverse as India and Egypt.

This historical picture enables one to raise a host of important questions. To what extent was the knowledge produced by philosophers living in various Muslim polities from the eighth century to around the 1250s "Islamic"? Moreover, one might ask: What does it mean to qualify this knowledge as "Islamic," when this tradition sees philosophical inquiry as the search for non-provincial and non-confessional truth? And, from another angle, one must ask: What does it mean to discuss Muslims' philosophy of love when many of those doing the philosophy explicitly dissociate themselves from philosophy proper? The last question leads to a final one: What is philosophy *proper* in an Islamic context?

Let me begin with some *proper* names, as one way to approach the question of philosophy *proper*. The following names come to mind immediately when thinking about "Islamic philosophy": the

philosopher of the Arabs al-Kindi (died c.866); the free-thinking physician Abu Bakr al-Razi, known in Latin as Rhazes (d. c.925); the Second Teacher Abu Nasr Farabi or Alfarabius (d. 950); the Prince of Physicians Ibn Sina or Avicenna (d. 1037); and the Commentator of Aristotle Ibn Rushd or Averroes (d. 1198). The questions and themes these philosophers straddled were later taken up by a host of Jewish thinkers who wrote in the Arabic language, such as Saadia ben Joseph (d. 942), Bahya ibn Paquda (d. 1120), and Musa bin Maimun or Maimonides (d. 1204). Moreover, in a related world of knowledge and piety, the writings of philosophers such as Farabi and Ibn Sina were consumed and contested by philosophical theologians, such as Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111) and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 1210). To this list one must also add Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (d. 1191) and Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240), respectively Persian and Spanish philosophical mystics.

One commonality among these diverse Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers, other than the fact that they are all men (and hence this tradition's androcentric make-up), is their awareness of and engagement with the Greek philosophical legacy. They inherited this legacy from the translated works of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. However, philosophers from al-Kindi to Maimonides did not merely cite Greek wisdom; instead, they appropriated Plato's theory of forms, bridged the gaps between "revealed" religion and Aristotle's politics and ethics, and devised an elaborate cosmology based on Plotinus's ideas. Additionally, they conversed with a range of other sources of wisdom, including Islamic and Jewish scriptural and theological texts. Some of these thinkers preferred revelation over reason; others sought to eradicate the contradictions between revealed and reasoned perspectives; and finally, another group affirmed the supremacy of reason over revelation and elaborated the need for "philosophic" religion. Their perspectives and methods were reworked by numerous early modern and modern Muslim intellectuals, such as the Persian philosopher and theologian Mulla Sadra (d. 1640) and the Indian poet Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938). In addition to Greek philosophical sources, the mystical writings of the Sufis became incredibly important for numerous Muslim thinkers. Thus, the working definition of "Islamic philosophy" I employ in this short survey of love is inclusive of philosophical, theological, and mystical perspectives.

The introduction of Sufism into philosophical thinking is especially visible when love is under discussion. This is so because many Sufi poets and prose-writers integrate Platonic notions of love into their teaching as they criticize the lack of love in philosophy, theology, and jurisprudence. Nonetheless, some of the above-mentioned philosophers address love without recourse to either scripture or mystical experience, and I shall take note of their approaches as well. Before presenting brief summaries of what particular Islamic philosophers say about love, let me mention some general features of the Islamic philosophical discourse on love.

First, the sources often subject love to binary formulations: love is split between being earthly/human and heavenly/divine, metaphorical and real, natural and acquired, and so on. In the Sufi "way of love" (*madhhab-i 'ishq*), earthly or metaphorical and divine or real love are held together. As Shahab Ahmed explains:

love is a way of going about being Muslim—a mode of being with God, of identifying, experiencing and living with the values and meaning of Divine Truth. Earthly love—that love for human beauty—is metaphorical love (*'ishq-i majazi*), and is the experiential means by which to come to know Real-True Love, or love for/in Real-Truth.

(Ahmed 2016: 38)

The Sufis often blur the lines between metaphor and reality; the sensual, earthly beloved is at once a means to God and a manifestation of God. Second, what Islamic philosophers say about love belongs within broader overarching "systems" of knowledge. One might think of their

epistemic systems as hierarchical trees, with metaphysics being the topmost branch of knowledge, reaching for the heavens. In these systems, love as a fruit of knowledge hangs on different branches: psychology and ethics, politics as well as metaphysics. Third, many of our more mystically inclined authors maintain an aura of secrecy and mystery around the reality of love. Something about love escapes definition and analytical capture. The mystical sources maintain that true knowledge of love is more an affective experience and less a rational principle. Finally, love is heavily associated with knowledge; the lover expresses her devotion to the Beloved by yearning to touch the Beloved by means of study and contemplation. For Islamic philosophers and mystics alike, God is the most sublime object of one's intellectual quests: "At the peak of human gnosis, man's knowledge of God may appear associated with the love of God" (Rosenthal 2007: 139). The triangulation of knowledge, love, and the divine is visible in the writings of the early Islamic philosopher Abu Bakr al-Razi.

The Love of Learning: Abu Bakr al-Razi

The physician and philosopher Abu Bakr al-Razi—Rhazes—was born in an ancient city which is today a part of greater Tehran, namely Rayy (thus al-Razi), in the mid-860s and died there around 925. He spent his adult life directing hospitals and writing philosophical as well as medical texts. The historian Sarah Stroumsa describes al-Razi as a "respectable freethinker" of medieval Islam, and many other scholars have noted his unbridled zeal for critical inquiry (Stroumsa 1999). Traditional Muslim theologians often charged al-Razi with heresy; some claimed that he rejected the authority of scripture and prophecy. Yet, as Peter Adamson points out, "There is room for doubt as to whether [Abu Bakr] al-Razi's position is being accurately represented" by his critics such as Abu Hatim al-Razi (Adamson 2016a: 64). Traditional theologians also rebuked Abu Bakr al-Razi for attributing eternal life to the following five entities: God, soul, matter, time, and place. The idea that there are five eternal entities implies "putting four other principles on a par with God," a perspective that troubles the Qur'anic teaching on God's oneness (Adamson 2016a: 63).

Abu Bakr al-Razi addresses "carnal love" (*ishq*) in his treatise, *The Spiritual Medicine (al-Tibb al-ruhani)*. According to al-Razi, *ishq* is an affliction, a malady that besets both body and soul. Carnal love is consuming, it produces "anxiety and effort ... constant anguish and unrelenting agony ... prolonged insomnia, worry and undernourishment to a state of madness and delusion, of consumption and wasting away" (al-Razi 1950: 42). For Abu Bakr al-Razi, sexual desire is potentially disastrous if it is not moderated and regulated by reason. One of the key objectives of a contemplative life is to shun excessive self-indulgence. To this end, the "men of lofty purpose and soul" avoid drawn out love affairs; however, "men that are effeminate, flirtatious, idle, soft, and given over to appetite ... are hardly delivered from this affliction" (al-Razi 1950: 38). According to him, one should further discipline carnal desire by avoiding romance literature, love poetry, and passionate songs—all of which fuel the fire of carnal passion.

Instead of pursuing the love of ephemeral objects, al-Razi exhorts people to pursue wisdom; in fact, because wisdom is eternal it truly suits the devotion of the rational self (which contemplates eternal, universal truths). Al-Razi therefore posits carnal love to be a function of the appetitive soul and intellectual love as a function of the rational faculty. Nevertheless, it seems that epistemic love, too, has its own fervor and intensity. The love of knowledge often defines the experience of desire for many philosophers; or, to put it otherwise: philosophical thinking is itself a form of pleasure and enjoyment. In this process, knowledge becomes the chief object of the philosopher's psychosomatic energies. As a saying attributed to the group of Muslim thinkers known as the Ikhwan al-Safa' (the Brethren of Purity) holds: "The beginning of

philosophy (*falsafah*) is the love of the sciences, its middle [is] knowledge of the realities of existents to the measure of human ability and its end [consists of] words and deeds in accordance with knowledge” (Nasr 1997: 23). According to this view, one’s chief object of desire ought to be knowledge. Muslim philosophers such as Abu Bakr al-Razi embodied, or at least aspired to embody, precisely this ideal. As the latter explains his own condition:

When it comes to my love of knowledge, my intense desire for it, and my hard work in pursuing it, it is common knowledge to anyone who has spent time with me or observed me that from the days of my youth to the present that I have been so devoted to it that whenever I come upon a book I have not read or a man I have not encountered, I pay no mind to any task (even if that be greatly detrimental to me) without finishing the book or learning what the man knows. My endurance and effort has reached the degree that in one year I wrote more than twenty thousand pages in the minute script used for talismans. I persevered in composing the huge *Compendium* for fifteen years, working day and night, to the point that my eyesight grew weak and the tendon in my hand tore, preventing me now from reading and writing. Despite my condition I still pursue these two things to the best of my ability while regularly employing someone to read and write for me.

(*al-Razi 2007: 44*)

Note how al-Razi uses the expression “intense desire” for knowledge. These autobiographical lines capture the intensity: the philosopher laid down the vitality and vigor of his body in the pursuit and transmission of knowledge. This coheres with al-Razi’s stance on bodily versus spiritual pleasure:

The noblest thing for which we were created and to which we are directed is not the pursuit of bodily pleasures but rather the acquisition of knowledge and the application of justice, both of which lead to our liberation from this world.... Both nature and whim lead us to prefer the pleasure of the present, while the intellect calls on us to give up present pleasure in favor of things that *it* prefers.

(*al-Razi 2007: 38*)

The intellect yearns for contemplating eternal entities such as God. The love of knowledge is ultimately bound up with love for God; knowledge is a perfection and all forms of perfection are completed in God.

The Love of Politics: Abu Nasr Farabi

We have just seen how al-Razi places the rational self in charge of the appetitive self: reason must govern the appetite, the seat of carnal love. Yet, the rational self is not entirely devoid of affective tendencies. Moreover, the tamed and disciplined appetitive soul, and its emotional capacities, might even aid the rational self in its pursuit of virtues. The way in which al-Razi speaks of epistemophilia is evocative of eros and reflects his understanding of reason’s entanglement with passion. This view, which resembles Plato’s teaching about love in *Phaedrus* (by contrast with, say, *Republic*, *Phaedo*, and *Symposium*, Nussbaum 2001: 201), was further developed by Islamic philosophers such as al-Razi, Farabi, and Ibn Sina. Farabi particularly elaborates a dynamic *political* theory that brings together his insights into human disposition, philosophy as well as prophecy, and the demands of urban life—Farabi called his model city “the virtuous

city.” His ideal polis, a city guided by both philosophy and prophecy, served as a blueprint for later philosophical theologians such as Maimonides and Mulla Sadra.

Farabi was born in the latter half of the ninth century in either Khurasan (now eastern Iran, western Afghanistan, and southern Turkmenistan) or Transoxiana (“the land beyond the Oxus River”). Farabi’s teachers and students in Greek philosophy included Christian scholars of the Baghdad School. His status as an outstanding scholar brought him the patronage of the Shi’i ruler of Aleppo, Safy al-Dawlah. Farabi died in Damascus around the year 950, leaving behind an incredible body of texts that have shaped philosophical knowledge in Arabic and Persian. Some of his successors remembered him as “the Second Master” (the first being Aristotle). Farabi’s major contributions include the organization of human knowledge into a coherent system—as is evidenced in his book, *The Enumeration of the Sciences*—and a political philosophy that is a “subtle reworking and interweaving of themes from Plato and Aristotle, along with analogies drawn to Galenic medicine” (Adamson 2016b: 72).

In *Selected Aphorisms*, Farabi divides love into two types: non-volitional and volitional. A woman’s love for her child, for example, is non-volitional. It is an unconditional love that is rooted in strong ties of kinship, and it is natural to wonder whether this type of love can ground a social unit beyond the family. Or, does this sort of familial love stand in the way of social cohesion? Farabi does not explore the political or anti-political dimensions of non-volitional love. Volitional love, on the other hand, is the glue that binds together cities and peoples. The origins of this type of love are shared doctrines and rituals. Here, religion and culture furnish people with a common enough narrative about their beginning (being caused by God), their desired end (the attainment of the soul’s ultimate happiness), and the opinions and actions they should cultivate in their worldly life. Farabi calls this “sharing in virtue,” which leads to a second source of love, namely becoming useful for each other. As Farabi says,

Because they are neighbors of one another in one dwelling and some of them need others while some of them are useful to others, that is also followed by the love that comes about for the sake of the useful.

(Farabi 2001: 40)

In this way, people’s friendships become imbued with love, and they ultimately derive pleasure from each other’s company and affections.

Farabi connects this social understanding of love to questions of justice: people “are bound by love, and they hold together and stay preserved through justice and the actions of justice” (Farabi 2001: 40). These words directly build on Aristotle’s view of friendship. Recall that Aristotle had said something similar:

Friendship seems to hold states together ... and when men are friends they have no need of justice, while when they are just they need friendship as well, and the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality.

(*Nicomachean Ethics* 1154b21–29 in Aristotle 1984)

Farabi’s Aristotelian frame for Muslim political philosophy was later embellished by the thirteenth-century polymath Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, the author of the influential *Nasirean Ethics*. According to this tradition of political thought, if people are true friends, implying that they care for each other’s flourishing, then they will not violate the due rights of their friends. Thus, love as friendship between city-dwellers serves an important socio-political need: it lessens the need

for administrative and procedural justice, for friends do not violate each other's rights because they desire the good for each other.

The Essence and Existence of Love: Ibn Sina

We discussed above the place of love in Farabi's political theory. The Second Master sees love as both natural (kinship) and acquired in the context of social life (friendship). Yet, he does not demonstrate how love between humans is linked with divine love, an important point elaborated by the next major Islamic philosopher, Ibn Sina. Renowned in the Latin West as Avicenna, the Persian philosopher Ibn Sina is "the single most influential medieval philosopher," whose legacy was inherited by "all three Abrahamic traditions—Islam, Judaism, and Christianity" (Adamson 2016b: 118–119).

Ibn Sina was born in 980 near the central Asian city of Bukhara (in present-day Uzbekistan). A fascinating source for studying his life is his *Autobiography* (transcribed and edited by his distinguished student Juzjani). In this text Ibn Sina tells us that by age sixteen he had mastered jurisprudence, mathematics, logic, medicine, and physics as well as metaphysics. As a young man, Ibn Sina would pray to God to seek solutions to his intellectual questions:

And because of those problems which used to baffle me, not being able to solve the middle term of the syllogism, I used to visit the mosque frequently and worship, praying humbly to the All-Creating, until He opened the mystery of it to me and made the difficult seem easy.

(Ibn Sina and Juzjani 1974: 29)

Ibn Sina spent much of his adult life navigating the privileges but also the persecutions afforded by state patronage. His contemporaries admired him but were also envious of him. Yet, he was able to elaborate his erudite ideas in tomes that survived him and solidified his status as the most important philosopher of Islam. Ibn Sina's encyclopedic presentation of the natural sciences and metaphysics, and so many other disciplines, is elaborated in his magnum opus, *Kitab al-Shifa'* (*The Book of Healing*). In the world of medicine, his *Qanun al-tibb* (*The Canon of Medicine*) served as the guide par excellence for physicians in both Muslim-majority societies and Europe until the very beginning of the modern period. It is hard to appreciate Ibn Sina's views on love unless one first learns about the building blocks of his metaphysics; that is, the basic assumptions of his theory of Being and beings. In what follows, therefore, I place Ibn Sina's theory of love in its metaphysical context. I restrict my analysis to his *Treatise on Love*—the *Risala fi'l-'ishq*—instead of his comments on love in the *Canon* that view "passionate love" as an ailment.

The centerpiece of Ibn Sina's metaphysics is the distinction between essence and existence. Let us work with an example—that of the elephant—to explore the implications of the difference between essence and existence. At some point growing up, most of us have encountered an image of an elephant. We might have seen this image in a zoo, in a storybook, or in a museum. Thus, most, if not all, of us carry in our memories the basic outline of an elephant's form. Now suppose that all existing elephants were to die because of climate change and poaching. Such a tragedy would not eradicate the idea of the elephant; it would still persist in our collective memory, especially with the aid of digital technology. This example yields two important lessons. First, we learn that we are able to picture the elephant in our minds (that is, the essence of the elephant) even if actual elephants cease to exist. This takes us to a second lesson: the elephant's existence is not necessarily tied to its essence; we can imagine a world with

elephants and a world without them. In Ibn Sina's terminology, the elephant's existence is "possible" but not "necessary." Every essence whose existence is possible but not necessary is a "contingent existent" (*mumkin al-wujud*). An essence whose existence is necessary (a being who cannot not be) is a "necessary existent" (*wajib al-wujud*). For Ibn Sina, God alone is the necessary existent. In other words, God's being does not depend on someone else for its existence (hence God is uncaused), as opposed to a "contingent existent" that depends on another for its existence. This idea of God became the standard definition of God for many Muslim theologians in the centuries after Ibn Sina (Ahmed 2016: 18). How does this idea of God relate to love?

For Ibn Sina, God as the Necessary Existent is the epitome of all perfection (*kamal*). The association of God with perfection is important because human beings love what is good and beautiful; humans love those who do good to them and those who are good in themselves. Ibn Sina holds that contingent existents have some trace of perfection, but God alone is perfection itself—in fact, for him, God is "beyond perfection." Humans might commence by loving imperfect instance of goodness and beauty, but they eventually come to love the ultimate and perfect source of all goodness and beauty, namely God. In this way, Ibn Sina connects the human love for earthly things and persons to the love of God. Humans thus yearn for the Eternal Being who is immune from all deficiencies such as death and dependency. Human beings also imitate their objects of yearning; hence, they seek to imitate God's perfection in their behavior and in their intellectual pursuits.

In his *Treatise on Love*, Ibn Sina posits God as "the Pure Good." God possesses purity of goodness because God is immaterial and full of Being. Thus, goodness consists of two chief characteristics: freedom from material contingencies and immunity from nothingness. According to Ibn Sina, pure goodness inheres in a Being that does not require matter for its life; however, traces of evil are found in those beings that vacillate between life and death. All contingent beings, then, strive and yearn for life—they have "a natural desire and an inborn love" to become connected to "the Pure Good," to activate a modicum of goodness already present in them; by this activation they seek greater participation in goodness, in life, in being.

Ibn Sina's extensive writings construct a bridge between physical realities and metaphysics. This bridge is logic, a tool that Ibn Sina uses to demarcate universal principles. These principles, according to him, are identical with divine knowledge. Hence, revealed scriptures such as the Qur'an cannot contradict demonstrative truths. Where there are contradictions between rational principles and revealed doctrines, the latter must be taken as allegories or imaginative storytelling devices to translate philosophical truths to the masses. Ibn Sina's commitment to logical demonstration troubled many traditional Muslim theologians. According to such theologians, "the philosophers" had subjected God's revealed Word to the dictates of human reason. Some theologians condemned philosophy altogether. Yet, philosophical theologians argued that logic ought to aid humans in understanding revealed knowledge, not detract them away from its truths.

For the Love of God: Abu Hamid al-Ghazali

In the last section, we saw how Ibn Sina situated the idea of love in a robust philosophical framework. Yet, his elaboration of love presents a puzzle about Divine love: Recall that God is perfection per se, and does not contain anything that indicates lack. How then can God be said to love, given that love implies a yearning for completion? One of the most esteemed of philosophical theologians to grapple with this puzzle was a man named Abu Hamid al-Ghazali.

Ghazali was born in 1058 in northeastern Iran, where he completed his studies of the religious sciences. His reputation as a distinguished theologian led to his appointment as a professor in

the Nizamiyya college of Baghdad. At the height of his academic fame, Ghazali experienced a spiritual crisis: he was wracked with pure doubt regarding academic theology and discursive reasoning. He abandoned the privileges of the academy and took up spiritual exile, traveling in greater Syria and making the pilgrimage to Mecca. During his eleven-year sojourn, he completed his major theological works, including the famous encyclopedic text, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences in Islam (Ihya' ulum al-din)*. He returned to his homeland in the late 1090s, entirely devoting himself to a life of mystical piety and teaching the religious sciences until his death in 1111 (Ormsby 2007).

Ghazali's *Revival* consists of forty "books" (or book-like chapters). These books take up a number of themes, ranging "from the most minute and mundane of details—the protocols of ritual ablution, how to hold a fork, the use of the toothpick—to the most lofty subjects—the love of God, and the blissful acceptance of death" (Ormsby 2007: 111). *Revival* is at once "a compendium of law, sacred tradition, theology and philosophy, and Sufi lore and theory, as well as a vivid, if inadvertent, depiction" of Ghazali's historical milieu (Ormsby 2007: 111). *Revival*'s thirty-sixth part is entitled *The Book of Love, Longing, Intimacy, and Contentment*.

Let us begin our study of Ghazali's views with the puzzle from above: Does God love if loving entails yearning for perfection? The first point to note is that Ghazali uses an expansive vocabulary to talk about love. He deploys a set of terms that locate love as an affective tendency: longing (*shawq*), intimacy (*uns*), and contentment (*rida*). These terms indicate spiritual conditions or stations on the path of love. Yet, before setting on the path of love, the lover of God engages in preparatory ritual practices and inculcates the needed internal disposition to become a sojourner of divine love.

God and humans can in fact cultivate mutual love. Ghazali cites the following sacred tradition (*hadith qudsi*; that is, a tradition attributed to God by the Prophet Muhammad): "A servant constantly draws closer to Me through supererogatory prayers until I love him. When I love him I become the hearing by which he hears and his sight by which he sees" (al-Ghazali 2011: 100). What does it mean for God to love obedient humans in this way? Let us cite a part of Ghazali's answer at length, to witness his words but also his indebtedness to Ibn Sina:

In linguistic convention, "love" designates the soul's inclination towards what is fitting and congruent. But this is conceivable only in a deficient soul which lacks whatever is congruent in it. Accordingly, it wishes to perfect itself by attaining that missing thing and delights in attaining it. In God's case, this would be absurd. All beauty, perfection, glory and majesty are possible in the case of divinity, since each is present, actual and necessarily existent for all eternity; neither cessation nor renewal is even thinkable. God has no view of anything other than Himself as being other than Himself. On the contrary, He only sees His own essence and His own acts exclusively since nothing exists except His essence and acts.

(al-Ghazali 2011: 101)

Note that here Ghazali transitions from a definition of love suitable for humans (love as inclination for perfection) to a definition of love suitable for God (love as self-love). Thus, self-love is genuine love, while inclination comes about when a contingent existent yearns for perfection. As God is the necessary existent, God is free of inclinations. Therefore, God's love for a created being is an expression of God's love for Himself, for God sees the devout human to be embodying a part of God's own perfection. God engages in self-love, which is the core of love, and not in inclination or desire for completion.

Likewise, the one who yearns for God engages in self-love, for he or she desires the completion of perfection. The sacred tradition Ghazali cites above reveals that it is through moral

formation and bodily acts that a believer strives for perfection. As the source of all perfection, God naturally, so to speak, becomes the human mind's ultimate object of love. The human mind thus loves the tidbits of knowledge about God (about reality) that it collects from observation, reasoned perspective, historical memory, revealed knowledge, and, above all, personal experience. Yet, humans can only yearn for but never exhaust perfection (God). This yearning for God, therefore, is the most noble and sublime yearning, for it has the capacity to sustain humans in their self-love. This is so because God is essentially unknowable; God is the everlasting territory of human yearning. In this way, there is a certain reciprocity of love between God and humans. Humans love God to become perfect, but God loves that humans strive to embody God.

Ghazali is not vague or abstract about humans' love for God. In fact, this love takes on a very bodily character: "Love is a fragrant tree; its root is firmly planted and its branches reach to heaven; its fruits emerge in the heart and in the tongue and in the limbs" (al-Ghazali 2011: 107). Love manifests in vivid ways. The lover loves to gaze at the beloved—the believer yearns to behold God after death. The lover of God "prefers what God loves over what he himself loves, both inwardly and outwardly" (al-Ghazali 2011: 110). Moreover, overwhelming love "curbs appetite; one has no delight left except for the beloved" (al-Ghazali 2011: 111). Love of God also brings one utmost joy and pleasure, especially when one engages in reciting God's many Names:

Whoever loves a thing feels compelled to mention it often and to mention anything connected with it. Thus, a mark of love of God is the love of mentioning Him, together with a love of the Qur'an which is His word, love of His Prophet, and love of all who are related to him. Whoever loves someone loves even the dog in his neighborhood.

(al-Ghazali 2011: 113)

The love of God leads to love of all things: "He whose heart love of God has overwhelmed loves all God's creation just because they are His creation" (al-Ghazali 2011: 113). The yearning for God also involves private, intimate encounters—those silent times during the night when one communicates with the Eternal and recites the Qur'an (al-Ghazali 2011: 114). Divine love is ever-consuming and forgetfulness toward God is a source of sorrow for the lover of God. The one intoxicated with God's love also observes God's laws and is afraid of disobeying or associating partners with God.

Ghazali cautions lovers of God not to indulge in boasting of their inner states, and not to use divine love to justify a sense of superiority above others. He says: "To make a show of love in word or in deed is reprehensible, except when love so overmasters one that the tongue is loosed and the limbs are in tumult. Someone in this state should not be censured" (al-Ghazali 2011: 128). Ghazali speaks of those sojourners and saints whose passion for the divine overpowers them; their vision of the divine is expressed in linguistic formulations and bodily behavior that others find troubling. At times, such ecstatic individuals experience social censorship and sometimes tyrants have them executed with the help of orthodox theologians. This was the case with Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi or "the murdered" (*al-maqtul*).

Love Illuminated: Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi

The legacy of Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi is important, for it signals that philosophical thinking did not end with Ghazali in the Muslim East. Undoubtedly, Ghazali mounted a strong critique

of philosophy that was answered by Ibn Rushd (Averroes). Yet, Ghazali's relationship to both Greek philosophy and its Islamic reception should be seen as creative translation, if not skillful appropriation (Moosa 2005). One might also view his epistemic endeavors as orchestrating a "naturalization" of Greek philosophy in mainstream Muslim thought, for Ghazali's "works document an attempt to integrate Aristotelian logics into the tradition of *kalam*, of rationalist Islamic theology" (Griffel 2009: 7). Yet, from another angle, we might view Ghazali's epistemic endeavors as restricting the creative potential of both demonstrative knowledge and mystical intuition; he instrumentalizes logic and experience to consolidate revealed knowledge and tradition-bound piety. Shortly after Ghazali's death in 1111, another Muslim thinker would explore and elaborate in an unprecedented way the creative power of demonstrative and mystical knowledge. By so doing this Muslim thinker would invigorate philosophy, not by faithfully citing Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, but by re-envisioning the relationship between metaphysics and epistemology. That thinker was Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi and that new approach was "the philosophy of illumination" (*hikmat al-ishraq*).

Suhrawardi was born in the middle of the twelfth century in what is today northwestern Iran. There, he mastered the theological sciences and philosophy as well as logic, the latter two not only from Greek but also from Persian and Indic sources. Suhrawardi's thought synthesizes a number of intellectual traditions to offer a new way of understanding epistemology, which also has significant implications for ontology and ethics. The centerpiece of Suhrawardi's philosophical system is the perspective that the most reliable way of knowing is immediate and intuitive. Here, knowing is not just a cognitive process; rather, it encompasses comprehension and conviction but also becoming illuminated and feeling transformed by what one has come to know. For Suhrawardi, it is the presence of light—really, rays of light that shine on the intellect—which makes possible direct knowledge of things as they are in themselves. The ultimate source of all lights is the "Light of Lights," a Qur'anic expression for God.

Suhrawardi lived as a mendicant mystic whose travels brought him to the city of Aleppo. There, the Muslim ruler Saladin's son took an interest in Suhrawardi's enthralling ideas and what the mystical philosopher might have to teach about governance and politics. When Saladin learned of the mystic's power over his son, he ordered the latter to execute Suhrawardi. The saint met an early death in 1191 before reaching the age of forty. Yet, the Master of Illumination, as Suhrawardi's followers came to refer to him, left behind an impressive corpus of writings. His approach to questions of metaphysics and epistemology are elaborated in four Arabic philosophical texts, the most famous of which is *The Philosophy of Illumination*. He also wrote allegories and mystical treatises in Persian, including one entitled *On the Reality of Love*.

Suhrawardi's allegories demonstrate his command of imaginative storytelling. *On the Reality of Love* presents a picturesque allegorical account of Suhrawardi's vision for ethical self-making, a vision that brings together his fresh approach to emanationist metaphysics and intuitive epistemology. This text is populated by personified concepts such as Beauty, Love, and Sorrow. These concepts name three qualities of the human intellect with reference to its objects of knowledge. Beauty is related to the "ability to know God," Love characterizes self-knowledge, and Sorrow stems from the "ability to know that which did not exist and then did exist" (Suhrawardi 1999b: 58). We encounter these qualities of the intellect as three brothers with different characters. Beauty, the eldest brother, is lofty and independent, as he contemplates the most perfect object of knowledge (namely, God). Love, the middle brother, is torn between attachment to angelic lights and carnal darkness; he knows that he possesses the dual capacity to reach great heights but also fall to lowly ditches. Sorrow is the youngest brother who reflects on human finitude and loss; yet, he is humble and patient in his mourning and melancholia. In addition to personifying these concepts, Suhrawardi places them in fantastical spatial settings

(palaces with elaborate doors and chambers) and relates them to a range of mythical and historical personages, including biblical ones. We thus encounter Adam and Joseph, who embody Beauty, Potiphar's wife, Zulaykah, who embodies Love, and Jacob, who embodies Sorrow (see Nwiyi 1977 for earlier associations between these ideals and biblical figures).

Let me step aside from Suhrawardi's allegorical frame and present what he is saying in philosophical terms. For him, the human intellect is endowed with three capacities: the capacity to know God, the capacity to know oneself, and the capacity to know finite beings. The actualization of each capacity produces spiritual and affective qualities in the human subject: one arrives at beauty (*husn*) by knowing God, one experiences passionate love (*'ishq*) when knowing oneself, and one suffers sorrow or melancholia (*huzn*) when contemplating finitude.

For our purposes, let us dwell on the character traits attributed to Love, the middle brother. Suhrawardi makes several important points about love, in allegorical fashion, in the following soliloquy he attributes to the character called Love:

I am from the Sacred Abode, from the quarter of Ruhabad [an imaginary place, or "Spiritsville"], from the lane of Husn [Beauty]. My house is next to that of Sorrow. My job is to travel. I am [an] abstracted mendicant. Every moment I go in a different direction. Every day I am in a different place. Every night I make for myself a different lodging. When I am among the Arabs they call me Ishq; among the Persians I am known as Mihr. In heaven I am called the Mover; on earth I am known as the Stabilizer. Although I am ancient of days, I am still young. Although I am bereft of possessions, I am from a noble family. My tale is long!

(Suhrawardi 1999b: 63)

From this monologue we learn that as a feeling love has an ontological reality, originating in the imaginal world. Accompanied by sorrow and longing, love is always on the move, always searching to possess the beautiful object. Love, in other words, is the desire to eradicate lack, and thereby to become like beauty. However, love also encompasses the pain of non-possession, and in this way it resembles sorrow. Moreover, the human feelings of love have their heavenly counterparts in the form of angelic lights that originate out of the "Light of Lights."

The Philosophy of Illumination sheds more light on a cosmic force that often accompanies love: anger or domination. Love and domination structure the inner human struggle to embody light. Suhrawardi proposes that one should channel the light of love toward the "Light of Lights," so that the soul transcends its materiality and reunites with its point of origin. However, one should steer one's anger or domination toward the base desires, for these blemish one's internal mirror that reflects heavenly rays of light. In so doing one would also cultivate an ascetic ethical subjectivity, exemplars of which include Plato and Muhammad. This is how Suhrawardi's metaphysics and epistemology come together to allow for a mystical self-fashioning project (Zargar 2018: 128–149). Shedding light on his predecessors (such as Ibn Sina), Suhrawardi's innovative take on love illuminated future generations of mystics and metaphysicians (such as Mulla Sadra). Suhrawardi's life was unjustly cut short but his legacy beckons one to search for creative alternatives to narrow fields of vision.

Conclusion

A creative alternative to studying love in texts alone is to fuse textual sources with visual and material ones. A case in point is the Tunisian director Nacer Khemir's *Desert Trilogy*, a series of films that use stunning colors and characters to depict various dimensions of love and longing.

Khemir's trilogy portrays the way in which sensual love and its transformation into divine love (sublimation) are often experienced simultaneously. *The Dove's Lost Necklace*, the second installment of Khemir's trilogy, brings to the screen the mystique and madness pre-modern Muslims associated with passionate love (*'ishq*). The film's name is a play on *The Ring of the Dove*, a treatise on love by the Spanish jurist and man of letters Ibn Hazm (d. 1064). The latter exploits philosophy, poetry, anecdotal history, and theological teachings to guide the reader through the complex feeling known as love, which is a source of sin for some but a path of piety for others (Ibn Hazm 1953; Abd Alghani 2016).

Love in Islamic philosophy is a multifaceted concept and practice. The preferred object of love for many Islamic thinkers is knowledge, which finds its perfection in God—the First Cause is the most sublime object of human knowledge. This is explicit in Abu Bakr al-Razi and Ibn Sina, and with a more mystical bent in Ghazali and Suhrawardi. Love also serves political functions and thus appears as friendship, the glue that binds together social relations and ensures civic order. Farabi and al-Tusi particularly gave a new life to this Aristotelian postulation. Finally, love is an affective force that can transform the self and assist in the cultivation of praiseworthy character traits but it can also cloud one's reflective capacities and assist in the pursuit of pure hedonism. Love is thus a mobile and dynamic psychic principle that is predisposed to both physical and metaphysical objects.

References

- Abd Alghani, Jalal. (2016) "'On the Way of Truth': Ibn Hazm's *Tawq al-Hamamah* and the Epistemology of Love." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 69.1: 37–62.
- Abrahamov, Binyamin. (2003) *Divine Love in Islamic Mysticism: The Teachings of al-Ghazali and al-Dabbagh*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Adamson, P. (2015) *Philosophy in the Islamic World: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Adamson, P. (2016a) "Abu Bakr al-Razi (d. 925), *The Spiritual Medicine*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Adamson, P. (2016b) *Philosophy in the Islamic World: A History of Philosophy without any Gaps Volume III*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ahmed, S. (2016) *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*. Princeton, NJ and London: Princeton University Press.
- Anwar, E. (2003) "Ibn Sina's Philosophical Theology of Love: A Study of the *Risalah fi al-'Ishq*." *Islamic Studies* 42.2: 331–345.
- Aristotle. (1984) *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bell, J. N. (1986) "Avicenna's *Treatise on Love* and the Nonphilosophical Muslim Tradition." *Der Islam* 63.1: 73–89.
- Chittick, W. C. (2013) *Divine Love: Islamic Literature and the Path to God*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- al-Daylami, Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali b. Muhammad. (2005) *A Treatise on Mystical Love*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Farabi. (2001) *Alfarabi: The Political Writings: Selected Aphorisms and Other Texts*, trans. and annotated by Charles E. Butterworth. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press.
- al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid. (1992) *Ihya' 'ulum al-din*, ed. Sayyid Ibrahim. Cairo: Dar al-Hadith.
- al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid. (2011) *Love, Longing, Intimacy, and Contentment: Kitab al-mahabba wa'l-shawq wa'l-uns wa'l-rida*, trans. Eric Ormsby. Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society.
- Griffel, Frank. (2009) *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ibn 'Arabi. (1968) *Al-Futuhat al-makiyyah*. Beirut: Dar Sadir.
- Ibn Hazm, 'Ali b. Ahmad. (1953) *The Ring of the Dove: A Treatise on the Art and Practice of Arab Love*, trans. A. J. Arberry. London: Luzac.
- Ibn Sina. (1945) "A Treatise on Love," trans. Emil L. Fackenheim. *Medieval Studies* 7: 208–228.

- Ibn Sina and Juzjani, ‘Abd al-Wahid. (1974) *The Life of Ibn Sina: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, ed. William E. Gohlman. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Moosa, Ebrahim. (2005) *Ghazali and the Poetics of Imagination*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Nasr, S. H. (1997) “The Meaning and Concept of Philosophy in Islam,” in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman. London and New York: Routledge.
- al-Nisaburi, ‘Abd al-Malik b. Muhammad Ibrahim. (1999) *Tahdhib al-asrar*, ed. Bassam Muhammad Barud. Abu Dhabi: Al-Majma’ al-Thaqafi.
- Nussbaum, M. (2001) *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Revised edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nwiya, Paul. (1977) “Un cas d’exégèse soufie: l’Histoire de Joseph,” in *Mélanges offerts à Henry Corbin*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Tehran: The Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy. 407–423.
- Ormsby, Eric. (2007) *Ghazali*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- al-Razi, Abu Bakr (1950) *The Spiritual Physick of Rhazes*, trans. A. J. Arberry. London: John Murray.
- al-Razi, Abu Bakr (2007) “The Philosopher’s Way of Life,” in *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources*, trans. and introduced by Jon McGinnis and David C. Reisman. Indianapolis, IN and Cambridge: Hackett.
- Rosenthal, F. (2007) *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*, ed. with an introduction by Dmitri Gutas. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Saruhan, M. S. (2000) “Praise for Reason and Love in Zakariya al-Razi.” *Hamdard Islamicus* 23.1: 21–29.
- Stroumsa, S. (1999) *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam: Ibn al-Rawāndī, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, and their Impact on Islamic Thought*. Leiden and Boston, MA: E.J. Brill.
- Suhrawardi, Shihabuddin Yahya. (1999a) *The Philosophy of Illumination: A New Critical Edition of the Text of Hikmat al-ishraq*, translation, notes, commentary, and introduction by John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press.
- Suhrawardi, Shihabuddin Yahya. (1999b) *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, edited and translated with an introduction by Wheeler M. Thackston, Jr. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers.
- Toussi, S. K. (2008) “The Concept of ‘Love’ in Transcendent Philosophy: A Comparison between Mulla Sadra and Plato.” *Journal of Shi’a Islamic Studies* 1.2: 16–39.
- Tusi, Nasir al-Din and G. M. Wickens. (2011) *The Nasirean Ethics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Zargar, Cyrus Ali. (2011) *Sufi Aesthetics: Beauty, Love, and the Human Form in the Writings of Ibn ‘Arabi and ‘Iraqi*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.
- Zargar, Cyrus Ali. (2018) *The Polished Mirror: Storytelling and the Pursuit of Virtue in Islamic Philosophy*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- al-Zirkili, Khayr al-Din. (1928) *Rasa’il ikhwan al-safa wa khillan al-wafa’*. Cairo: Al-Matba’ah al-‘Arabiyya.

34

THREE MODELS OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

Platonic, Aristotelian, and Kantian

Eric J. Silverman

A central feature of Christian ethics is the command to be a loving person. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus identifies the greatest commandments of the Old Testament as the commands to love God with the whole self and to love one's neighbor as the self. Accordingly, he claims that all of Jewish (and thus Christian) morality is founded upon these two principles of love. Jesus proceeds to expand the scope of persons viewed as 'neighbors' whom Christians ought to love. Using the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), he implies that every human being counts as 'one's neighbor' for the sake of this command. Furthermore, the Pauline letters portray love as superior to both all spiritual gifts as well as the great theological virtues of faith and hope (I Corinthians 13). Therefore, on any plausible interpretation of Christianity becoming a loving person is a central moral concern.

The Judeo-Christian Scriptures also have much to say about erotic love. It is well known that they include restrictions concerning sexual love such as the Ten Commandments' ban on adultery and limits concerning the permissibility of divorce. Yet the Judeo-Christian Scriptures also say much about the goodness of marital love: it is repeatedly used as an image of God's love for the church (Ephesians 5:23–32), marital sexual love—in somewhat explicit detail—is depicted as unambiguously positive (Song of Solomon 1–8), and the moral goodness of such love is consistently endorsed—although there are also warnings concerning the practical difficulties accompanying marital relationships.

While many people speak of 'Christian Love' or the 'Christian Model of Love', there is not just one interpretation or model, but several. This chapter suggests an unusual way of distinguishing between Christians in order to discuss how their theories of love stem from differing philosophical commitments. Rather than categorizing Christians by self-identified labels, denominations attended, or doctrines endorsed, one illuminating way to distinguish between Christians is to identify the secular philosophy exerting the greatest influence upon their worldview and thereby shaping the theoretical framework in which their Christianity is interpreted. The three secular philosophies that have had the greatest influence upon Christians are Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Kantianism. Each of these views will be examined in their full paradigmatic state, although individual Christians will be influenced by these philosophies to varying degrees.

Like most people in our philosophically heterogeneous Western culture, Christians are often influenced by varying philosophical ideas in ways that they may not even realize. In particular,

the ideas of thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, and Immanuel Kant have become synthesized—sometimes intentionally—with Christianity in deeply interwoven ways. These philosophical principles influence the interpretation and application of religious principles and practices including the Christian love commands. Yet, this fact in itself is not a direct threat to Christian orthodoxy. When theologians integrate secular philosophy with religion, at least some seek to avoid overriding religious principles with secular ones. Instead, such theologians seek to supplement religious truths with compatible secular truths to synthesize a fuller, more complete account of the world, since even theologians viewing Christian revelation as uniquely authoritative rarely hold religious sources of truth to be the only sources of truth. This chapter proceeds by outlining and comparing the distinctive traits of these three philosophical approaches to Christianity and their interpretations of Christian love.

Christian Interpretations of Platonism

Plato and the Neo-Platonists have been enormously influential throughout history. Neo-Platonists like Plotinus, Porphyry, and Antiochus exposed early Christians to their interpretations of Platonism. Neo-Platonic thought also influenced other religions as Philo, al-Kindi, and al-Farabi similarly synthesized their own Jewish or Islamic beliefs with Neo-Platonism. Several early church thinkers in both the Latin-speaking West and the Greek-speaking East saw considerable agreement between the secular Neo-Platonic and Christian worldviews. The influence of Neo-Platonism was strongest in the Ancient Era and Middle Ages, yet continues to this day.

Christian Neo-Platonism has largely stemmed from the influence of St. Augustine (354–430), who is arguably Christianity's most influential theologian.¹ His fusion of New Testament Christianity with Plotinus's Neo-Platonism has influenced Western Christianity since the fourth century. The timing of Augustine's writings is one reason for his broad influence. He wrote shortly after Christianity was safely established as the official religion of the Roman Empire, but before any particular systematic interpretation of Christianity had become codified throughout the Latin-speaking world.

Before the fourth century, Christian leaders within the Roman Empire had difficulty gathering to resolve critical theological issues due to their official status as a treasonous sect of strict theists who refused to worship the emperor. This difficulty ended when The Edict of Toleration established Christianity's legal permissibility in 311 and the Edict of Thessalonica established Christianity as the empire's official religion in 380. Accordingly, Augustine wrote in a time of greater centralization of Christian influence and easier communication. The Council of Nicea in 325 resolved several foundational theological debates focusing on Christological topics, such as the Deity of Christ and the relationship of Christ to God the Father. Yet, many issues were unaddressed, thereby leaving room for a theologian like Augustine to fill this theological void within the boundaries established by the earliest creedal Councils.

Augustine believed that the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus provided a largely correct account of the world and cohered fairly well with Christianity. For example, he believed that it provided philosophical tools to address the objections to Christianity of his day, such as the problem of evil. In Neo-Platonism, he found secular justification for important Christian doctrines including the existence of God, the nature of the soul, and even some aspects of the Trinity. Augustine writes,

First you [God] wanted to show me, how much you resist the proud but give grace to the humble ... you procured for me by a man horribly swollen with pride some books of the Platonists translated from the Greek into Latin. In them I read, without these

exact words, but with the same ideas and defended with many and varied reasons: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word with God, and the Word was God.” ... I read that the Word, God, was, “not born of the flesh or of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but born of God.” However, I did not read there that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”

(Augustine 1960: 7.9)²

Neo-Platonism’s secular arguments cohered well with foundational Christian claims. In this passage, Augustine identifies Neo-Platonic evidence for important metaphysical claims from the first chapter of the *Gospel of John* while noting that the most distinctly Christian teachings, such as the Incarnation of Christ, are absent from Neo-Platonism.

Another source of contemporary Anglo-American Christian Platonism is Clive Staples Lewis, who is among the most popular Christian thinkers of the twentieth century. He used his talents as an Oxford-trained Professor of Mediaeval and Renaissance Literature to serve as a Christian public intellectual. While Lewis is unlikely to have the same long-term influence exercised by St. Augustine, it is difficult to overstate his role in bringing Platonist ideas into the contemporary Anglo-American Christian consciousness. In addition to his academic writings, his *Chronicles of Narnia* exposes children to a deeply Christian Platonic narrative. The Platonic nature of the story is often evident, but rarely as explicitly as the end of the final book *The Last Battle*. Professor Digory Kirke—an unobvious stand-in for Lewis himself—finds himself in an afterlife that is far more real than the shadowy earthly existence and he explains that there is nothing surprising about the multi-leveled nature of reality or in the fact that heavenly existence is more real than earthly existence. He proclaims, “It’s all in Plato, all in Plato: bless me, what do they teach them at these schools!” (Lewis 1984: 212). Lewis also cites Plato directly on topics like the nature of virtue, love, and death (Lewis 1962). Elsewhere, he borrows and modifies Plato’s famous metaphor of the Sun (Plato 1992: 507d–508b), claiming, “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen not only because I see it but because by it I see everything else” (Lewis 2001: 140).

Regardless of how Platonism comes into synthesis with Christianity, it influences attitudes concerning a wide variety of issues. Plato’s teaching on the superiority of the immaterial world (Plato 2009: 65a–66d, 74d–74e and 1992: 507a–511e) coheres well with the Christian belief concerning the importance of the immaterial world since it includes the immaterial God and the human soul—the immaterial component of the self. Yet the Christian texts have a higher view of materiality than Plato and often serve as a counterweight against Platonic views. The Christian afterlife explicitly includes bodily resurrection (I Corinthians 15) so any view of the afterlife which is less physical than earthly life has more in common with Platonic (Plato 1992: 614a–621d) than Biblical teachings. Furthermore, the Platonic view that materiality is inherently corrupt is more negative than the Christian teaching that current earthly existence is contingently ‘fallen’ from the goodness of initial creation, but will be restored to its original goodness. Christianity cannot view materiality as innately corrupt since it endorses the doctrine of the Incarnation, claiming that God took on material flesh and dwelt among humanity. The two views of earthly existence cohere in their distrust of human preoccupation with material goods and pleasures, but the Christian view endorses the possibility of a good, ‘redeemed’ earthly existence, which has no Platonic equivalent. Yet there are undoubtedly Platonic Christians who favor Plato’s harsher anti-materialistic views, thereby viewing all material pleasures as inherently corrupt. For example, interpretations of Christianity that construe sex as inherently debasing have more in common with Plato than with the Biblical texts expressing positive or at least neutral views of sexuality in marital contexts (Song of Solomon 1–8, I Corinthians 7).

Christian Interpretations of Platonic Love

Platonic Christianity expresses its philosophical commitments by valuing spiritual immaterial love over physical earthly love. This principle synthesizes easily with the foundational Christian command to love the immaterial God with the whole self. Yet, Platonism can have troubling implications for the command to love one's neighbor. To the Christian Platonist the goods of the material body and earthly pleasure are vastly less important than the immaterial goods of personal virtue and discipline. Christian love—in any plausible interpretation—includes care for the well-being of humans. Yet, when combined with negative Platonist views of materiality and physicality, such Christianity can deemphasize the legitimacy of practical earthly concern for other's physical well-being as an expression of love. Such Platonic interpretations of Christian love instead emphasize the centrality of aiding others in non-material ways such as helping them mature spiritually or develop moral character. In its most extreme form, this emphasis on immaterial well-being can lead to a complete neglect of material charity.

These Platonic tendencies are seen in Augustine's *Seventh Homily on the First Epistle of John*, where he emphasizes the importance of corporal discipline to help develop virtue. He claims,

Do not imagine that you love your servant when you do not beat him; or that you love your son when you do not discipline him; or that you love your neighbor when you do not correct him: that is not love, but feebleness. Let charity be fervent to correct and to improve; but if there are good morals then let them delight you; if there are bad morals then improve and correct them. Do not love error in man, but man himself: for God made man, but man made error.

(Augustine 1888: 11)³

Unsurprisingly, Christian Neo-Platonism values virtue more highly than physical or relational comfort, but in its more extreme interpretations—that few would endorse today—it can even endorse physical abusiveness to obtain desired changes to immaterial character.

Augustine's *Confessions* similarly demonstrates Platonic commitments concerning sexual love. As he distinguishes between lustful physical attraction and chaste love of the soul, he uses Neo-Platonic language displaying his low opinion of sexual love.

What was there, to delight me, except to love and to be loved? Yet, I did not keep to the bright path of friendship and moderation of loving from soul to soul, instead my heart was darkened, obscured, and overcast by clouds from the polluted lust of the flesh and gushing energy of adolescence, so I could not discern between serene chaste love and the darkness of lust.... Who would have regulated my desires and turned to good use the fleeting beauties of lowest things, and put limits to their sweetness, and directed the tides of my youth to the shores of marriage if tranquility in these pleasures could not be obtained with the end of the procreation of children.

(Augustine 1960: 2.2)

Augustine depicts physical beauty and pleasure as “lowest things.” This view and language are found throughout Plotinus's writings,⁴ but are absent from the Christian Scriptures. The Christian Platonic view expressed here is that even married sexuality is only justified by the goal of reproduction, which is oriented toward a higher good since reproduction entails the creation of a human being with an immaterial soul. Sexual relationships, even reproductively oriented marital relationships, are compared unfavorably to Platonic friendship—the non-sexual love of

the immaterial soul. It should come as no surprise that Platonic influences devalue sexual love since the shallowest, rejected account of *eros* in Plato's *Symposium* focuses upon physical love and even love of other embodied souls is lower on the Platonic scale of value than love of the purely immaterial forms such as virtue and love itself (Plato 1994: 210a–212b).

We see similar Platonic warnings about human love and especially sexual love in C. S. Lewis's writings. While considerably more moderate than Augustine's Christian Platonism, Lewis still follows Plato in warning that human love is based in need. As Lewis warns, "Human love, as Plato teaches us, is the child of Poverty—of want or lack; it is caused by a real or supposed goal in its beloved which the lover needs and desires" (Lewis 1962: 50). Obviously, having a desire based in need is not immoral in itself, but it lays a foundation to view love as morally dubious and preoccupied with the self's needs rather than the beloved's well-being. Accordingly, Lewis endorsed the claim that even within marriage *eros* "ceases to be a devil only when it ceases to be a god" (Lewis 1995: 35). Implicitly, the ordinary state of *eros* is that of a demonic idol, which must be dethroned to be tamed and properly enjoyed.

Christian Interpretations of Aristotle

While Platonism was the first major secular philosophy to become synthesized with Christianity and continues to have considerable influence, its importance has declined significantly since the Middle Ages. Yet Platonism is hardly the only philosophy to influence Christianity. One famous Renaissance-era fresco demonstrating the importance of both Plato and Aristotle to Christianity is Raphael's *The School of Athens*. In the center of more than twenty ancient thinkers stand images of Plato and Aristotle speaking to one another. Plato points upward, which may be interpreted as a gesture toward what is most important to him—the immaterial forms. In contrast, Aristotle speaks with his open right palm extended downward to indicate his emphasis on the earthly material world. The painting is housed in the Vatican and is just one illustration of the high view many Christians hold of the two ancient thinkers. Furthermore, the painting hints at aspects of each thinker's philosophy that Christians have found to be compelling. Plato holds a copy of the *Timaeus*, which includes his creation story wherein the physical world is created by the immaterial godlike Demiurge from primordial elements. In contrast, Aristotle holds a copy of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, a book concerning the virtues, the teleological nature of ethics, and ideal virtuous human friendship.

The shift from Platonic to Aristotelian philosophy within Christianity began when Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) explicitly replaced many Platonic views with Aristotelian ones within his systematic theology. Having encountered Arabic translations of Aristotle's lost writings Aquinas found Aristotle's philosophy to be compelling. Accordingly, he sought to synthesize the Augustinian Christianity he inherited with Aristotelianism. Aristotle's authoritative place as the fount of secular wisdom was so foundational to Thomistic thought that Aquinas referred to him as 'The Philosopher'. Similarly, the famous Aristotelian Christian poet Dante Alighieri would later refer to Aristotle as "The master of those who know" (Alighieri 2003: 4:131).

Aristotelian Christianity was influential in both Protestant and Catholic circles from the time of Aquinas until the Modern Era.⁵ While Aristotle's Catholic followers are better known, he has also influenced notable Protestants including Reformation thinker Philip Melancthon and contemporary scholars including Norm Geisler, Dallas Willard, and Stanley Hauerwas. Yet, Aristotle has fewer contemporary Protestant adherents than Plato. Unsurprisingly, most contemporary Aristotelian Christians are traditional Catholics as Aquinas's views are still officially endorsed as a representative Catholic systematic theology and still hold a unique status within Catholicism. In the late nineteenth century, Pope Leo XIII described Aquinas as "the prince and master of all

Scholastic doctors” (Pope Leo XIII 1879) and explained his distinctive role in Catholic theology, saying,

The chief and special glory of Thomas, one which he has shared with none of the Catholic Doctors, is that the Fathers of Trent made it part of the order of conclave to lay upon the altar, together with sacred Scripture and the decrees of the supreme Pontiffs, the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas, whence to seek counsel, reason, and inspiration.
(Pope Leo XIII 1879)

In other words, the writings of Aquinas were proposed as an authoritative source of wisdom alongside Scripture and the decrees of the Popes.

Thomistic Aristotelianism continues to be endorsed in Catholicism to this day. Pope Paul VI re-emphasized the unique importance of Aquinas’s theology,

Moreover, the Church underlined her preference for the doctrine of St Thomas, proclaiming that it is its own.... Even today the Angelic Doctor and the study of his doctrine are, by law, the cornerstone of the theological formation of those who are called to the role of confirming and comforting their brothers in the faith.
(Pope Paul VI 1975)

Similarly, *Fides et Ratio* the influential Papal Encyclical on the relationship between faith and reason held up Aquinas as a model for reconciling faith and reason, “the Church has been justified in consistently proposing Saint Thomas as a master of thought and a model of the right way to do theology” (Pope John Paul II 1998: 43). Yet while Aquinas’s Aristotelianism continues to be endorsed by the Catholic Church, he is endorsed less enthusiastically and less uniquely than he once was as competing theologians and theologies have simultaneously been embraced in post-Vatican II theology. The weakening of Catholicism’s endorsement of Aquinas is even present in *Fides et Ratio*, which proposes Aquinas merely as ‘a model’ of the proper way to pursue theology rather than ‘the model’ or ‘the best model’ of how to do theology.

Many contemporary Christian philosophical arguments are grounded in Aristotelian assumptions. While Aquinas’s five ways of arguing for God’s existence explicitly presupposed an Aristotelian account of causation (Aquinas 1920: I.2.3), many contemporary cosmological arguments still implicitly require similar assumptions concerning causation. Similarly, some arguments against the moral permissibility of abortion rely upon the Aristotelian principle that the essence of a being’s identity is based upon its membership in a distinctive species regardless of that being’s current stage of development (George and Lee 2004–2005). Therefore, the morality of intentionally destroying a developing human fetus is viewed as essentially similar to destroying a fully developed human being. Accordingly, Aristotle’s philosophy often looms as an unstated—and sometimes unrealized—backdrop to contemporary Christian views.

Christian Interpretations of Aristotelian Love

Aquinas interprets Christian love as friendship, and models his view upon Aristotle’s account of ideal virtue-based friendship, which combines both benevolence and relational union with the beloved (Aristotle 1999: 1155a–1163b). He explains,

[Love] brings about a certain union of affection of lover to beloved. The lover considers the beloved in a certain way one with himself.... And the Philosopher [Aristotle]

because of this says in that very place that, “benevolence is the beginning of friendship.”

(Aquinas 1920: II–II.27.2)⁶

For Aquinas, love’s benevolence consists in a desire to promote both the beloved’s material and immaterial well-being.

However, since a person may possess genuine benevolence without affection for or relationship with another person love also requires a desire for a type of union between lover and beloved. Two senses of union are particularly important to loving relationships: first is the union of affections. Through the union of affections, the lover cares for the beloved as for herself. The lover experiences a benefit to the beloved as a benefit to the self as well. The lover hurts when the beloved grieves, and is happy when the beloved is joyful. To illustrate this union he cites Aristotle’s view that a true friend is also “another self” (Aquinas 1920: I–II.28.1). Furthermore, since all humans have a similar rational nature, Aquinas goes much further and suggests that every human ought to be viewed as ‘another self’. Therefore, Thomistic love is meant to be universal, but is neither stoic nor emotionally detached.

A second sense of union resulting from love is ‘real union’. Aquinas explains,

This is real union, which the lover seeks with the beloved thing.... As the Philosopher says, in *Politics II*, “Aristophanes said that lovers may desire out of both to become one,” but because, “from this action either one or both may be destroyed, instead they seek union that is appropriate and fitting for love, to dwell together, speak together, and share together in similar things.”

(Aquinas 1920: I–II, 28.1)

Love causes the lover to seek ongoing real-life connectedness with the beloved. She seeks to spend time with the beloved and share life together. However, it might seem that such union is incompatible with the Christian ideal of ‘universal love for all’, since it seems impossible to have ‘real union’ with all of humanity. Yet, Aquinas believes such union is possible in the afterlife where the occupants of heaven will be united with both God and one another in the shared contemplation of the divine essence. Therefore, loving other humans includes the desire to unite with them in the shared heavenly contemplation of God as well as desiring appropriate earthly bonds (Aquinas 1920: II–II.25–27).⁷

For Aquinas, love’s benevolence is fulfilled in both material and immaterial ways. In the *Summa Theologiae* a central act of love—almsgiving—is defined in both material and immaterial terms. When most laypeople think of ‘charity’ or ‘almsgiving’, they picture material acts of donating to the poor. However, in the *Summa* these material acts of love appear alongside acts of benevolence intended to help others pursue immaterial goods through ‘fraternal correction’. Therefore, the loving person promotes the beloved’s well-being through both practical earthly helps and by promoting their moral and religious well-being through brotherly correction. These types of actions are listed side by side as formally similar acts of ‘almsgiving’.

Aquinas’s account of love entails that sexual union is part of the relationally proper way for spouses to bond with one another within marriage.⁸ While Aquinas is undoubtedly conservative by contemporary secular sexual standards, he rejects the view that sexuality is inherently corrupt and argues that intercourse within marriage is morally meritorious (Aquinas 1920: Suppl. 41.4). Furthermore, he cites Aristotle’s account of humanity as social animal to argue that marriage is a foundational natural institution:

The Philosopher in the *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII, says that “man is more naturally a creature of marriage than politics.” But he also says that “man is naturally a political and gregarious animal.” Therefore, he is naturally inclined to marital union, and in this way conjugal union or marriage is natural.

(Aquinas 1920: Suppl. 41.1)

On this issue, Aristotelian influences help offset some earlier Platonic biases against the goodness of sexual union even within marriage. Of course, sexual union is neither the only nor the primary benefit of marriage for Aquinas. Children, fidelity among spouses, and the religious grace of the marriage sacrament are also important benefits of marriage with the sacramental grace being the most important benefit (Aquinas 1920: Suppl. 49.3).

A Paradigm of the Modern Enlightenment Era: Kantian Christianity

The Aristotelian Thomism of Aquinas was quite influential in Christian Europe from the thirteenth century until the Modern era. The Enlightenment brought several new influences into Christianity: an increased role for religious doubt, increased trust in the abilities of human reason, and an increased willingness to revise and reinterpret long-established Christian teachings. Some contemporary forms of Christianity embrace these principles as taught by a range of Enlightenment thinkers, but the most important is Immanuel Kant.

While Kant is usually regarded as the pinnacle of Enlightenment *philosophy*, his writings also influenced contemporary progressive forms of Christianity. While much of his work develops influential themes from the earlier Enlightenment thinkers, the religious implications of his *Critique of Pure Reason* were so sweeping that Karl Barth observed, “As a result of this teaching theology, at least as much as philosophy and every other branch of learning at that time, found itself faced with the problem of determining its future attitude to Kant’s critique” (Barth 2002: 264). For theologians who accept Enlightenment-era concerns Kant’s critique and reformulation of religion are the backdrop for contemporary theology that must be addressed—whether embraced or rejected. Most contemporary Kantian Christians are Protestants, since embracing Enlightenment assumptions entails a low view of ecclesiastical authority.

While earlier Christians sought to synthesize Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy with revelation while deferring to revelation’s authority, the modernist approach to religion—exemplified by Kant—was inherently different. Like many modern thinkers, his religious project was rooted in assumptions about the primacy of rationality and the dubiousness of revelation. Therefore, instead of grounding religion largely in revelation, the authority of Christian tradition, and/or ecclesiastical structures—as traditional Platonic, traditional Aristotelian, and most orthodox forms of Christianity—he sought to ground religion in rationality alone.

Kant famously argued that his moral system implicitly required certain religious beliefs claiming, “morality thus inevitably leads to religion” (Kant 1999: 6:6). Actually living by Kant’s ethical system required postulating several distinctly religious beliefs. As *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* explains, this reinterpretation of religion had considerable influence on post-Enlightenment theology:

Kant’s efforts to root religion in morality also had a significant impact on Protestant theology in Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly in various forms of what has been termed “liberal theology” or “liberal Protestantism,” which often placed great stress on the moral content of Christianity, particularly as an instrument of social reform. A significant early text that prefigures important features

of such liberal theology is the first part of an essay that Hegel wrote in 1795–6 (unpublished until 1907), “The Positivity of the Christian Religion,” in which he presents Jesus’ primary religious mission as embodying and preaching the Kantian categorical imperative.

(Pasternack 2014)

While Kant rejected traditional arguments for the existence of God, the doctrine of revelation, and the doctrine of original sin, his philosophy still overlapped with traditional Christianity in important ways. The central postulates of rational religion cohered well with Christianity on issues such as: the existence of God, the existence of the soul, and the reality of the afterlife. However, he justified religious belief only in terms of practical rather than pure reason. As Barth explains, “The proof of God is ever to be adduced as a demonstration of the presupposition that is assumed in deciding to accept the commandment of the inscrutable Law-giver, in subjecting oneself to the judgment of the inscrutable Judge” (Barth 2002: 263). In other words, accepting the concept of universally binding moral law requires grounding that belief in a divine moral law giver and judge. Yet, Kant accepted no objective evidence for such beliefs, but only the indirect pragmatic justification that these religious beliefs provide a broader worldview required by his moral system.

Kant argued that pursuing the moral life required certain practical beliefs, such as the real possibility of the greatest good—happiness distributed in proportion to each person’s worthiness of character. Since this greatest good does not occur in earthly life the ethical person must believe in the possibility of the afterlife, individual survival into the afterlife, and an omnipotent God capable of distributing happiness in proportion to character during the afterlife (Kant 2002: 5:124–125). When Kant’s religious views are combined with his moral theory including demanding ethical principles similar to traditional Christian morality such as strict rules on sexual behavior, absolute bans on lying and suicide, and broad commitments to charity and to develop one’s personal capacities for the service of others (Kant 2012: 4:422–423), the Kantian worldview looked familiar enough to attract many Christians. Since, the dictates of rational religion had considerable overlap with traditional Christianity Kant endorsed much of Christianity as an expression of rational religion and drew upon it to provide metaphors and narratives to communicate the truths of reason to the larger populace.

While some aspects of Kantian rational morality and religion were similar to traditional Christian views, all conflicts were resolved by revising traditional Christian beliefs to fit with Kantian views. Kantian Christianity reinterpreted revelation to fit the dictates of rationality (Kant 1999: 6:9–10).⁹ While many contemporary Kantian Christians resist the full implications of Kant’s project much of contemporary theology is a response to such Enlightenment era sensibilities. While the strict Kantian would judge traditional Christian claims by the authority of reason alone and happily discard them wherever they conflict, few contemporary Christians simplistically embrace such a view. Instead, contemporary Christians influenced by Modernist concerns typically balance the role of the authority of reason with the authority of Scripture, ecclesiastical authority, and/or tradition. The contemporary Anglican view that truth is found through the proper weighing of revelation, reason, and tradition should be seen as a response to such concerns. Similarly, contemporary Wesleyans and Methodists endorse the authority of scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Other contemporary Protestant denominations endorse similar roles for the authority of ‘reason’ or ‘rationality’. The authority that rationality holds in such systems represents an acceptance of Enlightenment views as embodied throughout Kant.

Kantian Love

As one would expect, Kant reinterprets the Christian love commands to cohere with his ethical system. The command to love God no longer includes a desire for mystical union with the divinity, but is redefined according to the needs of practical morality. He explains, “The love of God is instead [obedience] from one’s own free choice and from pleasure in the law (the duty of a child)” (Kant 1999: 6:182). Loving God is no longer about mystical union with a deity beyond sense experience or during an afterlife, but instead the command is interpreted narrowly to emphasize the importance of obeying God’s ethical commands during earthly existence. While Christians have traditionally connected love of God with obedience to God (1 John 5:3 and John 14:15), what is distinctive about Kantian Christianity is the complete reduction of love of God to obedience.

Kant similarly redefines the command to love one’s neighbor, arguing that it cannot include a command to desire or feel something for them. As he says, “love as an inclination cannot be commanded, but beneficence from duty ... is practical and not pathological love” (Kant 2012: 4:399). Since an important Kantian principle is ‘ought implies can’, the command to love one’s neighbor must be interpreted as referring to something attainable through the direct choice of the will. Humans cannot direct their affections, inclinations, or desires through simple choice; therefore, he reinterprets this command in terms of practical service. While traditional interpretations of Christian love typically included a practical component, earlier Christians generally believed that practical works of beneficence would naturally result from an internal loving disposition toward others, including desires and affection.

Another Kantian change to the love of neighbor is required by his view of human well-being. While previous accounts of Christian love emphasized the importance of helping others develop Christian character as a component of their well-being, Kantian philosophy emphasized more immediately practical categories for benefiting others. For Kant, happiness was no longer identified directly with virtue or even spiritual goods, but with the self’s consciousness of fulfilled rationally desired ends (Kant 2002: 5:22). Therefore, Kantian beneficence focused upon aiding the fulfillment of morally permissible ‘this-worldly’ desires rather than instilling virtue.

Many progressive forms of Christianity embody Enlightenment sensibilities similar to those advocated by Kant.¹⁰ For example, the ‘social gospel’ movement favored practical charitable and social action over speculative metaphysical debate. These tendencies can be found in the movement’s own self-description, “The social gospel approximates lay religion. It deals with the ethical problems of the present life with which the common man is familiar” (Rauschenbusch 1917: 16). As a lay movement it was uninterested in the sophisticated theological debates of the scholars, but prioritizes answers to the practical ethical problems of everyday life. Like Kant, the movement questioned the traditional doctrine of original sin and focused instead on the practical problem of repairing evil in society (Rauschenbusch 1917: 59). Ultimately, its focus rested not upon how to best unite with an immaterial God, but how to best improve material life for all.

Concerning marital and sexual love Kant retained a strict sexual ethic and went so far as to claim that all sexuality should keep in view of the preservation of the species (Kant 2017: 6:424). Other expressions of sexuality were viewed as immoral, construed as a type of ‘using’ both self and others as a means to pleasure. Thus, sexual immorality objectified people by using them as mere means to pleasure rather than treating them as ends in themselves. Yet, while Kant himself retained strict sexual ethics, some contemporary Kantian Christians have applied his openness to revising traditional Christian views by embracing progressive views of sexuality. While contemporary Kantian Christians typically still warn against the danger of using others for selfish sexual gratification and promise breaking within relationships, some accept the sexual revolution

on issues like the broad permissibility of divorce, approval of premarital sexuality, and openness to same-sex marriages.¹¹

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that we should not speak of ‘Christian love’ as if it is a single doctrine or view, but instead recognize the multiple historic interpretations of Christian love shaping contemporary Christianity. We have considered paradigmatic examples of Platonic, Aristotelian, and Kantian interpretations of Christian love. These three influential accounts reflect the sensibilities of the Late Ancient Era, the Scholasticism of the Middle Ages, and the Modern Enlightenment. Attentiveness to the complexity of these distinct notions of love helps us reflect upon the nature of love in the philosophically complex contemporary culture.

Certain developmental patterns can be seen when the three views are examined. For example, the application of the Christian love commands has been influenced by the dominant secular views of well-being in each age. In the ancient world where influential views like Stoicism and Neo-Platonism emphasized the overwhelming importance of immaterial virtue and the virtual insignificance of the material world, many Christians embraced this view. In contrast, expressions of Christianity shaped by modern views of well-being such as hedonism or desire fulfillment emphasize material expressions of care while deemphasizing the view that encouraging virtue in others is an expression of love.

Ultimately, it is possible that none of these paradigms captures the full Scriptural account of Christian love. Therefore, it seems best to conclude this discussion with the Apostle Paul’s argument for the moral primacy of love. He writes:

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

*(I Corinthians 13 NRSV)*¹²

Notes

- 1 However, Augustine was hardly the first Christian Platonist. Augustine converted to Christianity amidst an already existing community of Christian Platonists including St. Ambrose (Augustine 1960: 5.1–8.12). Furthermore, there is evidence of Platonic influences as early as Justin Martyr in the second

- century. In Eastern Orthodoxy, Platonic influences can be seen as early as Origen's second and third-century writings.
- 2 Here and elsewhere the translation of Augustine's *Confessions* is my own, but I have consulted the Ryan translation and found it to be helpful.
 - 3 The translation here is my own, although I consulted the Browne translation and found it to be helpful.
 - 4 See Plotinus 1991: II.4, IV.8 and Plato 1992: 507a–511e. For a systematic Neo-Platonic account of love see also Plotinus 1991: III.5 for Plotinus's interpretation of Plato 1994: 203a–c.
 - 5 This is not to suggest that there were no critics of Aristotle prior to Kant. For example, in France Aristotle was criticized by Peter Ramus, Michel de Montaigne, and Rene Descartes long before Kant.
 - 6 Aquinas appears to be citing Aristotle 1999: 1167a. Here and elsewhere, the translation is my own, but I consulted the translation of the *Summa* by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province and found it to be helpful.
 - 7 Of course, some of these broader views of the afterlife are not distinctly Aristotelian and can be also found in earlier thinkers such as Anselm (Rogers 2017).
 - 8 While Aquinas was hardly the first Christian with a more positive view of sex than Augustine, his Aristotelian Christianity provided a stronger philosophical basis for these positive views. Furthermore, before Aquinas there certainly were influential Christians other than Augustine who held unreservedly negative views on sexuality even in marriage, such as Saint Jerome.
 - 9 Kant's views have been influential upon many important progressive theologians. For example, it has been observed that, "[Rudolph] Bultmann's as well as [Karl] Barth's point of departure is Immanuel Kant's cleavage of reality into 'this side,' i.e. the sense world such as nature and history in which the laws of causality and analogy apply, and 'the beyond,' i.e. God who cannot be proved or disproved by logical reasoning and about whom nothing definite can be known. Due to the impenetrable wall between the two realities, no intervention of the beyond into this world, such as God's revelation of himself in history, can take place" (Glaw 2014: 120).
 - 10 Kant is credited for drawing attention to the importance of practical social ethics and is cited approvingly by important Social Gospel figures like Walter Rauschenbusch (Rauschenbusch 1917: 139 n). Additionally, there may have been additional indirect Kantian influence upon the Social Gospel through the American Pragmatists or theologians like Arthur Schopenhauer (Rauschenbusch 1917: xvii).
 - 11 Consider the United Church of Christ's *God Is Still Speaking* campaign. The foundational claim of the campaign is not that there are modern-day prophets or revelations, but rather that God is still speaking as reason guides Christians in revising their traditional views of marriage and sexuality (Schuenemeyer 2008).
 - 12 I am thankful to Adrienne Martin, Dawn Hutchinson, Gregory Sadler, Jason Poling, Elizabeth Jelinek, Chris Tweedt, and Stephen Strehle for their comments on earlier versions of this chapter. I also benefited from comments offered by an anonymous specialist in Ancient Philosophy. This chapter benefited from a research fellowship at Biola University's Center for Christian Thought, which was made possible through the support of a grant from Templeton Religion Trust. This chapter also benefited from a research grant from Christopher Newport University, Newport News, VA. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Templeton Religion Trust, the Biola Center for Christian Thought, or Christopher Newport University.

References

- Alighieri, D. (2003). *Inferno*. J. Ciardi (tr.) New York: Penguin Group.
- Aquinas, T. (1920). *Summa Theologiae*. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (tr.).
- Aristotle (1999). *Nicomachean Ethics*. T. Irwin (tr.) Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Aristotle (2018). *Physics*. C. D. C. Reeve (tr.) Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Augustine (1960). *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. J. Ryan (tr.) New York: Doubleday.
- Augustine (1888). *Seventh Homily on The First Epistle of John*. H. Browne (tr.) [online] Available at: www.newadvent.org/fathers/170207.htm [Accessed 3/29/2018].
- Barth, K. (2002). *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Its Background and History*. B. Cozens and J. Bowden (tr.) Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Byerly, R. and E. Silverman (2017). *Paradise Understood: New Philosophical Essays about Heaven*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Three Models of Christian Love

- George, R. and P. Lee (2004–2005). “Acorns and Embryos,” *The New Atlantis: A Journal of Technology and Society*: 7: 90–100.
- Glaw, A. (2014). *The Holy Spirit and Christian Ethics in the Theology of Klaus Bockmuehl*. London: James Clark and Company.
- Kant, I. (1999). *Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason and Other Writings*. A. Wood (ed.), G. Di Giovanni, and A. Wood (tr.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. (2002). *Critique of Practical Reason*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Kant, I. (2012). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. M. Gregor and J. Timmerman (trs.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. (2017). *The Metaphysics of Morals*. L. Denis (ed.), M. Gregor (tr.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, C. S. (1984). *The Last Battle*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Lewis, C. S. (1962). *The Problem of Pain*. New York: Macmillan.
- Lewis, C. S. (1995). *Christian Reflections*. Grand Rapids, MI: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Lewis, C. S. (2001). *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (1997). Philadelphia, PA: American Bible Society.
- Pasternack, L. (2014). “Kant’s Philosophy of Religion,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [online] Available at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-religion/supplement.html> [accessed 1/24/17].
- Plato (1992). *The Republic*. G. M. A. Grube (tr.) and C. D. C. Reeve Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Plato (1994). *Symposium*. R. Waterfield (tr.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Plato (2008). *Timaeus*. R. Waterfield (tr.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Plato (2009). *Phaedo*. D. Gallop (tr.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Plotinus (1991). *Enneads*. S. MacKenna (tr.) New York: Penguin Group.
- Pope John Paul II (1998). *Fides et Ratio*. [online] Available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html [accessed 2/16/2017].
- Pope Leo XIII (1879). *Aeterni Patris*. [online] Available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_04081879_aeterni-patris.html [accessed 2/16/2017].
- Pope Paul VI (1975). *Apostolic Letter Lumen Ecclesiae*. [online] Available at www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_academies/san-tommaso/pastmagisterium.html [accessed 2/16/2017].
- Rauschenbusch, W. (1917). *A Theology for the Social Gospel*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Rogers, K. (2017). “Anselmian Meditations on Heaven,” in R. Byerly and E. Silverman (eds.) *Paradise Understood: New Philosophical Essays about Heaven*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schuenemeyer, M. (2008). *God Is Still Speaking about Marriage*. Cleveland, OH: Wider Church Ministries, UCC. [online] Available at: http://d3n8a8pro7vbm.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy_url/6006/god-is-still-speaking-about-marriage-rvds-june-2008.pdf?1418430313 [accessed 4/26/2017].

Further Reading

- Lewis, C. S. (1971). *The Four Loves*. New York: Harvest Books.
- Wojtyla, K. (1981). *Love and Responsibility*. London: William Collins Sons & Company.

EUROPEAN CONCEPTS OF LOVE IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES¹

Gábor Boros

Philosophy of love in the 17th and 18th centuries was a dynamic process partly following, partly guiding the momentous developments on Europe's historical path. Our aim in this chapter is to trace three major strands of this process. The first is a natural right-based conception of love partly developing traditional theological patterns, partly relying on the results of the new mechanical sciences. The second is a hedonistic conception developing through a first phase of complementing the natural right conception to a second phase of becoming a sarcastic critic of all natural right conceptions. The third strand is the distinctive contribution of women philosophers of the age.

Theologically Motivated Natural Right Conceptions of Love

Natural right in its original meaning is far from our familiar concept of human rights. Natural right is a system of rules that originate in the classical concept of man as a rational being. Rationality is a distinguishing feature that obligates man to base her behavior on her life-long search for *perfection*, which is understood as the appropriate way of fitting in nature, the ultimate realization of rational perfection. Christian natural right concepts connect this ideal of rational perfection with God as the most perfect being, and thus they tend to identify the love of God with the love of perfection.

The Religious Renovators

Among the competing candidates for the title of the dominant perspective on love there were partisans of religious renovation. No wonder: religion traditionally played a fundamental role in defining the evaluative frames of the use and abuse of love. The religious renovators' aim was to establish new forms of religious life and worship with fitting concepts of love.

The foundation for all later Jewish-Christian interpretations of love was the love-command of the Bible and the Song of Songs systematized under Plotinus' influence in the vein of the Platonic-Socratic narratives on love. The renewal of the religious approach to love started with the works of Francis of Sales. He initiated a spiritual movement whose partisans were accused of heterodox theological views. *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1609/1619) and *Treatise on the Love of God* (1616) are Francis's works centered around the concept of love. The focus point of

Francis's texts is the righteous way of loving God. It is righteous insofar as it prepares the believer to house God in herself instead of a narcissistic adoration of the original ego the symptom of which is a love usually called *mercenary*. The narcissistic ego wishes God to *reward her for her deeds*—this is what she really wants when she prays for God's will being done. For Francis, the absolute model of love is the love of God on the cross, "a love more painful than death itself and a death more loving than love itself."² This doctrine of "pure love" would eventually be developed further in the writings of Mme Guyon and Fénelon, whereas such thinkers as Bossuet, Malebranche and Leibniz denounced it as a sheer impossibility.

The protagonists of Francis' concept of the purity of love do not aim at finding *one's own* "real" or "proper" self. Instead, they believe the most important achievement of our love of God is that He finds in our souls an appropriate dwelling place. If our love attains this end, He renders our souls His own and thus suppresses our original egos. Since this conception presupposes that *either* God *or* our narcissistic ego occupies our soul, the ego must undergo a radical change during the preparation for this pure love; a change that the mystical tradition calls *annihilation* or *death*.

Mme Guyon and Fénelon took over this renewed traditional conception while elaborating the "impossible hypothesis" most characteristically in Fénelon's 1697 *Explication of the Maxims of the Saints on the Inner Life*.

One no longer loves God, either for the merit, the perfection or the happiness that one finds in loving him. One would still love him as much even if—supposing an impossible hypothesis—he did not know that we loved him or if he decided to damn eternally those who loved him.³

The essential point of this heavily debated and condemned hypothesis is the distinction between the *motive* and the *object* of love: "even if the happiness of the righteous is de facto inseparable from the love of God, it must be secondary and should not be the essential motivation of love."⁴

Malebranche

Among the thinkers who developed a theologically motivated concept of love, Malebranche (1638–1715) was by far the most important. He was appraised as the greatest Platonic philosopher,⁵ in part for his natural right concept of the love of *perfection* leading ultimately to the love of God as the *most perfect* being. Malebranche accepted the classical Christian doctrine that God loves us first, and our task is to find the adequate response to this gratuitous love. Finding the place of this circular love-relationship within the context of mechanical philosophy was, however, not an easy task.

Descartes, the mastermind of mechanical philosophy, conceived God's love toward his creatures in reverse analogy with "affection." The God-loving man is in the most inferior position vis-à-vis God, the highest beloved, whereas God distributes the "advantages" like we distribute our "gratuitous" acts to our beloved inferiors.

Malebranche, by contrast, insists on the *unique* nature of the God-man relationship as the indispensable basis of our whole thinking. Malebranche's Platonic philosophy of love presupposes the existence of *natural inclinations* in the will that direct the intellect by letting its *general* tendency to knowledge focus on *particular* objects. They are the impressions of God's will in the mind God endows us with to ensure that we always remain directed toward the good. This is the systematic place of the previously mentioned theological circularity of love in Malebranche:

God impresses the inclinations in the human will as acts of His *gracious-gratuitous* love to render us capable to act as His representatives in this world, guiding worldly events to their *theological teleology-based natural ends*.

The love of the good in general is the source of all our particular loves because, in effect, this love is but our will, for, ... the will is nothing other than the continuous impression of the Author of nature that leads the mind of man toward the good in general.⁶

In his *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, Malebranche expresses his view that God loves himself because He takes joy in Himself, because the beauty of the orderly relation of His perfections makes Him feel pleasure. And we love Him because He continually ingrains in us the natural inclination to love Him. Things attracting us express this inclination *due to their place in the hierarchy of perfection*, i.e., in proportion to the things' *own* perfection, to their relationship to God:

[B]ecause the Order ... is nothing but the relation between the divine perfections, ... it is clear that the love of Order is but the love of God and of all things, in so far as we consider them through their relation to God. Because loving the Order is nothing but loving God and all things in so far as they stay in relation to the divine perfections.⁷

An essential feature of Malebranche's explanation is his connecting this *natural* love to the *gratuitous divine love* expressed in Jesus Christ. It is by way of "the grace of Jesus Christ" that we "resist the disorderly pleasures."⁸ The means Malebranche offers against exorbitant passions rely on the *supernatural* grace that appears *exclusively in Jesus Christ*, the real cause of enlightened joy in us. Its apex is the point where it incites us to love God *as charitable*, which is *not* identical with loving God *as the highest good*. It corresponds rather to the love of *justice*, "love of the Order," because

the idea of God as the highest *justice* is more apt to regulate our love than all other ideas of God that our imagination could make corrupt, in this way evoking illusions in us.

(*Ibid.*)

When looking at the role and place of the ego in this upward movement to the love of God *as charitable*, we can discern Malebranche's standpoint in the *amour pur* debate. He maintains that the ego remains a center of value in its own right in all kinds of love: "one can only love what one likes; and hate what one dislikes."⁹ This is so even in the case of devotion, the love of God. In this kind of love, however, *amour de complaisance* is not an instinctive *sensual* love: the mind's ability to find pleasure in the highest *justice* results from a *theo-logical education* that issues in appropriating the perspective of the life to come on the this-worldly existence.

Malebranche describes *philosophically* the basically *theological* relationship between the two lives governed by two kinds of love:

Now there is a fight between the love of beatitude and that of perfection, because the present age is the time of merit, and the aim of the soul's being in her body is to be put on the test.¹⁰

When speaking *theo-logically* about the saints, Malebranche articulates the perspective of the life to come: "But in the heavens all that we will like will render us more perfect: all our pleasures will be pure, and we will be united with the true cause that produces them."¹¹

For Malebranche, the transformation from “the love of the good *in general*” or “the love of beatitude” to “the love of a *certain* good thing” or “the love of beatitude objectified in a certain object” has a necessary presupposition: our being touched so deeply as if we were really struck. This love is *elective* insofar as it is considered as *objectified*, felt toward and focused on a *certain* object, although its background is the “formal” love impressed on us by God that has nothing to do with particular choice.

The love of the good in general becomes transformed in a natural way in the love of this or that good thing, when the idea of this or that good thing brings forth in the soul the agreeable perception, through which this good becomes noticeable for her; and if the soul in that moment gives her consent, ... she finds her satisfaction in this good that she has perceived.¹²

Malebranche the theologian adds to this formulation that the soul finds its satisfaction in this good insofar as it becomes united to it. When speaking about the unification, he embraces the terminology of the partisans of the idea of *amour pur*.

[T]he more perfect our transformation will be, so to speak, the more the soul will forget herself, the more she annihilates herself, the more God will be everything in her.¹³

Yet, what he says about the *annihilation* of the lover is but rewriting *theologically* what Descartes wrote about devotion *philosophically*. Malebranche shares with Descartes the idea of the ego as a center of value in its own right. The pleasure of enjoying the order of the divine perfections, “this infinitely sweet and calm pleasure,” the tasting of “even the substance of the divine being itself” *remains* after the lover transformed himself in the beloved in the same way as the will must remain, due to Malebranche’s concept of the love of God as a *non-natural* love: the act of the will cannot be annihilated. The freedom and purity of the love of God must both be retained and harmonized:

The love of beatitude is a natural impression; ... Love of the objective beatitude, love of God is my choice.¹⁴

Pure love is nothing but the perfect conformity of our wills to God’s will.¹⁵

Mechanical-Physiological Natural Right Conceptions of Love

This section is dedicated to thinkers whose main concern was to generalize their knowledge of a particular subject-matter, which was nature as a system of corporeal phenomena. With respect to the transposition of their knowledge of corporeal nature to the philosophical questions of the love of God, their belonging to the old Aristotelian and Galenic school or the new mechanical science is of secondary significance. Although Malebranche was influenced by the mechanical science, we treated him in the previous section, because his concept of love owes much more to his Augustinian theology than to his Cartesian science.

Charron and Ferrand

The traditional Platonic-Stoic approach to love was summarized in Pierre Charron’s *De la sagesse* (1601; *Of wisdom*, 1612). He calls love “the first, the chief, the reigning passion,” and

distinguishes between its virtuous and vicious kinds. The former includes “friendship, charity and natural affection or tenderness,” the kinds he treated under the heading of “justice.” The latter is subdivided into “three principal subspecies”: “*Ambition* or *Pride*, which is the love of honour and greatness; *Avarice*, which is the love of riches; and *sensuality* or *caral desire*, which is the love of pleasure.”¹⁶

This traditional *philosophical* concept was given the first *physiological* twist by Jacques Ferrand in his treatise on the essence and cure of love as a sickness, published in Toulouse in 1610.¹⁷ Ferrand’s physiology was, however, a peculiar *mythological physiology* instead of a *mechanical* one we are more familiar with due to the lasting influence of the mechanical sciences. Ferrand’s work was composed in the style of the Renaissance love treatises without, however, any systematic-metaphysical underpinning. His method is *philologically* investigating texts ranging from the authorities of *his* paradigm of medicine—Galen, Fernel—through classical philosophers of all traditions and of all ages to Biblical passages. He contaminated the most sacred literary source with the most profane topics: carnal love and its organs, excesses, symptoms and medicaments.

Ferrand’s aim was to explain the remedies of love-sickness in order to teach how to love earnestly. Love becomes sickness when its usual passionate character deteriorates and becomes perturbation of the mind, measureless and inimical to reason. First he defines love and enumerates its causes. “[L]ove or erotic passion is a form of devotion, proceeding from an inordinate desire to enjoy the beloved object accompanied by fear and sorrow.”¹⁸ Love is the principle and origin of our affections; there could be no good without love. A traditional physiologist, he assigns a determinative role to the liquids of the human body. Another clear sign of his not yet belonging to the practitioners of the new science is that reason is given an unquestionably normative function. The sickness of the passions consists in their hindering reason in forming correct judgments. He propagates the prejudice that women are inclined to passionate sickness more than men due to their ineptitude in using reason. He refers to poets as well as to ancient theologians as sources of explanations. La Mettrie would be his heir after the paradigm-shift in physiology leading to the dethronement of reason as an unquestionable normative authority.

Immediately after Charron’s and Ferrand’s decade philosophers became influenced by the *mechanical* instead of *mythological* physiology. Their central problem was how to account for the Christian *theological-metaphysical* doctrine of the virtuous role of love within the framework of their *physical-physiological* theory of affects.

Descartes

In his *Passions of the Soul* (1650) Descartes defines love as follows:

Love is an emotion of the soul caused by a movement of the spirits, which impels the soul to join itself willingly to objects that appear to be agreeable to it.¹⁹

The next article distinguishes love from *desire* linked later to sexuality’s improper sense of love and emphasizes the will’s unique role for his account of love:

[I]n using the word “willingly” I am not speaking of desire.... I mean rather the assent by which we consider ourselves henceforth as joined with what we love in such a manner that we imagine a whole, of which we take ourselves to be only one part, and the thing loved to be the other.

(*Ibid.*)

“Will” is meant here in Descartes’ technical sense of assenting to what has been presented by the cognitive faculty. The upshot of the assent in love is the lover’s *motivation for action*, her being engaged in and for the sake of a *whole* within which she *willingly* acknowledges to be but a *part*. The ego assents to its limitation with respect to the other part, obliging oneself to cease acting egoistically irrespective of the interests of the other.

It is here that Descartes’ distinctive claim that *love is measurable* begins playing a significant role. As in the case of colliding bodies, where the greater determines the joint movement of the new unit, if we have “colliding” lovers, the interests of the “greater” will determine the actions to be assented to by the “smaller.” Descartes’ tripartite division of love represents the three basic possible relations of magnitude between the lovers:

We may ... distinguish kinds of love according to the esteem which we have for the object we love, as compared with ourselves. For when we have less esteem for it than for ourselves, we have only a simple affection for it; when we esteem it equally with ourselves, that is called “friendship”; and when we have more esteem for it, our passion may be called “devotion.”²⁰

Descartes claims this division explains the *essence* of love rather than its *effects*, as the traditional distinction between concupiscent and benevolent love does (cf. §81). The essence of love is what provides us with value-based action-readiness: in all types of love, “we consider ourselves as joined and united to the thing loved, and *so we are always ready to abandon the lesser part* of the whole that we compose with it so as to preserve the other part” (emphasis added). The interest of the “greater” ought to be valued more than the interest of the “lesser”: “pure description” is claimed to establish *moral evaluation*. The physical, *descriptive* law is transformed into a *normative* law establishing moral values and making us act according to these values.

The first and third kinds of love complement each other: in every relationship between *unequal* parties the lesser loves “devotionally,” whereas the greater loves “affectionately”:

In the case of simple affection this results in our always preferring ourselves to the object of our love.

(*Ibid.*)

In the case of devotion ... we prefer the thing loved so strongly that we are not afraid to die in order to preserve it.

(*Ibid.*)

Thus, becoming part of a love relation *ab ovo* establishes moral values, and loving the greatest possible object implies that it is endowed with the highest moral value. For Descartes, the most appropriate object of love is God, the main effect of such a love being that the lesser part of the whole—man—ought to feel obliged to sacrifice himself for the greater part—God. “As for devotion, its principal object is undoubtedly the supreme Deity” (*ibid.*). Furthermore, God’s right to oblige to a sacrifice is transferred to the sovereign, who has the right to oblige his subject to die.

But we may also have devotion for our sovereign, our country, our town.... We have often seen examples of such devotion in those who have exposed themselves to certain death in defence of their sovereign or their city.

(*Ibid.*)

In the metaphysical perspective, love is principally love of God toward *all* creatures. He granted them *all* great favors, as our main source regarding Descartes' thinking on cosmic-metaphysical love, his letter to Chanut (6 June 1647), indicates:

I do not see that the mystery of the Incarnation, and all the other favours God has done to man, rule out his having done countless other great favours to an infinity of other creatures.²¹

The relation between God and the universe is a causal one: every created thing is the effect of God, and as such, they all bear some similarity to him. Like in Malebranche and the Platonic tradition, love is a cosmic principle connecting God and Nature with the bounds of a mutual and circular love.

Thus, in Descartes' universe, man is naturally inclined to love God as a sovereign, exemplifying *devotion*: man, the smaller part of the whole man-God, ought to be ready to sacrifice himself. Still, the greater part of the whole, God, the "affectionate" lover does not annihilate His beloved, man. A good sovereign, He is engaged in the well-being of men, and it is in this engagement that God's love toward men finds its expression.

In Descartes' system, God is the most valuable "other," the one who is the most *agreeable* to us, therefore the most *lovable*. Love of God in both senses of the circle of love is on the top of the hierarchy of the kinds of love. But this does not lead to a *traditional* theological concept of the love of God. We can introduce the term *philotheistic* for Descartes' attitude: *our natural human intellect is capable of guiding us to a reliable knowledge and further to a rational love of God without a necessary reference to the supernatural revelation*. Notwithstanding this reliance on the trustworthiness of our natural cognition, Descartes' God is the transcendental God of the Christian tradition, the same as we find in Malebranche. Yet, for Malebranche, the revelation is *necessary* for the righteous love of God, whereas for Descartes it *can* be of use even if man is capable of attaining to the love of God supported by the natural cognitive faculties. As for Spinoza, revelation loses its supernatural character, and can only teach us obeisance.

Spinoza

Spinoza's *metaphysical* concept of love dispenses with most of the remains of a traditional Christian theological understanding of love. His definition of love and its explication run as follows:

VI: Love is a Joy, accompanied by the idea of an external cause.

EXP.: This definition explains the essence of Love clearly enough. But the definition of those authors who define Love as a will of the lover to join himself to the thing loved expresses a property of Love, not its essence.²²

The concept of the will—so important for Descartes—is missing from Spinoza's definition of love, and it is degraded in the explanation. The most fundamental difference between their theories of love goes back, however, to their fundamentally different concepts of God. For Descartes, the expression "God or Nature" designates a nature impregnated with a *transcendent* voluntarist God, whereas for Spinoza it refers to a naturalized *immanent* God being and acting out of necessity of his essence. Instead of relying on the will, Spinoza emphasizes the highest kind of cognition in the human mind—intellect or *intuitive science*—through which we can have an intellectual insight into the relationship between God's essence and the eternal essences of the particular things. He is convinced that the love of God arises in us by way of

our becoming conscious of our participating in the divine *intellect* through the highest mode of cognition.

From the third kind of knowledge, there necessarily arises an intellectual Love of God. For from this kind of knowledge there arises (by P32) Joy, accompanied by the idea of God as its cause, i.e. (by Def. Aff. VI), Love of God, ... insofar as we understand God to be eternal. And this is what I call intellectual love of God.²³

Spinoza maintains that this love is eternal:

P33: The intellectual Love of God, which arises from the third kind of knowledge, is eternal.

SCHOL.: Although this Love toward God has had no beginning (by P33), it still has all the perfections of Love, just as if it had come to be ... the Mind has had eternally the same perfections ..., and ... it is accompanied by the idea of God as an eternal cause. If Joy, then, consists in the passage to a greater perfection, blessedness must surely consist in the fact that the Mind is endowed with perfection itself.

(*Ibid.*)

However, given the general definition of love based on *joy*—the mind's *passage* to a greater perfection—*eternal* love seems to be a sheer contradiction. To avoid the apparent contradiction between the transitional nature of Joy and the eternal nature of the intellectual Love of God Spinoza introduces the concept of *blessedness*.²⁴ The mind's blessedness is the most efficient remedy of the affects;²⁵ it is identified with freedom, salvation and "a constant and eternal Love of God" which is "God's Love for men" at the same time.²⁶ Blessedness is, therefore, the infinitely condensed circle of love that we have met in Malebranche and Descartes without its being based on the transcendent relationship between God and man. Spinozian blessedness is akin to the scholastic *visio beatifica*, without its being attached to a life to come of the saints, the few elected believers. Everyone can attain this distinguished state actualizing, as it were, the potentially always already perfect intellect. Thus, Spinoza's *philosophical* concept of blessedness is as far from its *religious* original as the mind's eternal love is from being commanded. Eternal minds in Spinoza are blessed of *logical necessity* instead of *depending on God's voluntary decision*.

Further, Spinoza identifies this eternal love with God's love toward himself:

P35: God loves himself with an infinite intellectual Love.

P36: The Mind's intellectual Love of God is the very Love of God by which God loves himself, ...; i.e., the Mind's intellectual Love of God is part of the infinite Love by which God loves himself.

COR.: ... God's love of men and the Mind's intellectual Love of God are one and the same.

(*Spinoza 1985: 612*)

Spinoza's idea of this Janus-faced intellectual love can be considered a Platonizing philosophical-metaphysical attempt to counterbalance the anti-metaphysical, relativistic tendencies which appeared with the experience-based new scientific theories and the discoveries of non-Christian cultures.

Descartes and Spinoza on Friendship

Having considered the highest intellectual form of love in Spinoza, we must have a look at the 17th-century transformation of the type of love ancient and modern philosophers called *friendship*. Both Descartes and Spinoza took over this kind of love in the form of what they called *générosité* (French), *generositas* (Latin).²⁷

Spinoza's *generosity* is one of the affects that originate from the understanding rather than from the imagination. The former affects are *not passive*, i.e., *passions* but *active*, i.e., *actions* in the technical sense of the term.

All actions that follow from affects related to the Mind insofar as it understands I relate to Strength of character [*fortitudo*], which I divide into Tenacity and Generosity.... By Generosity I understand the Desire by which each one strives, solely from the dictate of reason, to aid other men and join them to him in friendship.²⁸

Spinozian generosity is connected, first, to desire and, second, to *friendship* constituting its own "specific difference" within its *genus proximum*, which is strength of character. Respect for the needs of others—whose perspective is introduced under the heading "friendship"—is constitutive of generous deeds.

Descartes had already established *systematic* links between the *etymologically* related concepts of *amour* and *amitié*. Spinoza's concept of friendship (*amicitia*) is the homologue of *amitié* in Descartes, where the lovers are of *equal* value. For Spinoza, love in the form of friendship is characterized by reciprocity and equality. Even between men *not* living under the guidance of reason can be found a kind of "proto-generosity," a non-commendable form of the love of the neighbor. In the Scholium to Proposition 10 of Part 5 of the *Ethics*, we are offered an imagination-based method of developing a (proto-)generous character. First, we form *rational* principles of life; second, we engrave them in our *memory*, so that we can, third, apply them to particular cases in *real life*. Thus, our *imagination* will be informed in a specific way to govern our deeds according to the pre-impressed guidelines of *reason*. We quote the first "maxim of life" Spinoza recommends.

For example, we have laid it down as a maxim of life (see IVP46 and P46S) that Hate is to be conquered by Love, or Generosity.... If we have ready also the principle ... of the good which follows from mutual friendship and common society, and keep in mind, moreover, that ... men, like other things, act from the necessity of nature, then the wrong, or the Hate usually arising from it, ... will easily be overcome.

(Spinoza 1985: 601)

It is not the recognition of a free and good will in ourselves and in others that induces us to be generous, to behave *as if* guided by the love-command, but the recognition of the fact "that men, like other things, act from the necessity of nature." Spinoza broke with the whole voluntarist tradition of Christian philosophy. The inclination to love God has been naturalized: its motivation is the hidden *necessity* of all that happen in nature.

Hedonistic Concepts of Love

The divide separating the 17th and 18th centuries appears most clearly when we compare Fénelon's traditional theological ideas and concerns treated at the beginning of this chapter with

the ironic-critical manner in which Voltaire poses theologically relevant questions concerning love, leading to La Mettrie's idea of devotion toward the beloved and love itself, instead of God, transcendent or immanent.

Voltaire

Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary* contains an implicit treatise on love scattered in articles on love, friendship, self-love, "Socratic love" and beauty. His views are naturalist in a double sense. First of all, he explains love in *descriptive*-naturalistic terms: "here we must have recourse to the physical: it is the staff of nature which the imagination has embroidered."²⁹ Second, he does use "nature," "natural" and their opposites in a *normative* sense, as a criterion of evaluation of any given deed or habit as for its being *natural* or *unnatural*, praiseworthy or abominable.

Voltaire claims the type of love that *nature* as a crypto-agent *prescribes* to all sensible beings with some idea of love is *the heterosexual, corporeal-copulative love*. Humans are close to *other* animals insofar as this kind of love serves the propagation of the species in pigeons, horses or other animals too. Yet, Voltaire does not regard man simply as an animal: many species of animals pursue their procreational activities with no pleasure at all, whereas he claims enjoyment is the most important physical feature of love. In human beings love as established by nature includes theoretically unlimited pleasure in a double sense. First, human love is not confined temporally to certain periods of the life-cycle. Second, humans are capable of causing and experiencing pleasure in significantly more ways than animals. Regarding these potentialities and faculties, the *natural* setting of human kind proves only to be the starting point of the cultural evolution of sexuality. Human beings have developed fine manners of satisfying their shared need to cause and to experience pleasure as part of their striving for happiness. Voltaire praises these manners in his famous 1736 poem titled "The worldling." He uses the pattern of evolutionary progression in the history of our sexual behavior to defuse Rousseau's idea of a regressive involution of our moral faculties. When comparing the primeval "paradisiac" conditions of love affairs and his own day's refinement, he cannot help finding in luxury a full-blown positive state of human condition. He believes nature commands love to be efficient in procreation *and* in providing us with pleasure in the most refined ways possible.

The two "natural" functions, however, need not be effectively operational in every sexual act, given the phenomenon of homosexual love Voltaire calls "Socratic." He regards it as an unnatural criminal activity and a riddle similar to the inconceivable fact of a particular disease corrupting precisely our genitalia and especially in those people who do *not* devote themselves to "sodomite perversions." The reason for his not being a Leibnizian "optimistic" thinker is precisely this riddle: "Is that the best of possible worlds? ... Caesar, Antony, Octavius never had this disease; but was it not possible to save Francis I from being killed by it?" (31). He absolves the ancient Greeks of the charge leveled against them that they promoted homoerotic love with juristic means. He defends them claiming that homoerotic love was only *tolerated*, not *prescribed* juristically.

It is illuminating to link his condemnation of homosexual love to his rejection of the concept of an *ideal* beauty: begetting in beauty—conceived as eternal, immutable and non-relativistic—has always been evaluated in Platonic thinking much higher than begetting in flesh. In "Beautiful, Beauty," Voltaire contrasts his own unambiguously relativistic views concerning the beautiful with those of the Platonic "philosopher" who abandons his concept of the ideal eternity of the beauty as soon as he is confronted with obvious phenomena of the difference of taste among different peoples. However, if someone abandons the ideal incorporeal and thus a-sexual begetting in beauty in favor of begetting in flesh—as Voltaire does—she will have to emphasize the heterosexual relationship to the homoerotic ones, unless she relies on artificial methods of

fertilization—what Voltaire does not do. Given the animal aspects of human condition even for those who prefer begetting in beauty to begetting in flesh, what remains from nature's two aims with sexual love is the multiplication of joy by way of sexual activity. Consequently, this option opens up a vast area of producing joy from homosexual "friendship" of reciprocal enjoyment to unilateral exploitation of our own genitals or those of others, since all these activities can be conceived of as complements of the ideal begetting in beauty. Voltaire does not seem to have been interested in ways of unilateral sexual exploitation but he was interested in friendship that is also a concept with clear connections to "Socratic love" that Voltaire adamantly opposes. He employs the strategy mentioned earlier: he dissociates *prescription* from *toleration*. Yet, this is not his main point when treating friendship. He defines friendship as a *tacit contract* implicitly establishing a connection between Aristotle's and Kant's treatment of friendship, all three emphasizing the significance of the friends' being virtuous.³⁰

La Mettrie

Voltaire's ideas on love were revered by La Mettrie (1709–1751), who developed a quasi-religious cult of love. In both of his works on joy—*La volupté* and *L'Art de la volupté*—La Mettrie employs the concept of the lover of joy, *le voluptueux*, endowing him with the symbolic power to define the basic terms:

He distinguishes joy from pleasure, like the smell from the flower that exhales it or the sound from the instrument producing it. He defines debauchery, an excess of wrongly tasted pleasure, and joy, the spirit and as if the quintessence of pleasure, the art of how we can make use of it in a prudent manner, how to manage it by reason, and to taste it with sensibility.³¹

La Mettrie implicitly confines nature's double aim with love to the enjoyment, and so he develops further Voltaire's conception of the multiplication of the ways of joy as the distinctive feature of man:

The taste of pleasure has been given to all animals ...; their aim is pleasure for its own sake without thinking any further. Only man, this reasonable being is capable of elevating himself to joy; his distinctive mark within the universe is his spirit; a delicate choice, a purified taste, by refining and intensifying the sensations through reflection he became the most perfect, i.e., the happiest being.³²

La Mettrie's main heroes are Epicurus, Lucretius and Catullus. A fragmented ancient mythology is his basis for interpreting symbolically the physiological phenomena accompanying love. Within his physical universe, the Christian God plays no role any longer. Man's main aims are happiness on the level of the individual and growth through multiplication on the level of the species. Both are inseparable from joy, and from the infinitely many ways reason's "real" wisdom can multiply and render subtler the *physical* joy we share with the animals.

One of the numerous detailed descriptions of the physical deeds lovers perform to secure the biggest and subtlest joy by way of the efforts of the intellect, the "slave of the pleasures," runs as follows:

These happy lovers will be intoxicated through love, as if they wanted to partake of it for the rest of their lives ... they forget themselves; their bodies extended in a lewd

manner, the one upon the other, and they embrace themselves in millions of sophisticated positions, they intertwine, unite.³³

Reason or intellect is the slave of joy, of love consisting in corporeal acts, in the context of an intellectual framework invoking a whole range of ancient mythological topics and contemporary literary artifices.

17th and 18th-Century Women Philosophers on Love

Because of the increasing interest in the discovering and making accessible the works of women philosophers of the Early-Modern period, it is an urgent task to assess their roles in every area of philosophical research. Since emotionality has traditionally been associated with feminine character, it is particularly important to involve in our treatment the women philosophers' opinions about love. Elisabeth of Bohemia and Queen Christina were the noble ladies instigating Descartes to compose his *Passions of the Soul*, and they were also the primary *human* objects of devotion for him. However, two English women philosophers of the *fin de siècle*, Mary Astell and Damaris Masham, contributed more substantially to the developments of ideas about love in the period.

Mary Astell

Mary Astell is one of the first women who demanded equal right for women to express their ideas. Her exchange of letters with John Norris was accepted by other women philosophers at least as an implicit manifesto of the rights of women to education, stated as follows:

Though some morose Gentlemen wou'd remit me to the Distaff or the Kitchin, or at least to the Glass and the Needle, the proper Employments as they fancy of a Woman's Life; yet expecting better things from the more Equitable and Ingenuous Mr. Norris, who is not so Narrow-soul'd as to confine Learning to his own Sex, or to envy it in ours.³⁴

The shared conviction about the equal right to access to reason in no way implies the sameness of the reasoning itself: Platonic philosophy connected Astell and Norris, whereas the philosophical friendship between Masham and Locke was based on their shared strong anti-Platonic conviction.

The main topic in the exchange of Astell and Norris is developing a traditional Christian Platonic theological philosophy in the context of the new empiricist-mechanical philosophy. Their shared conviction implies the fundamental premise of reason's divine origin without the claim that religion is exhausted by rational considerations:

There are *Mysteries* in the Love of *GOD* as well as in other parts of religion which to the Minds of Men, armed as they are with sensible Prejudices will appear very difficult.

(57)

God and the love of God are the worthiest subjects of reflection for any rational creature sharing the traditional view that perfection is the most essential quality. Norris writes in the preface to the reader:

Love is not only the shortest and most compendious Way to Perfection, but the greatest Height and Pitch of it. The more we have of Love, the nearer Advances we make to GOD who is Love it self.

(56)

He then continues with the traditional theme of the “essential and substantial Love” leading to the union with God:

Love only elevates us up thither, and is able to unite us to God. 'Tis this that gives us the strictest Union with him in this life.

(57)

Having love as divine passion, no virtues can be missing any longer, and no imperfection can remain in any of our virtues. These are traditional ideas shared by both Astell and Norris, who thus interpret the love command as having the aim of directing the inner dynamism of the believer's love fully toward God. The problematic side of the *fullness* of this love appears where Norris takes over Malebranche's occasionalist reading of the love command: since God is the only real, i.e., efficacious, cause, He must be the *only* legitimate object of our love as well. This is the point where Masham's critique sets out but even Astell has some reservations. In her first letter she convinces Norris to modify his original view that God is the only cause of our *pleasures*—leaving open the question of the origin of pain. His modified view is that God causes our pains because He *intends our education*, and thus He deserves our full love despite those pains.

Astell's later letters virtually prefigure the objections against the Malebranchean side of Norris' Platonism made by Masham.

Damaris Masham

Damaris Masham (1658–1708) published her *A Discourse Concerning the Love of God* anonymously in 1696, contributing at least indirectly to the Astell–Norris exchange. Daughter of the Neoplatonic philosopher Ralph Cudworth and intimate friend of John Locke, she was moved to write the *Discourse* through Norris' two books mentioned above, which included his Malebranchean tenets.

Her argument concerning love has a philosophical and a biblical-theological layer. The key issues are the love of God and the love of creatures. Her reasoning is generally pragmatic: she abstains from subtleties where she believes one can simply look at the problem and resolve it without involving speculative theories. In this spirit, she “corrects” Norris' exegesis of the love command in Matthew 22, 37: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” Norris' interpretation relies on a *logical* consequence of using the term “all.” Loving someone with *all* our heart leaves no more place for loving others. Thus the passage must be interpreted as commanding to love God as the *only* proper and legitimate object of our love.

Masham's objection to this view points out that the Gospel's injunction is a repetition of Moses' words in *Deuteronomy* 6, 5, declaring the essence of his laws. The addressees of Moses were “rude and illiterate people,”³⁵ and it seems unlikely that a lawgiver formulates the essence of his laws in a way that only a minority of the subjects comprehend it. As a further step she contrasts the logic of the philosopher with that of everyday language. Instead of “Mr. N[orris]'s Logical, and Grammatical, though otherwise Inconceivable Sense” (41) she prefers the sense following from the undeniable fact

that, in every Language, nothing is more ordinary than to say we love a Person intirely, or with all our Hearts, when we love them very much; And yet better may this be said if we love them above all others.

(Masham 2004: 39)

Scripture does accommodate it self to the fashion, and figurative ways of speaking usual amongst Men.

(Masham 2004: 38)

She then introduces a third kind of logic, the logic of passions:

[t]he Passions where they are strong, argue by a Logick of their own, not that of Reason, which they often and significantly enough, invert to serve their own Purpose.

(Masham 2004: 28)

Religion can even strengthen the idiosyncrasies of the passions. Religious passions can

dress out an intire System, intelligible only by sentiment, not to Reason; of which, perhaps some of the Mystical Divines are an Example.

(*Ibid.*)

Thus, learned men must keep in mind that the religious texts obey the logic of strong religious passions, not that of pure philosophical logic.

However, Masham also applies pure *philosophical* arguments against the concept of an *exclusive* love of God. This argumentation starts by interpreting the entire love command:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

The love of God must undoubtedly differ from the love of the neighbor. Norris and Masham agree on the absurdity of affirming that the love of God excludes *in an unqualified sense* the love of creatures. Their difference concerns their ways of interpreting this shared conviction. Norris distinguishes traditionally *love of desire* from *love of benevolence*. Love of desire is only adequate in relation to God; love of benevolence is the form of love allowed toward the creatures. Masham departs from this tradition maintaining that *all acts of love* involve both desire and benevolence. To determine the true relation between love of God and love of the creatures it is indispensable to distinguish the act of love from what merely accompanies it. First, she defines love by applying an introspective method, taking the form of “When I say that I love X, I find that ...”:

When I say that I love my Child, or my Friend, I find that my Meaning is, that they are things I am *delighted* in; Their Being is a *Pleasure* to me.

When I say that I love God above all, I find I would express that he is my chiefest Good, and I *delight* in him above all things.

Again, when I say that I love my self, I likewise mean by it that my Being is dear, and *pleasing* to me.

(Masham 2004: 18—*italics added*)

This experimentation leads her to the definition:

Love [is] only a Name given to that Disposition, or Act of the Mind, we find in our selves toward any thing we are pleas'd with.

(*Ibid.*)

This idea of love owes much to Locke. For him, things “are good or evil only in reference to pleasure and pain,” and he calls *good* that

which is *apt to cause or increase pleasure, or diminish pain in us, or else to procure or preserve us the possession of any other good or absence of any evil.*³⁶

He then describes love as follows:

anyone reflecting upon the thought he has of the delight which any present or absent thing is apt to produce in him has the *idea* we call *love*.

(Locke 1997: 295)

Further:

[O]ur *ideas* of *love* and *hatred* are but the dispositions of the mind in respect of pleasure and pain in general, however caused in us.

(*Ibid.*)

Thus, Masham opts for Christian hedonism as opposed to the speculative asceticism of Norris. She explains the “delight” found in God as follows:

We love God for those Excellencies of his Nature, wherein he infinitely surpasses all that is good, or desirable in the Creature.

(Masham 2004: 22)

Love is a simple act of the mind always accompanied by *both* desire *and* benevolence. Therefore, love of God and love of creatures cannot be distinguished *via* an exclusive relation to the desires of unification or benevolence. She accepts the tradition that love of God is a distinctive kind of love, while insisting on the idea that love of God is accompanied by *both* desire *and* benevolence:

For the Perfection and Superlativeness of his Nature, makes him the Object of our Love, Desire and Benevolence, in a quite different way from Created Beings.

It is the incommensurability between the nature of God and our own finite nature that makes the difference between the two kinds of love the concomitant acts of the mind being the same. She suggests the difference between the love of creatures and the love of God is based on the opposition between Epicurean-hedonistic views and Stoic natural right theories. Creatures are loved because we are pleased with their *presence*—independently of their inner merits—whereas God must be loved because of the natural attraction of His supreme perfection.

Foolish Men ... love ardently oftentimes, without considering whether the Object of their Love be worthy of it. But *to love with the Mind and the Soul*, as well as the Heart,

is not to love so; but to love with the Understanding, Rationally, as well as Passionately. And we cannot love God *with our Souls and with our Mind*, that is, ... with a reasonable Love, without loving him above all his Creatures; Because he is infinitely more lovely.

(Masham 2004: 44)

Thus, the Christian-hedonistic world-view of Damaris Masham (with a remnant of perfectionism) is far from a severe, Christianized Stoic perfectionist world-view such as we find in Norris or Malebranche.

Emilie Du Châtelet

Emilie Du Châtelet (1706–1749) wrote the short treatise *On Happiness* to address not only happiness, but also love. Her view on love can be summarized in the characterization of her relationship with Voltaire:

I was happy for ten years because of the love of the man who had completely seduced my soul; and these ten years I spent tête-à-tête with him without a single moment of distaste or hint of melancholy.³⁷

This self-referential way of presenting her ideas is peculiar to her: she *generalizes* her knowledge gained by *self-inspection*.

As for her concept of love, we can point out the obvious signs of the diminishing influence of the Platonic model of love: she proves to be an heir of Epicurus and Lucretius—but also Voltaire, for that matter. She considers love to be the most vivid and lively passion, unrivalled in its capability to render us happy. She maintains that every age has *its own* prevailing passions leading to happiness, if followed without excesses. The main passions she believes fit for the old age are as divergent as gambling and the love of study—the latter, however, is no longer meant to lead us to a Platonic higher-order world. It aims at the acquisition of knowledge of those subjects that issue either in discoveries, developments *useful for society* or in a moral theory praising precisely *usefulness for society* as the *main ethical value*. Her passages on love contain mostly pieces of psychological advice to women (of the same rank) regarding how to nourish the fire of love in their partners or how to behave when this fire threatens to be extinguished.

Mary Wollstonecraft

Almost a hundred years after the writing of the letters between Astell and Norris, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) published her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). As far as love is concerned, she is close to the Platonism of Astell and the perfectionism shared by Astell, Norris and Masham. As for the practical aspects of love in the life of a woman, she is an adamant enemy of Rousseau's ideas in his *Emile*.

Although she wrote in the fever of French Revolution, her concept of nature is much more strongly linked to a traditional theological concept of God than to the concept of nature in most of the philosophers of Enlightenment. She considers a natural law that “the female in point of strength is, in general, inferior to the male” (72). This has a fatal consequence:

not content with this natural pre-eminence, men endeavour to sink us still lower, merely to render us alluring objects for a moment.

This is the point where the question of love is given preeminence. Being an alluring object for a moment means being the object of love *qua* sensual object of desire, of men's false adoration that intoxicates women to be content with this type of love without obtaining "a durable interest in their hearts."³⁸

The basis of this line of thought is not the concept of the dignity of woman in her person but the government of the world by God. True human dignity consists in adequately using our rational faculty instead of relying on the imagination or the senses. Those who are objects of love based on the latter faculties become quickly viewed with contempt (see p. 73) or even as brute-like animals, since "man's pre-eminence over the brute creation consist" clearly "in Reason," and virtue is whose "acquirement exalts one being above another." The "perfection of our nature and capability of happiness" are equivalent, and

must be estimated by the degree of reason, virtue, and knowledge, that distinguish the individual, and direct the laws which bind society.

(76)

Her conviction could hardly be farther from the Mandeville-type views echoed or presupposed tacitly in the love-treatises of his own,³⁹ of Voltaire, Maupertuis⁴⁰ and La Mettrie. She believes "the gracious fountain of life" leads us

from the contemptuous brutish sensual love of ourselves to the sublime emotions which the discovery of his [God's] wisdom and goodness excites ... to improve our nature, ... and render us capable of enjoying a more godlike portion of happiness ... I build my belief on the perfection of God.

(Wollstonecraft 2008: 79)

Her foundational belief is in the perfection of God working behind nature as the fountain of life. He lets human beings—both men and women—seek their true dignity and happiness in the achievements of their rational faculties instead of their senses and imagination. This, however, does not hinder her from recognizing women in traditional gender roles, such as married mothers suckling their babies and controlling the education of their children.

Conclusion

Our aim in this chapter was to trace three major strands of the philosophy of love in the 17th and 18th centuries. The reader can hardly have doubts concerning the unique significance of this period with respect to love. In its first part, the partisans of the theological interpretations retraced the traditional Christian conception of the loving God. At the same time, the philosophers of the mechanical science developed a novel this-worldly understanding of love that had an ambiguous relationship to the theology of their age. The 18th century saw the dominance of the this-worldly perspective with much more concern with the descriptive social aspects of the amorous nature of men and women than the normative, ethical or theological aspects. A distinctive contribution of women philosophers of the age consisted of their achievement of a fine equilibrium between the two aspects both in their work and life.

Notes

- 1 In the period of working on this chapter, my research was supported by the Hungarian National Research, Development, and Innovation Office grant K 120375.
- 2 *Traité de l'amour*, in: de Sales 1894: 24.
- 3 Fénelon 2006: 218.
- 4 Schmal 2007: 121.
- 5 "He [Malebranche] is indeed the great *Galileo* of the Intellectual World." Norris 1701 (1974): 4.
- 6 Malebranche 1997: 267, ch. 1, §3.
- 7 Malebranche 1992: 1050.
- 8 *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, in: Malebranche 1992: 1052; my translations.
- 9 Malebranche 1992: 1051.
- 10 Malebranche 1992: 1055.
- 11 Malebranche 1992: 1055, f.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Malebranche 1992: 1056.
- 14 Malebranche 1992: 1057.
- 15 Malebranche 1992: 1058.
- 16 Charron 1707: 178, Book I, Ch. 19.
- 17 *Traicte de l'essence et guerison de l'amour ou de la melancholie erotique*.
- 18 Ferrand 1990: 238.
- 19 §79, Descartes 1985: 356.
- 20 §83, Descartes 1985: 357.
- 21 Descartes 1991: 321.
- 22 *Ethics* 3, Aff. Def. 6, Spinoza 1985: 533.
- 23 *Ethics* 5, Prop. 32 Coroll., Spinoza 1985: 611.
- 24 Its definition itself is based on its opposition to joy: "If Joy, then, consists in the passage to a greater perfection, blessedness must surely consist in the fact that the Mind is endowed with perfection itself" (*Ethics*, Bk 5, Prop. 33 Schol., Spinoza 1985: 611).
- 25 As the pendant of Descartes' *générosité* built on the freedom of the *will*. See the Preface to *Ethics*, Bk 3., Spinoza 1985: 597.
- 26 *Ethics*, Bk 5, Prop. 35, Cor., Schol., Spinoza 1985: 612.
- 27 I will translate it "generosity"—fully aware of the narrowness of the contemporary meaning of this term.
- 28 *Ethics* 3, Prop. 59, Scholium, Spinoza 1985: 529.
- 29 Article "Amour: Friendship" in Voltaire 1971: 29.
- 30 Cf. Books 8 and 9 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*, §45 f.
- 31 La Mettrie 2002: 28. My translations.
- 32 La Mettrie 1783: 47–48.
- 33 La Mettrie 2002: 13.
- 34 Letter I in Astell and Norris 2005: 69.
- 35 Masham 2004: 40.
- 36 Locke 1997: 294, Bk. 2, Ch. 20, § 2.
- 37 Du Châtelet: 362.
- 38 Wollstonecraft 1999: 72.
- 39 His *A Modest Defence of Publick Stews* appeared anonymously in 1724.
- 40 His *Venus physique* appeared in 1745 (*Venus physique ed 1745.*, 2012).

References

- Aristotle (2003) *The Nicomachean ethics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Astell, M. and Norris, J. (2004) *Letters concerning the love of God*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
- Boros, G., Dijn, H. de, Moors, M. (Eds.) (2007) *The concept of love in 17th and 18th century philosophy*. Leuven and Budapest: Leuven University Press; Eötvös University Press.
- Charron, P. (2015) *Of wisdom*. Charleston, SC: BiblioLife.
- De Sales, F. (1894) *Oeuvres complètes de saint François de Sales*. Annecy: Niérat.
- Descartes, R. (1984) *The philosophical writings of Descartes*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Du Châtelet, E. (2009) *Selected philosophical and scientific writings*. Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Fénelon, F. S. de (2006) *Selected writings*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Ferrand, J. (1990) *A treatise on lovesickness*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Kant, I. (1996) *The metaphysics of morals*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- La Mettrie, J. O. de (1783) *L'école de la volupté*. Genève.
- La Mettrie, J. O. de (2002) *L'Art de jouir*. Paris: Éditions de Boucher.
- Locke, J. (1997) *An essay concerning human understanding*. London and New York: Penguin Books.
- Malebranche, N. (1979) *Œuvres*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Malebranche, N. (1997) *The search after truth; Elucidations of the search after truth*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mandeville, B. (1724) *A modest defence of publick stews*. London.
- Masham, D. (2004) *A discourse concerning the love of God*. Bristol, UK: Thoemmes Continuum.
- Maupertuis, B. (1745) *Venus physique*. Paris: Hachette Livre-Bnf (2012).
- Norris, J. (1974) *An essay towards the theory of the ideal or intelligible world*. Hildesheim: Olms.
- Schmal, D. (2007) "The problem of conscience and order in the amour-pur debate" in Boros, G., Dijn, H. de, Moors, M. (Eds.) *The concept of love in 17th and 18th century philosophy*. Leuven and Budapest: Leuven University Press; Eötvös University Press, 113–123.
- Spinoza, B. de (1985) *The collected works of Spinoza*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Voltaire (1971) *Philosophical dictionary*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Wollstonecraft, M. (2008) *A vindication of the rights of men; A vindication of the rights of woman; An historical and moral view of the French Revolution*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

LOVE IN 19TH-CENTURY WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

Michael Strawser

Introduction

Several of the major figures of 19th-century Continental European philosophy take as their core guiding project to narrate the development, and ultimate ascendancy, of the human spirit. Although these philosophers have not often been read as giving love a starring role in their narratives, readers of the philosophers Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) will find substantive and rich ideas about how the activity of loving may contribute to the realization of the full human potential. Therefore, exposing these philosophers' major writings on love will be the focus of this chapter. Given the close relations between Hegel and Kierkegaard, the views of these two thinkers will be examined first. Thereafter, given the close relations between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, their philosophies of love will be presented.

Within 19th-century Anglo-American philosophy there is little sustained work on the philosophy of love. Although the British philosophers Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) develop a utilitarian ethical theory intended to promote acts that reduce suffering and reflect the “golden rule of Jesus ... to love your neighbor as yourself” (Mill 2002: 17), their writings are not directly devoted to analyzing the concept of love and thus will not be covered in this chapter. The American philosophers Josiah Royce¹ (1855–1916) and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) are also worthy of mention, especially the latter's essay “Evolutionary Love” (1892), which argues “in favor of the agapastic theory of evolution” holding that “progress comes from every individual merging his individuality in sympathy with his neighbors” (Peirce 2010: 189), but due to space limitations they will not be considered here. Of all of the 19th-century Western philosophers, it is Kierkegaard whose entire authorship is most prominently centered on love. Before Kierkegaard, however, there was Hegel.

Hegel: Love Unifies

In this section we shall see how Hegel, especially in his earlier writings, develops a concept of love focused on its expression in marriage and in the family, and that its function is to serve the ascendancy of spirit. In his later writings, this concept of love becomes less important, and the state becomes more important—however, there are certain affinities between Hegel's early

treatment of love and Kierkegaard's view (as well as differences between Hegel's later treatment and Kierkegaard's) that make it informative to understand Hegel's view first.

Although love plays a role in the philosophy of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775–1854),² it is doubtlessly Hegel who is the most influential of the German idealists, and the one who provides the greatest resources for the philosophy of love. Like Plato, Hegel expresses a philosophy that charts the ascendance of spirit, although the phenomenon of love is not commonly seen as dominant in this movement for Hegel, as it plays a relatively minor or at best implicit role in his greatest work, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Here Hegel explains how the dialectic of spirit, which is grounded in desire, moves from its objective to subjective to absolute manifestation, a culmination which is marked by perfect rational understanding. Because of this movement from desire to absolute reason, it is possible to link the grand philosophies of Plato and Hegel and speak of a “Platonic–Hegelian eros” (Hughes 2014: 38), a view Kierkegaard will respond to with a heightened emphasis on subjectivity in which the centrality of love will be made much more explicit.

As Mark C. Taylor writes, “the significance of love for Hegel's philosophy is less evident and is less often recognized” than other elements (Taylor 1977: 96). Nevertheless, the image of Hegel as a cold, loveless philosopher of the absolute is far from accurate. Instead, love is an important technical concept in Hegel's philosophy, Robert Williams explains, “because it is the origin of [his] concepts of recognition and spirit, and ultimately the system itself” (Williams 1997: 208). Love makes possible “the unity of self and other, of self and the world, and of self with an infinite principle” (Ormiston 2004: 27), serving as the “continuous foundation” (Ormiston 2004: 5) of the “whole movement” of spirit Hegel's philosophy seeks to trace (Ormiston 2004: 37). Particularly in his *Early Theological Writings*, which include a “Fragment on Love,” but also in the *Philosophy of Right* (1820), we find that the phenomenon of love has great importance for the development of both the self and society. Working within a Christian context and influenced by the poetry of Friedrich Hölderlin, Hegel develops a view of love as a unifying force that enables a person to reconcile contradictions, overcome alienation, and join positively with others.

In the *Early Theological Writings*, Hegel holds that Christianity is the religion of “absolute reconciliation,” and as Taylor explains, this “extraordinary revolution in Hegel's thought grows out of his discovery of the importance of the phenomenon of love” (Taylor 1977: 97). In contrast to Judaism³ and Kantian morality, when love forms the center of human experience as it does in Christianity, then the focus is not on obedience to the law, but rather attending freely to the beloved. Through love, which Hegel understands as fundamentally social, self-alienation is overcome, and inclination and obligation are thus reconciled. According to Jean Hyppolite, “love is the miracle through which two become one without, however, completely suppressing the duality. Love goes beyond the categories of objectivity and makes the essence of life actually real by preserving difference within union” (Hyppolite 1974: 164). The love-relationship marks a unification that, as Taylor observes, “excludes all opposition, and neither restricts nor is restricted, it is not finite at all” (Taylor 1977: 102). In other words, love expresses our participation with the divine, a view Kierkegaard will also emphasize in *Works of Love*.

Although there is wide agreement that Hegel's mature philosophy represents a stark contrast to his early understanding of love, it is still arguable that “the structure of the love relation is homologous with what Hegel later calls ‘life’ and finally identifies as ‘spirit’ ” (Taylor 1977: 103). What Hegel explicitly emphasizes through his use of these terms is the value of the family and lived social experiences in a community that contribute to the mind's development. With regards to the significance of the family for understanding love, in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel writes: “The family, as the immediate substantiality of mind, is specifically characterized by love,

which is mind's feeling of its own unity" (Hegel 1967: 110). In other words, through the love brought about in the family relation the individual mind is transcended and the phenomenon of unity is experienced.

According to Hegel, there are three phases involved in the completion of the family, and the most important of these is marriage, which manifests "the immediate type of ethical relationship" through which two persons (i.e., a duality) move beyond a physical, "natural sexual union ... into a union on the level of the mind, into self-conscious love" (Hegel 1967: 111). Thus, for Hegel, the end goal of marriage "is a union of mutual love" (Hegel 1967: 111), and he further explains that "the ethical aspect of marriage consists in the parties' consciousness of this unity as their substantive aim, and so in their love, trust, and common sharing of their entire existence as individuals" (Hegel 1967: 112). Hegel continues:

As a result, the sensuous moment, the one proper to physical life, is put into its place as something only consequential and accidental, belonging to the external embodiment of the ethical bond, which indeed can subsist exclusively in reciprocal love and support.

(Hegel 1967: 113)

In contrast to Schopenhauer's view, for Hegel, "a marriage brings into being a new family ... [which] is based on love of an ethical type" (Hegel 1967: 116), and it is important to understand that "love, the ethical moment in marriage, is by its very nature a feeling for actual living individuals, not for an abstraction" (Hegel 1967: 122). Love, then, is a form of recognizing the other, although for Hegel this experience of love takes the form of immediate feeling rather than rational thought.

For Hegel love can thus be viewed as a transformative force that brings natural persons into a spiritual union of mind in which a higher consciousness is perceived. T.M. Knox notes: "Love is reason implicit and this spiritual union is thus union of mind with mind" (Hegel 1967: 351). "Love," for Hegel, "means in general a consciousness of my unity with another, so that I am no longer isolated for myself, but have my independence only in the unity of my self-consciousness with that of another" (Hegel 1973: 507; Williams 1997: 212).

While the unity brought about by love through marriage and the family is seen by Hegel as an important stage of development and, as Williams writes, "the structural core of ethical life" (Williams 1997: 13), this expression of love is nevertheless limited and does not achieve the kind of full social unity of rational individuals brought about through the institution of the state. Further, in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel provides a brief analysis of the commandment to love your neighbor, which can be seen as supporting the common Kierkegaardian criticism of Hegel as an abstract thinker unconcerned with the individual. The general point that Hegel makes in the section focused on "Reason as lawgiver" is that this and other commands, such as "honor thy father and mother," are empty expressions offering no real guidance for acting in particular situations (Stern 2013: 147–148). More specifically, Hegel initially conceptualizes love as "a relationship between two individuals, or as a relationship of feeling Active love—for love that does not act has no existence and is therefore hardly intended here" (Hegel 1977: 255). Thus, love is linked to the good as it aims to remove evil and actively benefit the other. In order to do this, Hegel writes, "I must love [the other] *intelligently*" (Hegel 1977: 255), but he then adds:

Intelligent, substantial beneficence is, however, in its richest and most important form the intelligent universal action of the state—an action compared with which the action

of a single individual, as an individual, is so insignificant that it is hardly worth talking about.

(Hegel 1977: 255)

Readers may rightly wonder how it is possible for a state to feel active love, but this goes unconsidered by Hegel. Instead, he moves further away from the commandment and conceiving love as a relationship between individuals, by suggesting that the only significant beneficent action for the single individual is helping someone in need (Hegel 1977: 255). The commandment to love your neighbor is ultimately seen to lack “universal content” and “does not express, as an absolute ethical law should, something that is valid in and for itself” (Hegel 1977: 256). In contrast, Kierkegaard provides a more probing and positive analysis of the commandment in *Works of Love*, but both thinkers nevertheless share a conception of love as an active deed involving an immediate state of consciousness not open to direct observation.

Kierkegaard: Love Edifies

Of all the 19th-century philosophers, it is the Danish writer Søren Kierkegaard who most forcefully shows how the activity of loving is required for the realization of the full human potential—a potential whose highest point is the expression of the divine spiritual potential that mysteriously originates in God’s love (Kierkegaard 1995: 10). Kierkegaard’s greatest text on love is *Works of Love* (1847), and in the Conclusion of this text he writes that “to love people is the only thing worth living for, and without this love you are not really living ... and to love people is the only true sign that you are a Christian” (Kierkegaard 1995: 375). For Kierkegaard, then, we are most like God when we love others, and *Works of Love* offers a profound investigation into the meaning of the moral task of loving one’s neighbor, which when properly understood involves a duty that frees one from selfishness (Kierkegaard 1995: 44) and despair (Kierkegaard 1995: 29, 40f.), establishes true equality among human beings (Kierkegaard 1995: 57–60), and calls us to find the actual people we see lovable no matter how they may change (Kierkegaard 1995: 159). We shall return to this text below, but let us now consider more broadly the rich resources for reflecting on love that Kierkegaard offers his readers.

According to Kierkegaard, “it is certain that love is the highest good” (Kierkegaard 1995: 452),⁴ and his vast authorship provides far-reaching support for this claim. Nevertheless, it is only recently that Kierkegaard’s philosophy of love has become a dominant theme in the secondary literature,⁵ which is understandable when one considers the highly diverse nature of Kierkegaard’s authorship complicated by the fact that many of his key works are published under pseudonyms. Nevertheless, Kierkegaard is “first and foremost a philosopher of love” (Strawser 2015: 187–188) who “writes book after book on the nature of love” (Singer 2009b: 38). From his early magisterial dissertation on *The Concept of Irony* (1841) to *Works of Love*—“the central work in Kierkegaard’s entire authorship” (Pattison 2009: ix)—to his late “The Unchangeableness of God” (1855), Kierkegaard is striving to find a “sound and healthy love” (Kierkegaard 2009: 329) that is actualized in existence.

Kierkegaard’s relationship to Hegel’s philosophy has been much debated, and while the relationship is now understood with more nuance than previously, there is still more work to be done on their relationship with regards to the philosophy of love. For all their differences, it may nevertheless be appropriate to view Kierkegaard as developing a phenomenology of spirit that more explicitly charts the movement of love from the inside—within the inwardness of subjectivity—through its various aesthetic, ethical, and religious manifestations. Given the great variety of Kierkegaard’s writings and the complication of pseudonyms, it is possible to isolate

specific passages and texts and only focus on aesthetic (romantic, erotic) love, or ethical (familial, marital) love, or the religious love of God and neighbor, and view these manifestations as sharply distinct kinds of love. Whether these manifestations are to be understood as presenting essentially different kinds of love or whether they can be understood as unified is undeniably a complex question, but it seems wrong-headed to read in Kierkegaard a rejection of love's passionate immediacy (as in, for example, *Don Giovanni*). Kierkegaard does not want to reject the different manifestations of natural human love, but instead offer a positive view in which all manifestations of love are valuable, and he then works to show how these loves can be perfected. Surely Kierkegaard emphasizes the importance of the Christian love of neighbor, but to view this as "[destroying] the framework which governs erotic love and friendship" (Cady 1982: 243) goes too far, and fortunately much of the recent attention given to Kierkegaard's philosophy of love has helped to correct this view. As George Pattison writes in his Forward to *Works of Love*:

Yet (for once!), Kierkegaard does not insist on an either/or. It is certainly not the case that we can only become practitioners of commanded love by rooting out or crushing the spontaneous human loves we all know from daily experience.

(Pattison 2009: xii)

Kierkegaard's authorship proper is said to begin with *Either/Or* (1842), a masterful two-volume pseudonymous work designed to edify readers and provoke to action. *Either/Or* is frequently read as a foundational work in existentialist philosophy devoted to the significance of individual choice. What has been less frequently observed, however, is that all six pseudonymous authors in this work (Victor Eremita, "A," Johannes the seducer, Cordelia, Judge William, and the Jutlandic Parson) are fundamentally marked as *lovers*, thereby implicitly asserting that to live a human life is to love, and presenting the question "how should I love?" This focus on the "how" is key in Kierkegaard's writings, which thus move us along the path of becoming perfect lovers, a path which, as long as we exist, is never completed.

Even though the young Kierkegaard is well known to have desired "to find a truth that is truth for me, to find the idea for which I am willing to live and die" (Kierkegaard 2000: 8), it becomes clear that the ultimate truth he exposes is not an idea, for it is love, which is essentially a work or a deed. Given that Kierkegaard was a master of irony who championed individual subjectivity against the Hegelian system, it should not be surprising that there is some irony in Kierkegaard's philosophy of love, even in the edifying writings written under Kierkegaard's own name. For love is not something to be solely written and philosophized about—if all one does is think about love, then one is not loving—it is to be enacted, to be lived. In the first of *Three Edifying Discourses* published on the same day as *Fear and Trembling* and *Repetition* (October 16, 1843), Kierkegaard opens emphatically by praising love:

What is it that makes a person great, admired by creation, well pleasing in the eyes of God? What is it that makes a person strong, stronger than the whole world; what is it that makes him weak, weaker than a child? ... What is it that is older than everything? It is love. What is it that outlives everything? It is love.... What is it that perseveres when everything falls away? It is love. What is it that comforts when all comfort fails? It is love. What is it that endures when everything is changed? It is love. What is it that remains when the imperfect is abolished? It is love.... What is it that is never changed even though everything is changed? It is love; and that alone is love, that which never becomes something else.

(Kierkegaard 1990: 55)

This passage appears in the discourse “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” a title that conveys a theme of great import in Kierkegaard’s philosophy of love, as it is the subject of two of the first three edifying discourses as well as a discourse in the later *Works of Love*. The central significance of these analyses lies in Kierkegaard’s expression of a phenomenology of love showing that love’s intentionality is such that it does not see the other’s faults or limitations, for it sees beyond or seeks to hide the other’s wrongdoings. As Kierkegaard writes, “When love lies in the heart, the eye has the power to love forth the good in the impure, but this eye sees not the impure but the pure, which it loves and loves forth by loving it” (Kierkegaard 1990: 61).

Various texts by Kierkegaard can be privileged in exposing his philosophy of love. For example, Mark C. Taylor finds *Stages on Life’s Way* to be most significant since it contains expressions of love relevant to the three stages of existence (aesthetic, ethical, and religious) developed by Kierkegaard (Taylor 1977: 105), and Sharon Krishek (2009) analyzes *Fear and Trembling* to explain the key relationship between faith and love. Additionally, *Either/Or* and the *Edifying Discourses* are of great significance for explaining Kierkegaard’s phenomenology of love and developing a more unified account, such as the letters in volume II of *Either/Or* (e.g., “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage”), which show the clear influence of a Hegelian dialectic and how the decisive will to love reveals one’s eternal validity.

Kierkegaard’s *Works of Love*, however, is of undoubtedly utmost importance, and contemporary Danish Kierkegaard scholars have even suggested a connection between this work and Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*.⁶ In *Works of Love* Kierkegaard presents a deep analysis of the commandment “you shall love your neighbor,” focusing on the key components of “the eternal shall” and the meaning of the neighbor. Kierkegaard uses different Danish words to refer to love of the neighbor [*Kjerlighed*] and erotic love [*Elskov*], where the latter “is defined by the object” and preferential, while “only love for the neighbor is defined by love [*Kjerlighed*]” (Kierkegaard 1995: 66). This distinction is hardly meant to abolish erotic love in its immediacy (Kierkegaard 1995: 61), but instead makes it eternally secure through revealing the eternal value of the person—what Kierkegaard refers to as “the common watermark” (Kierkegaard 1995: 89)—such that the lover’s love is not based on the unstable dissimilarities of the object, but rather rooted in the will to love itself. The “neighbor,” as Kierkegaard notes, is what philosophers call the “other” (Kierkegaard 1995: 89), and his analysis of the experience of loving the other thus involves the fullest expression of an intentionality marked by a “change of eternity” in which “everything has become new” (Kierkegaard 1995: 25) and the lover is secured against every change, despair, and freed in blessed independence (Kierkegaard 1995: 29f.).

Throughout Kierkegaard’s authorship readers are invited to look through the “eye of love” (Kierkegaard 1990: 63) in order to become edified or built up as lovers. In “Love Builds Up,” which opens the second series of discourses in *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard explains that “building up is exclusively characteristic of love” and “to edify means to presuppose love; to be loving means to presuppose love; only love builds up” (Kierkegaard 1995: 224). Lovers, we learn, are constituted by love, and their acts bring forth love; they “love up” [*elske op*] love (Kierkegaard 1990: 61, 1995: 217). Consequently, it is clear that the fundamental presupposition that characterizes Kierkegaard’s philosophy is love, “something that in its total richness is *essentially* inexhaustible ... *essentially* indescribable just because essentially it is totally present everywhere and *essentially* cannot be described” (Kierkegaard 1995: 21). Thus, while interpreting Kierkegaard’s philosophy of love is not without its difficulties, such as the problem of self-love and the relation between the love of God and the love of people in the world,⁷ it is nevertheless the case that the depth and scope of his reflections on love continue to offer us powerful resources for our personal relationships.

Schopenhauer: Love Hurts, but Loving Kindness Heals

When we consider love to be a truly positive force, as both Hegel and Kierkegaard do, we may well question in principle what the great German pessimist Arthur Schopenhauer has to contribute to our understanding of the philosophy of love. Schopenhauer is best known for his provocative reflections on sexual love, and his negative view of the instinctive will to love may ultimately provide us with good reasons for sharply distinguishing sex and love. As we shall see, however, within Schopenhauer's writings a more complex understanding of love can be found.

The most direct discussion of "love" by Schopenhauer is found in his chapter on "The Metaphysics of Sexual Love," which first appeared in the second volume of Schopenhauer's chief work *The World as Will and Presentation* (1844). Here Schopenhauer starts by marveling "that a matter that plays such an altogether significant part in human life has up to now been almost entirely disregarded by philosophers" (Schopenhauer 2011: 594). As the title of this chapter suggests, Schopenhauer focuses on sexual love, thus articulating a view that sees love as reducible to sex. He writes:

For love, however ethereal it may be in its bearing, is always rooted solely in the sex drive, indeed, is altogether only a case of more precisely determined, specialized, indeed in the strictest sense individualized sex drive.

(Schopenhauer 2011: 595)

Clearly, then, the emphasis is on sex, or what Schopenhauer also refers to as "passionate love." Ultimately, Schopenhauer views sexual love as an instinctive delusion brought about through the meretricious force of nature known as the will manipulating human beings to procreate in order to bring about the next generation. The delusion is that sexual love leads individuals into "marriages of love," which are "contracted in the interest of the species, not of individuals" (Schopenhauer 2011: 620). Consequently, "marriages contracted from love turn out, as a rule, unhappy, for through them care is taken for the coming generation at the expense of the present" (Schopenhauer 2011: 621). On the other hand, marriages of convenience, which involve what Irving Singer refers to as "companionate love" in his discussion of Schopenhauer (Singer 2009a: 70), at least allow for the possibility of happiness, since they are generally based on present concerns. Overall, however, Schopenhauer's "metaphysics of love ... stands in exact correlation of [his] metaphysics in general" (Schopenhauer 2011: 622), which is to say that lovers are ultimately being moved by a will to life that belongs to the essence of the species and not to them as individuals, and this instinctive will, which "holds the reins and creates illusions" (Schopenhauer 2011: 630), seeks to perpetuate the species and consequently all the pain and suffering of existence. Thus, if we wish to express our individual wills, we should deny the will to life and above all the instinct to love.

The criticisms Schopenhauer applies to the understanding of love found in Rousseau and Kant apply equally well to his own account; namely, it is "unsatisfying" and "without knowledge of the matter" (Schopenhauer 2011: 594). Reducing love to the sex drive is surely problematic, for we can have sex without love and love without sex, and ultimately, it is philosophically unsound to develop a conception of love that is "even compatible with the most extreme hatred for its object" (Schopenhauer 2011: 618). Alternatively, a more optimistic view of Schopenhauer's philosophy of love could begin by noting that while the focus of Schopenhauer's attention is given to sexual love, he nevertheless expresses distinctions that appear to represent different kinds of love. For example, he mentions "benevolence and works of human love"

(Schopenhauer 2011: 403), love of life (Schopenhauer 2011: 595), “friendship” (Schopenhauer 2011: 622), and “loving kindness” (Schopenhauer 2010: 228–232), although the relations among these various manifestations go unaddressed. For Schopenhauer, these other manifestations of love are of an origin different from sexual love, and perhaps the most important of these for a more comprehensive understanding of Schopenhauer’s contribution to the philosophy of love is “loving kindness,” which is rooted in compassion.

Schopenhauer’s ethics are more lovable than his metaphysics. In his essay “On the Basis of Morals” (1840) he provides a compelling view contrary to Kantian ethics that moral value is fundamentally determined by compassion, which does not take an imperative form and serves as the foundation of the two main virtues of justice and loving kindness (Schopenhauer 2010: 238). Schopenhauer can thus be said to present readers with an ethics of love, one that perhaps most significantly calls for compassion and loving kindness towards non-human animals, “which are cared for in other European systems of morals in such an unjustifiably bad way” (Schopenhauer 2010: 239). To his credit, of the philosophers being considered in this chapter, Schopenhauer is the only one whose philosophy of love explicitly includes non-human animals, as he holds that one could not be a good and loving person without expressing “compassion for animals” (Schopenhauer 2010: 242).

Nietzsche: Love Affirms

The Nietzschean corpus contains powerful, profound, puzzling, and sometimes contradictory expressions, and this is no less the case when he specifically addresses the concept of love. Although the attention to love is not nearly as pervasive in Nietzsche’s philosophy as it is in Kierkegaard’s, if we can see how “love” is connected to Nietzsche’s central philosophical metaphor of the “Dionysian,” then perhaps Nietzsche’s thinking could be more closely considered to express a philosophy of love. In contrast to the metaphysical pessimist Schopenhauer, whom Nietzsche called “my great teacher” (Nietzsche 1967: 19), and yet forcefully rebuked, insofar as Nietzsche’s philosophy represents the affirmation of life grounded in love, he may be justifiably read as a philosopher of love.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche’s most remarkable literary work, love appears only a few times, but these instances are important. First, when Zarathustra descends from the mountain and meets the saint, his initial utterance is “I love man,” to which the saint responds that he loves God rather than man. Zarathustra then says: “Did I speak of love? I bring men a gift” (Nietzsche 1982a: 123). While this playful forgetfulness with regards to love may serve as a fitting epigraph for Nietzsche’s ambiguous writing on love, it nevertheless raises the question of love at the beginning of Nietzsche’s most celebrated work. As Robert Pippin explains, this beginning, which is similar to *On the Genealogy of Morals*, indicates for Nietzsche the “priority of some sort of erotic striving, a matter of the heart” (Pippin 2010: 13). Such images of eros and the heart run throughout Nietzsche’s work, thus emphasizing the significant origin of philosophy in love, and that “philosophers should be understood as inexpert, clumsy lovers” (Pippin 2010: 13). Additionally, as Pippin shows, even Nietzsche’s gay science can be read as “a knowledge of erotics; not so much a knowledge of what love is as how to love and so live well” (Pippin 2010: 35).

The gift, of course, is “the overman: he is this lightning, he is this frenzy” (Nietzsche 1982a: 126), and Zarathustra goes on to express his love of those who help to prepare the path of the overman, while he also expresses his contempt for the loveless last man who presents himself as an obstacle (Nietzsche 1982a: 129). In a general sense, then, Zarathustra’s speeches could be seen as expressions of his love, which affirms the body and the earth, and offers humans the gift of the overman. Let us look at some of the highlights of these speeches that address love.

First, in “On Reading and Writing,” Zarathustra says: “True, we love life, not because we are used to living but because we are used to loving. There is always some madness in love. But there is also always some reason in madness” (Nietzsche 1982a: 153). Here it would not be unreasonable to question Nietzsche’s view of love and how to make sense of it in relation to madness, although we cannot explore this further here. Then, Zarathustra offers speeches “On the Friend” and “On the Love of the Neighbor,” and in the latter speech he claims to the crowd that “your love of the neighbor is your bad love of yourselves” (Nietzsche 1982a: 172). In opposition to love of the neighbor Zarathustra posits love of the self, love of the friend, and most importantly, love of the farthest. “Higher than love of the neighbor is love of the farthest and the future; higher yet than the love of human beings I esteem the love of things and ghosts” (Nietzsche 1982a: 173). The love of the friend, who is a co-creator with an overflowing heart, is a means to the farthest, for “in your friend you shall love the overman as your cause” (Nietzsche 1982a: 174). Thus, although fragmented, Nietzsche presents a view of the love of neighbor that contrasts starkly with Kierkegaard’s view.

Just as the goal of friendship is to prepare for the overman, the same is true when two join together in marriage. In the speech “On Child and Marriage” Zarathustra speaks of the meaning of love by first identifying it as a mistake—“many brief follies—that is what you call love. And your marriage concludes many brief follies, as a long stupidity” (Nietzsche 1982a: 183). He then posits a higher goal:

Over and beyond yourselves you shall love one day. Thus *learn* first to love. And for that you had to drain the bitter cup of your love. Bitterness lies in the cup of even the best love: thus it arouses longing for the overman.

(Nietzsche 1982a: 183)

Thus, for Nietzsche, love can be seen as the way toward the overman, the gift and metaphorical goal Zarathustra gives to humanity, and because of this it is justifiable to claim that love plays a central role in Nietzsche’s philosophy. But as these few passages show, Nietzsche does not directly explain his concept of love, although it clearly contains a negative element (e.g., bitterness). An additional example is found in the speech “On the Way of the Creator,” where there is a link between loving and despising. Here Zarathustra connects the way of the creator with the “the way of the lover”:

Lonely one, you are going the way of the lover: yourself you love, and therefore you despise yourself, as only lovers despise. The lover would create because he despises. What does he know of love who did not have to despise precisely what he loved!

(Nietzsche 1982a: 177)

While it is reasonable to make a connection, as Nietzsche does, between the creator and the lover, for the lover is a creator of value (i.e., the value of the beloved), the connection between loving and despising is not as reasonable, for we experience love as contrary to hatred and an affirmation of value, which is a point that Nietzsche will embrace in a later work. A further complication encountered by readers in this text is the fact that Zarathustra later counsels his followers to resist him and “be ashamed of him,” for he may have deceived them. Following this Zarathustra bids his followers “to lose [him] and find [themselves],” for only then will he return “with a different love” (Nietzsche 1982a: 190). What this different love involves remains undetermined.

So, we must learn to love, and higher than the love of human beings is the love of things and the love of the earth, for we are told to “remain faithful to the earth” and that “the overman is

the meaning of the earth” (Nietzsche 1982a: 125). Such love can be considered as related to the most famous Nietzschean expression concerning love, which is *amor fati* (the love of fate). Within this expression we can find a connection to Nietzsche’s central philosophical perspective to affirm life, although as Béatrice Han-Pile explains in an article that analyzes the paradoxes involved in *amor fati* in which she argues for an agapic interpretation of Nietzsche’s concept to resolve these paradoxes, this conception is hardly developed in any thoroughness as it appears rather cryptically only four times in his published works (Han-Pile 2009: 224). The original statement of this theme appears in the *Gay Science*:

I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that me my love henceforth! ... [S]ome day I wish to be only a yes-sayer.

(Nietzsche 1974: 223)

Hardly an elucidation, this and the few other appearances of *amor fati* are more suggestive than explanatory, which accounts for why it is difficult to interpret and prone to misinterpretation. For example, Irving Singer explains that this concept “consists in accepting everything as it is, in loving everything simply because it is what it happens to be” (Singer 2009a: 62), which he then claims “goes too far” (Singer 2009a: 96). Does Nietzsche “expect us to love the periodic table in chemistry or the laws of thermodynamics, or the explosions that are taking place in remote galaxies, or even in our own galaxy and on our sun?” Singer writes, “I see no hope of explaining love that way; the notion doesn’t make any sense to me” (Singer 2009a: 96). Alternatively, *amor fati*, which Nietzsche posits as the antithesis of Christian love, can be interpreted as the highest expression of the affirmation of life with all its hardship and suffering. But this would not require that we “deem good or beautiful every event and experience” (May 2015: 274), or, as we have seen above, that we not despise “particular experiences and nonetheless affirm them *qua* inextricable parts of the whole, to the fatedness of which I say Yes” (May 2015: 275). *Amor fati* is intended to cultivate an attitude of yes-saying that permeates all existence, and in *The Will to Power* this attitude is explicitly connected to the Dionysian: “The highest state a philosopher can attain: to stand in a Dionysian relationship to existence—my formula for this is *amor fati*” (Nietzsche 1968: §1041).

The theme “Dionysian” runs throughout Nietzsche’s writings from *The Birth of Tragedy*, where it is originally developed, to the late *Twilight of the Idols*. This latter work provides a vivid expression of the meaning of the word “Dionysus” as well as suggestive expressions for Nietzsche’s overall philosophy of love as an affirmative life-philosophy. “Dionysus” is the “venerable symbol par excellence” (Nietzsche 1982b: 561) that refers to the most profound instinct of life and the mysteries of sexuality in which procreation, birth, and future life are eternally affirmed. “The psychology of the orgiastic” experienced in the Dionysian mysteries expresses “an overflowing feeling of life and strength, where even pain still has the effect of a stimulus” (Nietzsche 1982b: 562). Thus, for Nietzsche, the Dionysian involves “saying Yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems” (Nietzsche 1982b: 562).

Nietzsche contrasts this view with Christianity, “with its *ressentiment* against life” (Nietzsche 1982b: 562) and pollution of sexuality, and there is also a sharp opposition to Schopenhauer’s attack on the instinct of life and the will to procreate. Further, whereas Schopenhauer offers a vulgar view of sexual love, Nietzsche’s appraisal moves beyond the vulgar to the spiritual, for a central question of his philosophy of love is this: “How can one spiritualize, beautify, deify a craving?” (Nietzsche 1982b: 487). Love, then, is not reducible to sexuality, for what Nietzsche calls love is “the spiritualization of sensuality” (Nietzsche 1982b: 488). This Dionysian philo-

sophy of love thus expresses a spiritual perspective which calls us to make “room in our hearts for every kind of understanding, comprehending, and *approving*. We do not easily negate; we make it a point of honor to be *affirmers*” (Nietzsche 1982b: 491).

Overall, it is not unfair to maintain that Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, expresses an ambiguous conception of love, and while it would be claiming too much to say that the conceptions found in Hegel and Kierkegaard lack all ambiguity, we are on much firmer ground in claiming that their conceptions involve more consistent positive accounts of love. However critical of an ideal view of love, Nietzsche nevertheless develops his own ideal goal for humanity in the Dionysian overman, which is evidently not without love. Perhaps a final quotation from Nietzsche’s *Untimely Meditations* could be useful in projecting a more unifying interpretation of the greatest 19th-century philosophers of love: “*It is only in love ... that is to say in the unconditional faith in right and perfection, that man is creative*” (Nietzsche 1997: 95). As we have seen, several major 19th-century philosophers clearly express a philosophy of love in their creative works, and Hegel, Nietzsche, and above all Kierkegaard create deep and engaging works affirming love as an ascendant spiritual activity of human beings.

Notes

- 1 Royce’s mature philosophy of love does not emerge until the 20th century in *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (1908) and his last major work *The Problem of Christianity* (1913).
- 2 Schelling’s discussion of the appearance of spirit as “the will of love” in *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809) is particularly significant (Schelling 2006: 42).
- 3 While the commandment to love your neighbor is fundamental in core Jewish texts, it is nevertheless the case that this commandment takes on heightened prominence in Christianity (see Matthew 22:36–40).
- 4 For a direct examination of this claim, see Strawser 2017.
- 5 The 21st century has seen many works devoted to analyzing various aspects of love in Kierkegaard: see Hall 2002, Furtak 2005, Evans 2006, Ferreira 2008, Krishek 2009, Lippitt 2013, Barrett 2013, Hughes 2014, and Strawser 2015.
- 6 See Grøn 1991 and Welz 2007.
- 7 See Strawser 2015, chapters 6 and 7.

References

- Barrett, L.C. (2013) *Eros and Self-Emptying: The Intersections of Augustine and Kierkegaard*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Cady, L.E. (1982) “Alternative Interpretations of Love in Kierkegaard and Royce,” *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 10.2: 238–263.
- Evans, C.S. (2006) *Kierkegaard’s Ethic of Love: Divine Commands and Moral Obligations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ferreira, M.J. (2008) *Love’s Grateful Striving: A Commentary on Kierkegaard’s Works of Love*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Furtak, R.A. (2005) *Wisdom in Love: Kierkegaard and the Ancient Quest for Emotional Integrity*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Grøn A. (1991) “Kærlighedens gerninger og anerkendelsens dialektik [*Works of Love* and the Dialectic of Recognition],” *Dansk Teologisk Tidsskrift* [Danish Theological Journal] 54: 260–270.
- Hall, A.L. (2002) *Kierkegaard and the Treachery of Love*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Han-Pile, B. (2009) “Nietzsche and Amor Fati,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 19.2: 224–261.
- Hegel, G.F.W. (1967) *Philosophy of Right* (trans. T.M. Knox), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hegel, G.W.F. (1971) *Early Theological Writings* (trans. T.M. Knox), Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Hegel, G.W.F. (1973) *Vorlesungen über Rechtsphilosophie* [Lectures on the Philosophy of Right] 1818–1831, Volume 3, K. Iltng (ed.), Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog.

- Hegel, G.W.F. (1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit* (trans. A.V. Miller), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hughes, C. (2014) *Kierkegaard and the Staging of Desire: Rhetoric and Performance in a Theology of Eros*, New York: Fordham University Press.
- Hyppolite, J. (1974) *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (trans. S. Cherniak and J. Heckman), Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1990) *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses, Kierkegaard's Writings V* (trans. H.V. Hong and E.H. Hong), Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1995) *Works of Love, Kierkegaard's Writings XVI* (trans. H.V. Hong and E.H. Hong), Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (2000) *The Essential Kierkegaard* (trans. H.V. Hong and E.H. Hong), Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (2009) *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates, Kierkegaard's Writings II* (trans. H.V. Hong and E.H. Hong), Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Krishek, S. (2009) *Kierkegaard on Faith and Love*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lippitt, J. (2013) *Kierkegaard and the Problem of Self-Love*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- May, S. (2015) "Nietzsche on Love and the Affirmation of Life," *Iyyun: The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly* 64: 264–276.
- Mill, J.S. (2002) *Utilitarianism*, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.
- Nietzsche, F. (1967) *On the Genealogy of Morals* (trans. W. Kaufmann), New York: Random House.
- Nietzsche, F. (1968) *The Will to Power* (trans. W. Kaufmann), New York: Vintage Books.
- Nietzsche, F. (1974) *The Gay Science* (trans. W. Kaufmann), New York: Vintage Books.
- Nietzsche, F. (1982a) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche* (trans. W. Kaufmann), New York: Penguin.
- Nietzsche, F. (1982b) *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Portable Nietzsche* (trans. W. Kaufmann), New York: Penguin.
- Nietzsche, F. (1997) *Untimely Meditations* (trans. R.J. Hollingdale), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ormiston, A. (2004) *Love and Politics: Re-interpreting Hegel*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Pattison, G. (2009) "Foreword," in S. Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*, New York: Harper Perennial.
- Peirce, C.S. (2010) "Evolutionary Love," in *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition, Volume 8: 1890–1892*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Pippin, R. (2010) *Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Schelling, F.W.J. (2006) *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (trans. J. Love and J. Schmidt), Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Schopenhauer, A. (2010) "On the Basis of Morals," in *The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics* (trans. D.E. Cartwright and E.E. Erdmann), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schopenhauer, A. (2011) *The World as Will and Presentation, Volume Two* (trans. D. Carus and R.E. Aquila), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Singer, I. (2009a) *Philosophy of Love: A Partial Summing-Up*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Singer, I. (2009b) *The Nature of Love, Vol. 3, The Modern World*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Stern, R. (2013) *The Routledge Guidebook to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, London: Routledge.
- Strawser, M. (2015) *Kierkegaard and the Philosophy of Love*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Strawser, M. (2017) "Love Is the Highest Good," in *Kierkegaard's God and the Good Life*, S. Minister, J.A. Simmons, and M. Strawser (eds.), Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Taylor, M.C. (1977) "Love and Forms of Spirit: Kierkegaard vs. Hegel," *Kierkegaardiana* 10: 95–116.
- Welz, C. (2007) "Present Within or Without Appearances? Kierkegaard's Phenomenology of the Invisible: Between Hegel and Levinas," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook*, H. Schulz, J. Stewart, and K. Verstrynge (eds.), Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Williams, R. (1997) *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

(THE VARIETIES OF) LOVE IN CONTEMPORARY ANGLOPHONE PHILOSOPHY

Benjamin Bagley

The example of love most discussed in contemporary Anglophone philosophy, originally introduced by Bernard Williams, is a man who saves his drowning wife over a stranger. Though clearly morally permissible under the circumstances, Williams argued that as far as the husband is concerned this should be beside the point. The alternative, he claimed, “provides the agent with one thought too many” (Williams 1981: 18). If the man were willing to save his wife only on that condition, his concern would lack something vital.

Williams meant this case to illustrate a general point, about the unconditional nature of the commitments—often but not always aptly described as matters of love—we necessarily have to whatever makes our lives worth living. (See e.g. Wolf 2015.) But it’s also been read more narrowly, as concerned with the justification of partiality in interpersonal relationships, and still more narrowly as concerned with the nature of love for individuals. “It’s odd,” Derek Parfit once remarked,

that Williams gives, as the thought that the person’s wife might hope he was having, that he is saving her because she is *his wife*. She might have hoped that he saved her because she was *Mary*, or *Jane*, or whatever.

(Murphy 2000: 140n36)

In other words, she might have hoped that he saved her out of love for *her in particular*, and not just because he saw her as a generic locus of moral obligation or spousal concern. But what could it be to love someone in this way?

This chapter aims to assess representative recent answers to this question and tentatively defend a pluralist one. To love someone is to value them as an individual, but there are multiple ways to do this. Each is responsive to a different kind of value, and involves its own forms of response. This is important for two reasons. First, theories of love that might seem like competitors are often better understood as complements, such that each aims to describe different modes of love. Second, while prototypical cases of love often involve multiple modes at once, conflating these can lead to serious confusions.

Love as a Topic in Normative Theory

Philosophers normally use “love” exclusively to refer to love for individuals as such. It’s worth asking what justifies this. Perhaps love is *essentially* for individuals as such—so anything less isn’t really *love*—but I don’t find this obvious. Maybe romantic love is socially constructed, as Carrie Jenkins (2017) claims, so that whether something can truly be called romantic love is a function of how well it plays the roles associated with the concept in the speaker’s society. Given what these roles seem to be in Jenkins’s and my society, it wouldn’t surprise me if seeing someone as a generic object of certain instrumental desires—say, as at once sexually desirable and someone it would suit one’s preferred self-image to be with—would qualify.

Nevertheless, there would still be good reason to single out love for the individual as an object of special interest. It involves a fundamentally different mode of concern for its object than that for generic objects of instrumental desire, and this is what makes love important to basic normative theory. Partly, this is because love’s focus on the individual gives it distinctive normative significance, which we need to understand to assess its relationship to other normative domains. If the man in Williams’s example saved his wife because he saw her as at once sexually desirable and someone it suited his preferred self-image to be with, the explanation of his act wouldn’t “silence comment” (Williams 1981: 18) in anything like the way it should if he saved her out of love for *her*. Furthermore, it’s famously puzzling how loving someone as an individual is compatible with loving them for reasons. Responses to this puzzle highlight basic issues about the nature and scope of rationality, which will be much of my concern below.

Irreplaceability, Constancy, and Reasons for Love

“For someone who is eager to help the sick or the poor,” Harry Frankfurt writes,

any sick or poor person will do. With regard to what we love, on the other hand, that sort of indifference to the identity of the object of concern is out of the question. Substituting some other object for the beloved is not an acceptable and perhaps not even an intelligible option. The significance to the lover of what he loves is not that of an exemplar; its importance to him is not generic, but ineluctably particular.

(Frankfurt 1999: 166)

Frankfurt thinks this element of *irreplaceability* means that love neither admits of nor requires reason. For reasons necessarily consist in “general and hence repeatable” (169) properties, Frankfurt argues, and any repeatable properties that could give him reason to love his children could give him reason equivalently to love someone else.

One response to this concern is to argue it’s overblown. Perhaps the properties for which we love people are rare enough to make them irreplaceable in practice, and that’s all that matters. It’s not easy to find someone who is passionate about board games, has the brand of wit you most enjoy in people, *and* looks kind of like your celebrity crush; the possibility of finding another might seem moot. Among other problems, this reply conflicts with love’s *constancy*. Love should persist through an indefinite range of changes in the beloved’s personality, appearance, and other properties. But if reasons for love are general enough to imply this, how can they be specific enough to single an individual out?

Frankfurt’s arationalism avoids this problem, but has consequences many readers find incredible. Perhaps the clearest counterexample comes from Troy Jollimore, who imagines a man who feels Frankfortian love—an involuntary, non-instrumental, self-affirming concern—for a “1959

Oklahoma Today Mickey Mantle baseball card” (Jollimore 2011: 22). Realistically, the man fetishizes the card: he loves because of a value he erroneously attributes to it. Perhaps he’s obsessed with it because it’s so rare; perhaps he worships Mantle, and the card is the centerpiece of his shrine. Or perhaps he doesn’t love it at all. If he really sees *nothing* about the card as giving him reason to care about it, his attitude seems less like love than a bizarrely internalized compulsive tic, akin to Warren Quinn’s (1993) case of a man with a primitive urge to turn on every radio he sees.

This suggests that *pace* Frankfurt, love admits of and requires reason. Furthermore, it suggests that love is broadly speaking a mode of *valuing*: it consists in experiencing certain properties as giving you reason to respond to the beloved in certain ways.¹ Thus the lesson of the baseball-card-compulsive is that attitudes that don’t involve valuing aren’t intelligible as love, and the lesson of the baseball-card-fetishist is that if the properties you treat as giving you reason to respond lovingly actually don’t—that is, they aren’t actually *lovable* to you in that way—then you love irrationally.

Quality Views and Wrong Kinds of Reasons

Obviously, this leaves us with the problems of irreplaceability and constancy. It also leaves us with another problem, which is less discussed but which I suspect more fundamental: generically admirable, attractive, or desirable qualities don’t seem to constitute the right kinds of reasons for love.

Thomas Hurka puts the problem nicely. “It’s actually puzzling,” he writes,

why admirable qualities should be thought a reason for all the elements in love. That someone is virtuous or intelligent is certainly a reason to admire her, but why is it a non-instrumental reason to want her company or to want her to be happy?

(Hurka 2017: 170)

That is, Hurka accepts a *quality view*, on which lovable properties include personal qualities that distinguish the beloved from others. For Hurka, these can be anything that makes someone admirable, attractive, or desirable. “Kindness, honesty, or, more generally, virtue” (165), “intelligence, wit, or aesthetic sensitivity” (165), or “the color of your beloved’s hair or her particular scent” (166) are all possibilities. Hurka recognizes, however, that love isn’t admiration or attraction, and that reasons of love aren’t instrumental. You can have instrumental reason to want an intelligent person’s company, or want a virtuous person to be happy because you think they deserve it. But the ways we normally have reason to value both properties seem unrelated to the ways we have reason to value beloveds.

Many quality theorists offer sophisticated accounts of irreplaceability and constancy, but equally puzzling lists of lovable qualities. Thus, Jollimore claims the lovable properties largely consist in “attractive qualities such as charm, intelligence, humor, physical beauty, moral virtue, and so on—the sort of universalizable qualities in terms of which a person’s attractiveness or desirability is typically assessed” (Jollimore 2011: 25–26). Sara Protasi (2014: 22) offers a similar list, albeit with the proviso that the properties are only lovable in the specific forms in which they’re experienced in a particular relationship or from a particular perspective. Simon Keller’s main examples are “graceful dancing, sensible conversation, and strength of will,” along with “being a good listener, being sensitive, being generous,” and “[knowing] exactly how to treat [one’s lover] when he is in a bad mood” (Keller 2000: 165–166). All these qualities can be admirable, attractive, or instrumentally desirable, but it’s obscure what—above and beyond

this—makes them *lovable*. (Knowing exactly how to treat you when you're in a bad mood is indeed valuable in a beloved, but it is likewise valuable in a valet.)

The problem is particularly acute with respect to other elements of love, like the special interest we take in a beloved's evaluative perspective. Thus, Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett argue that a "process of mutual drawing is partly constitutive of [companion] friendships" (Cocking and Kennett 1998: 506)—wherein friends characteristically shape each other's evaluative perspectives in light of their mutual interest and receptivity—and Jollimore proposes that love aims at "*identification with the beloved*," as an "attempt to make contact with the beloved's inner life, to unite her perspective on the world with one's own" (Jollimore 2011: 26). But a beloved's good looks don't in themselves seem to give me any reason to "get infected by [their] enthusiasm for ballet" (Cocking and Kennett 1998: 504). Their aesthetic sensitivity might, but it's obscure how it can give me the right kind of reason—if I love the person, their enthusiasm is infectious because it's *theirs*, not just because it's objectively well founded. Similarly, why should someone's intelligence be a reason to unite their perspective on the world with one's own, other than in the sense of pooling information?

Hurka admits he lacks a solution to the problem, but seems to be optimistic that there is one. I'm not—at least not for the generically admirable, attractive, or desirable qualities he thinks are lovable. This is because treating these qualities as lovable in themselves strikes me as not only mysterious but objectionable. There's something fetishistic about noninstrumentally wanting someone to be happy just because they're charming or intelligent, as though that somehow made them matter more; treating someone's good looks as reason to get infected by their enthusiasm for ballet bespeaks a lack of integrity, since it would mean allowing one's interests to shift in response to transparently irrelevant factors. In themselves, then, generically admirable, attractive, or desirable qualities are just that. They give the wrong kind of reason for love. Some might warrant love indirectly or under special circumstances, but before considering this possibility, let's consider views that look elsewhere.

Agapic Love

J. David Velleman (1999, 2008) and Kieran Setiya (2014) defend broadly agapic views of love, on which people are lovable in virtue of their humanity.² For Velleman, this means humanity in the Kantian sense: rational nature or moral personhood. For Setiya, it means literally being human. For both, humanity constitutes *noninsistent* reason for love: it makes it rationally permissible, but not required, to love anyone.

This may seem radically to reject irreplaceability, but Velleman's analysis is trenchant. Irreplaceability consists in how beloveds are valued, he proposes, not how they are selected. To value you as replaceable is to value you relative to my prior ends, for which your contingent properties make you suitable; to value you as irreplaceable is to value you as an end in yourself. Kant's theory of rational nature lets us understand this distinction. Since rational nature is the source of value in general, heightened emotional receptivity to it in someone entails heightened emotional receptivity to whatever is independently normatively significant about them. This general suspension of emotional defenses, Velleman argues, is what love consists in.

On Velleman's view, then, beloveds are valued as special in the sense people are told they're special in preschool. It is a profound truth that everyone is special in this sense, but notoriously cold comfort to anyone worried about being special to certain people. One might therefore wonder whether the selective love we worry about in these cases is the same as that Velleman describes.

It certainly wouldn't be if humanity were insistent reason for love, since then loving selectively would be irrational. The problem, as Niko Kolodny argues, is that some reasons for love

are insistent. Kolodny imagines what it would be like to stop loving your child or closest friend, in the absence of any relevant changes in either of you: nobody has done anything bad, undergone a shift in character, or forgotten the relationship. “You just wake up one day,” he writes, “to find that [the person] means nothing to you” (Kolodny 2003: 168). Presumably, this would be irrational:

an inappropriate emotional response, analogous to the failure to fear what is patently fearsome. If this happened to you, you would find it alarming, to say the least. Even from the inside, it would seem that something had gone wrong, that your emotional reactions were seriously dysfunctional.

(168)

Loving Attachment

Conceding the point, Setiya admits the agapic view may need to countenance relationships as additional reasons for love. This is Kolodny’s view. Love, Kolodny argues, consists in treating your relationship with someone as a source of reasons for partiality and emotional vulnerability to both them and the relationship, in ways appropriate to relationships of that type.³ This elegantly answers Frankfurt: the general and hence repeatable property that gives Frankfurt reason uniquely to love his children is just the relational property of being one’s child.

In my view, the relationship theory is a convincing account of what might be called *loving attachment*. This is not strictly speaking a species of personal love, since relationships to animals, activities, and things can ground partiality and emotional vulnerability in the same way. The only difference is that interpersonal relationships can introduce special considerations that justify correspondingly special concern. (See, e.g., Kolodny 2010.) This generality is a strength of Kolodny’s view, but it’s also symptomatic of its main weakness. Surely our really *personal* relationships are fundamentally about what the people we have them with are like—rather than our histories with them—as our relationships with cars aren’t, and our familial relationships aren’t always. Here the relationship theory gets things backwards: it “inverts the order of justification between love and loving relationships” (Protasi 2014: 215).⁴

There are two ways to articulate this concern. One is to object (with Stump 2006, Protasi 2014, and Setiya 2014) that the relationship theory makes paradigm cases of unrequited love irrational. Unsurprisingly, Kolodny anticipates this objection. He claims it conflates love and attraction. Love differs from attraction in essentially involving “noninstrumental concern” (Kolodny 2003: 171), and noninstrumental concern is indeed irrational in the absence of a relationship. I find the second claim plausible, but not the first. As Protasi argues, unrequited love is valuable because “it expresses the capacity of attributing a special role to a person in one’s emotional life without demanding that the other person do the same” (Protasi 2014: 218). Presumably, this can be more than just attraction, but needn’t involve unwonted concern.

This leads to the second, deeper problem. For Protasi, the special emotional role attributed to the beloved is grounded in the value of their qualities. The relationship theory denies this. It allows that love can—indeed, often should—involve specially valuing a beloved’s qualities, but only because they happen to be qualities of someone you’re in a relationship with. In some cases, this is the right result. Parents at school recitals are not connoisseurs. But in others, the value of the qualities comes first. Precisely in virtue of qualifying the beloved for their special emotional role, the beloved’s qualities define the value a relationship with them would have.

Perhaps the best example is the most famous case of unrequited love in philosophy:

I don't know if any of you have seen him when he's really serious. But I once caught him when he was open like Silenus's statues, and I had a glimpse of the figures he keeps hidden within: they were so godlike, so bright and beautiful, so utterly amazing—that I no longer had a choice—I just had to do whatever he told me.

(*Symposium* 216–217)

Alcibiades loves Socrates for the singular beauty he sees in him. His attitude transcends mere attraction, because of the particularity of its focus—Alcibiades loves Socrates in his ineffable uniqueness—and the depth and generality of the significance it attributes to its object, manifested *inter alia* in Alcibiades's intense desire to know and be known by Socrates, and in his “naked vulnerability to criticism” (Nussbaum 1986: 189)—Socrates is the only person who can make him feel shame. Alcibiades certainly wants a relationship with Socrates, but only as a relationship *with Socrates*, individuated in terms of the qualities that define him. These are what set the conditions under which the relationship Alcibiades wants would persist as valuable, and explain how Alcibiades would have reason to respond to Socrates in its context.

Our really personal relationships are rarely as purely or intensely aspirational as Alcibiades's, but share its order of justification. Were our friends or lovers to respond to our qualities like parents at school recitals, we would feel patronized. We want them to value their relationships with us specifically in virtue of qualities they find compelling, and would still find compelling without the relationship in place.⁵

Reactive Love

This brings us back to the quality view. Recent quality theorists often aim to accommodate love's irreplaceability the same way Kolodny does, by arguing that you only have reason to love people with whom you stand in certain historical relations. The difference is that for them, the historical relations (which may or may not be relationships in Kolodny's sense) aren't *sources* of reason but *enablers*—a consideration that doesn't normatively ground a response directly, but enables other considerations to. So reasons for love consist in qualities that lots of people might have, but are only lovable in certain relational contexts. (See Jollimore 2011, Keller 2013, Protasi 2014, and Naar 2017.) This doesn't itself account for constancy, but since the qualities can be very general, defenders of this proposal often argue it wouldn't be rational to continue loving someone who lost them.⁶

However, this doesn't address the other problem from the first section. Even if generically admirable, attractive, or desirable properties could somehow acquire special significance in the right relational contexts, this wouldn't necessarily turn them into the right kinds of reasons for love. It's here that Kate Abramson and Adam Leite's proposal stands out.

Love, they argue, is among what P. F. Strawson (1974) famously called the “reactive attitudes”—broadly emotional responses to properties of an agent's will that are relevantly expressed in conduct. The “conduct” part is key: resentment is a response to malice or culpable indifference, and gratitude to goodwill, but only when their possessor has actually expressed them in mistreating or helping you. Similarly, Abramson and Leite propose that “reactive love” (Abramson and Leite 2011: 677) is appropriate in response to certain morally “laudable traits that are especially salient in the context of fairly intimate relationships” (679) that have been “expressed in a way directed towards the lover in an appropriate relational context” (696).

I think this is correct up to a point. Certain laudable traits can indeed warrant special attachment when appropriately expressed in relatively intimate contexts, but this is because they really warrant other reactive attitudes—namely, gratitude, trust, and admiration—rather than love *per se*. This isn't entirely a bad thing: Abramson and Leite's view highlights how these other attitudes can change what it's like to relate to a person in a way that explains many of the reasons we prototypically have toward beloveds. There are, however, crucial reasons of love that transcend these.

One of Abramson and Leite's main examples—from *Sense and Sensibility*—illustrates this. For them, the solicitude Colonel Brandon shows the Dashwoods during Marianne's illness is paradigmatically lovable: it's "precisely the sort of character trait that would be relevant to anyone in an intimate (familial, friendly, marital) relationship with the Colonel" (Abramson and Leite 2011: 679), and its expression "towards Marianne and those she loves is key to making sense of her growing love for him" (681). The problem is that there's no textual evidence Marianne actually does feel growing love for Colonel Brandon at this point in the novel, or at any point before the epilogue. None of her remaining dialogue is addressed to him, and in fact she only mentions him in it once, as someone to borrow books from during her anticipated life of seclusion. When she marries him, it is with "intimate [knowledge] of his goodness," but "no sentiment superior to strong esteem and lively friendship" (Austen 1933: 378). Only "in time" does Marianne's "whole heart" become "as much devoted to her husband, as it had once been to Willoughby" (379).

"Strong esteem and lively friendship" is an excellent description of the attachment that gratitude, trust, and admiration enable when jointly occasioned in intimate contexts. To see how, begin with gratitude. While we are typically grateful to strangers for discrete benefits we don't expect to be repeated, our gratitude to closer acquaintances is paradigmatically for informal expressions of goodwill that blend together and shape our relationships over time. If our gratitude for these benefits was like gratitude to strangers—which involves something akin to the desire to settle a debt—we would be rejecting the friendly spirit in which they were meant. Instead, we feel friendly in turn: we are broadly sympathetic, warm-wishing, and willing to help. As these feelings are mutually reciprocated over time, they become responses to a shared history of beneficence, and settle into generalized concern for the other's welfare.

This strikes me as the basis of a promising explanation of reasons for partiality in friendship. (Compare Kolodny 2010.) Other apparent reasons of love seem likewise explicable in terms of other reactive attitudes, in conjunction with our reasons for caring about intimate relationships. In intimate contexts, reasons for trust become reasons for the self-disclosure many writers have upheld as characteristic of friendship. (See, e.g., Thomas 1987; for a defense of trust as a reactive attitude, see, e.g., Holton 1994.) We want to share private and potentially embarrassing experiences and opinions, and be spontaneous with others without worrying about our conduct being held against us. This is particularly important with people we admire. Most of us have a basic desire for the people we admire to think well of us, which gives us special reasons for self-disclosure and sensitivity to the other's judgments. (Recall Alcibiades's vulnerability to Socrates's criticism, or—since we're now in Austen territory—Emma Woodhouse's vulnerability to Knightley's.) Importantly, all these responses inform, enhance, and sustain each other. People who trust each intimately are normally positioned to care for and admire each other in ways others don't have access to. This in turn tends to engender deeper and more specific forms of intimacy, thereby constituting a unified form of attachment that deserves to be called love.

Partly, Austen would agree: goodness intimately known warrants strong esteem and lively friendship. Austen's implication that this isn't love is obviously tongue in cheek, a playful jibe at Marianne's immature romanticism. But in her subsequent description of Willoughby, she

identifies precisely what it lacks. “In spite of his incivility in surviving her loss,” she writes, Willoughby

always retained [for Marianne] that decided regard which interested him in everything that befell her, and made her his secret standard of perfection in women;—and many a rising beauty would be slighted by him in after-days as bearing no comparison to Mrs. Brandon.

(Austen 1933: 379–380)

In addition to making Willoughby an archetypal unrequited lover, this element of interested attention gives the best loving relationships—like Marianne’s relationship with her older sister—their depth and vitality. Marianne may feel it for her husband eventually, but when she does it will be for reasons left to the reader’s imagination, and that Abramson and Leite’s moralized theory leaves unexplained.

Aesthetic Love

That Willoughby loves Marianne is evinced in how she *determines* his standards rather than merely meets them. Alexander Nehamas (2007) offers a rich account of this phenomenon as a response to beauty. While such accounts are hardly new, they’re often taken—as in Gregory Vlastos’s (1973) critique of Plato—to make beloveds essentially replaceable: loving someone for their beauty is loving beauty in them, which when done properly should shift one’s love to beauty in general. For Nehamas, however, the truth is the opposite: beauty essentially demands loving attention to the individuality of its object.

To find something beautiful, Nehamas argues, is to experience it as calling for ongoing, open-ended, and emotionally receptive attention to as yet unnoticed or underappreciated properties of it, for reasons that necessarily outrun one’s present conception of its value. As a consequence of this attention, one’s conception of a beautiful object’s value becomes increasingly deep, complex, and specific to that thing—while never becoming fully determinate—in ways one necessarily can’t anticipate. Since this makes it impossible fully to specify any criteria by which anything distinguishable from the object would be equivalently valuable, beautiful objects are valued as irreplaceable.

Nehamas’s view similarly captures how reasons for attraction and emotional vulnerability to beloveds can be appropriately particular to them. Earlier, we saw that aesthetic sensitivity wasn’t in itself the right kind of reason to get infected by a beloved’s enthusiasm for ballet because it should be *their* enthusiasm that matters, not the fact that it was well founded. On Nehamas’s view, claims like these “signify that [the property] functions aesthetically here: it is a factor that draws me to you and contributes to my finding you beautiful” (Nehamas 2007: 100). In these cases, my reasons for responding lovingly to you reflect a value I see in you that might depend on any number of your properties, but which I’ll never be able fully to specify as long as I’m still responsive to it. Saying a beloved’s enthusiasm is infectious because it’s *theirs* can thus be the best explanation available.⁷

That said, the example is in one respect infelicitous. It’s possible to find someone’s enthusiasm *beautiful* without finding it *infectious*—without experiencing it as something to be *shared*. But this is what distinguishes love that values persons as things from love that values them as *persons*. (Compare Frye 1983 and Langton 1997.) Socrates’s beauty makes him lovable to Alcibiades in the second sense, but not all beauty is like this. A canonical example, which Nehamas discusses in depth, is *Death in Venice*. Aschenbach is an aging writer and Tadzio a teenage boy, whose

beauty provokes in Aschenbach a desire so consuming as to lead him to abandon his dignity and, eventually, expose himself to the epidemic from which he dies. “Aschenbach’s passion is fueled by a particular interpretation of Tadzio’s beauty,” Nehamas (2007: 104) writes, which is putting it mildly. It is a paradigm case of projection, transparently grounded in desires and associations for which Tadzio is a catalyst and screen. It regards Tadzio as an aesthetic object, and is basically insensitive to his interests. At one point, it occurs to Aschenbach that he ought to warn Tadzio’s family about the cholera sweeping the city, but he finds himself almost totally unmotivated to: this would deprive him of his irreplaceable object of desire.

While it would be artificially moralistic to deny that Aschenbach loves Tadzio, his love is obviously imperfect, even as a mode of broadly aesthetic engagement. In my view, this is because it fails to engage specifically with the beloved’s *agency*.

Aspirational Love

It’s often argued that the values to which we are fundamentally committed—our deepest principles, ideals, and aspirations—constitute our identities as agents. If so, to love someone for the values with which they identify would in that respect be to love them for who they are in themselves—for their essence, rather than their accidents. Thus, numerous philosophers—often inspired by Aristotle’s (1999) view of virtue friendship—argue that people are lovable in virtue of identifying with the same values as oneself. (See, e.g., Nussbaum 1990; Whiting 1991; Westlund 2008; Brewer 2009.)

Though consonant with the evident importance of shared values to loving relationships, this generates a special problem akin to that of constancy. Beloveds whose evaluations perfectly mirror yours are boring, and lovers who expect your evaluations to perfectly mirror theirs are suffocating. Both things seem essentially inimical to love. Unanticipated divergences from your own evaluations should seem interesting, exciting, to be welcomed. But how, then, would the other’s values be lovable for being like yours?

What I will call *aspirational* views of love aim to resolve this problem by arguing that a beloved’s values are lovable as *dynamic*, rather than *static*: not as what they now determinately are, but as what they are in the process of becoming.⁸ On the aspirational view I defend, this is because the contents of our values can be fixed by the particular responses we take to be expressive of them over time—on condition that they remain jointly intelligible as conforming to a unified norm (Bagley 2015: 491–496). I liken this process to musical improvisation, so that the experience of a particular way of playing as inchoately expressive reflects the as-yet-indeterminate character of the musical ideas or themes in the process of being expressed. Love, then, is like improvising with a partner. It consists in valuing the beloved as improvisationally pursuing the same values as oneself, and therefore in attributing the same significance to the beloved’s responses in determining one’s values one attributes to one’s own. In practice, this would make a beloved’s enthusiasm for ballet infectious because you experience it emotionally as partly defining the values you’re inchoately pursuing yourself. In this, aspirational and aesthetic love resemble each other: both involve experiencing the beloved as demanding essentially individualized attention and emotional engagement, for reasons that are never fully determinate but become increasingly sophisticated and specific over time. The difference is that the aspirational lover’s attention is focused on the expression of an evaluative perspective loved as autonomous, independent, and equally authoritative.

Like its counterparts, however, there are essential features of love I doubt the aspirational view accounts for. First, though I argue aspirational love necessarily involves concern for the beloved’s autonomous flourishing (Bagley 2015: 504), this concern is instrumental. My concern

for my friends isn't, entirely: it's largely that of reactive love. Second, the aspirational view doesn't capture the diversity of the qualities for which we love. All kinds of qualities—including ones whose appeal is exquisitely perverse—can draw you to someone in their particularity and give them a grip on your attention and desire. Even when these include someone's values, the love they prompt may be aesthetic. I love my parents substantially for the values I see embodied in their lives, but I'm not sure I love them aspirationally: that would conflict with the distance that, like many grown children, I want to maintain between their perspectives and mine. My attitude is more like that toward characters in whose narratives one has become deeply invested.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I've sketched what I think are five plausible sources of reason for love, each represented in the current literature:

- i humanity, for agapic love,
- ii valuable historical relationships, for loving attachment,
- iii reasons for intimate gratitude, admiration, and trust, for reactive love,
- iv beauty, for aesthetic love, and
- v dynamically shared values, for aspirational love.

All constitute reason to value someone as irreplaceable—whether this consists in valuing them in their individuality (agapic and aesthetic love), in the context of a concrete historical relation (loving attachment and reactive love), or both (aspirational love)—and to respond to them in recognizably loving ways. As such, all constitute reason for love.

However, none is redundant. Each, I've argued, only accounts for different subsets of what a complete theory of love should explain. If this is right, theories that appeal to different of these reasons aren't really competitors. Rather, they describe different, mutually irreducible kinds of love. Any complete theory of love will have to be pluralistic, and include them all.

This is important, because conflating them yields confusion. For example, Kieran Setiya's (2014) affirmation of agapic love leads him to reject both any quality view and (more startlingly) the moral requirement to save the greater number. First, Setiya finds it "profoundly troubling" (Setiya 2014: 257) that it should ever be irrational to love someone. Because this requires that there be sufficient reason to love anyone, Setiya concludes that reasons grounded in qualities are "redundant" (258). I agree that this situation would be troubling, but I would find it even more troubling if I had sufficient reason to love just anyone aesthetically or aspirationally, or if just anyone had sufficient reason to love me in those ways. Because these consist in different responses than agapic love, reasons for the latter don't—again—make reasons for the former redundant.

Setiya's argument against saving the greater number—which returns us to Williams's original case—rests on a similar but subtler mistake. Setiya insists that it is rational

to act for the sake of someone you love, moved by a concern for her that is not contingent on how she relates to you. This is how I would want my wife to act if she were in your place: to save me not because I am her husband or because we have the relationship that we do, but spontaneously, just because it was me.

(Setiya 2014: 266)

Largely, I agree. But one thing we've seen in this chapter is how thoughts of the form "because it was *her*" can stand in for complex individualized considerations grounded in multiple forms

of love. Here, it stands in for the complex, individualized respects in which a partner's drowning can be unthinkable—respects that would give her screams a singular intensity, her struggles a singular wrenchingness, her loss a singular horror. In this situation, I imagine I would be moved by considerations like these. The facts constituting my reasons for love would not figure into my practical reasoning as premises, but “motivation [by belief in them] need not be self-conscious” (Setiya 2014: 267)—it can function as a background belief that makes intelligible the motivations from which one acts directly. We can see this applies here by comparison to adjacent, deficient cases. If the belief turned out to be false—if I saved the woman because she looked like my wife from a distance—I would retrospectively regard my singular concern as an emotional misperception corresponding to the visual one. And if I felt this concern for someone absent any beliefs about who they were to me, I would regard it as a fit of insanity. (If someone felt that way about me, I would find it incredibly creepy.)

I suspect Setiya would recognize that his argument can be resisted in this way. His aim is less to “compel assent” (Setiya 2014: 276) than to formulate an ethics of agape in terms that capture its appeal. As such, his argument significantly adds to our understanding of how love can be a source of philosophical challenge and possibility, and is in that respect consonant with my main aim in this chapter. The case I've sketched for pluralism cautions against forcing a richly heterogeneous phenomenon into an artificially narrow mold. This would necessarily deny part of what makes love by turns grounding, uplifting, exhilarating, sublime, maddening, and dangerous.

Notes

- 1 Or, equivalently, to experience the properties as making such responses fitting. (It shouldn't be assumed that valuing in this broad sense is especially cognitive or self-conscious. See n. 3).
- 2 Yao MS develops a more nuanced agapic view appealing to a secularized form of grace, on which the beloved's humanity is importantly linked to their imperfections.
- 3 This compressed formulation (from Kolodny 2003: 150–151) leaves out Kolodny's claim that love “partly *consists* in the belief that some relationship renders it appropriate, and the emotions and motivations of love are *causally sustained* by this belief” (Kolodny 2003: 146), which leads some (e.g., Hurka 2017) to reject Kolodny's view as overintellectual. However, this criticism is unfair. It does not target Kolodny's core claim—that love consists in treating relationships as reasons—but rather his further claim that treating relationships as reasons involves robust regulation by one's normative beliefs about them. I agree the latter is implausible, but the former doesn't entail it.
- 4 For similar complaints, see Abramson and Leite 2011, Zangwill 2013, and Bagley 2015.
- 5 I give a somewhat more involved argument for this in Bagley 2015: 487–489.
- 6 Jollimore 2011 and Protasi 2014 explore other ways to accommodate constancy, along with unrequited love.
- 7 Nehamas 2016 attributes Montaigne's famous epigram—“if you press me to tell you why I loved him, I feel that this cannot be expressed except by answering: because it was he, because it was I”—to this indeterminacy.
- 8 For other accounts of reasons of love as dynamic, see Rorty 1986, Brewer 2009, Helm 2010, and Nehamas 2016.

References

- Abramson, K. and Leite, A. (2011) “Love as a Reactive Emotion,” *Philosophical Quarterly* 61: 673–699.
- Aristotle (1999) *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. T. Irwin, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.
- Austen, J. (1933) *Sense and Sensibility*, ed. R. W. Chapman, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bagley, B. (2015) “Loving Someone in Particular,” *Ethics* 125: 477–507.
- Brewer, T. (2009) *The Retrieval of Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cocking, D., and Kennett, J. (1998) “Friendship and the Self,” *Ethics* 108: 502–527.

- Frankfurt, H. (1999) "On Caring," in *Necessity, Volition, and Love*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frye, M. (1983) "In and Out of Harm's Way: Arrogance and Love," in *The Politics of Reality*, Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press.
- Helm, B. (2010) *Love, Friendship, and the Self: Intimacy, Identification, and the Nature of Persons*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Holton, R. (1994) "Deciding to Trust, Coming to Believe," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 72: 63–76.
- Hurka, T. (2017) "Love and Reasons: The Many Relationships," in E. Engels Kroeker and K. Schaubroek (eds.) *Love, Reason, and Morality*, London: Routledge.
- Jenkins, C. (2017) *What Love Is and What It Could Be*, New York: Basic Books.
- Jollimore, T. (2011) *Love's Vision*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Keller, S. (2000) "How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Properties," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 37: 163–173.
- Keller, S. (2013) *Partiality*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kolodny, N. (2003) "Love as Valuing a Relationship," *Philosophical Review* 112: 135–189.
- Kolodny, N. (2010) "Which Relationships Justify Partiality? The Case of Parents and Children," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 38: 37–75.
- Langton, R. (1997) "Love and Solipsism," in R. E. Lamb (ed.) *Love Analyzed*, Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Murphy, L. (2000) *Moral Demands in Nonideal Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Naar, H. (2017) "Subject-Relative Reasons for Love," *Ratio* 30: 197–214.
- Nehamas, A. (2007) *Only a Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Nehamas, A. (2016) *On Friendship*, New York: Basic Books.
- Nussbaum, M. (1986) "The Speech of Alcibiades: A Reading of the *Symposium*," in *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nussbaum, M. (1990) "Love and the Individual: Romantic Rightness and Platonic Aspiration," in *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Plato (1997) *Symposium*, trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff, in J. Cooper (ed.) *Plato: Complete Works*, Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.
- Protasi, S. (2014) "Loving People for Who They Are (Even When They Don't Love You Back)," *European Journal of Philosophy* 24: 214–234.
- Quinn, W. (1993) "Putting Rationality in Its Place," in *Morality and Action*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rorty, A. O. (1986) "The Historicity of Psychological Attitudes: Love Is Not Love Which Alters Not When It Alteration Finds," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 10: 399–412.
- Setiya, K. (2014) "Love and the Value of a Life," *Philosophical Review* 123: 251–280.
- Strawson, P. F. (1974) "Freedom and Resentment," in *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays*, London: Methuen.
- Stump, E. (2006) "Love, by All Accounts," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 80: 25–43.
- Thomas, L. (1987) "Friendship," *Synthese* 72: 217–236.
- Velleman, J. D. (1999) "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109: 338–374.
- Velleman, J. D. (2008) "Beyond Price," *Ethics* 118: 191–212.
- Vlastos, G. (1973) "The Individual as Object of Love in Plato," in *Platonic Studies*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Westlund, A. (2008) "The Reunion of Marriage," *Monist* 91: 558–577.
- Whiting, J. (1991) "Impersonal Friends," *Monist* 74: 3–29.
- Williams, B. (1981) "Persons, Character, and Morality," in *Moral Luck*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wolf, S. (2015) "'One Thought Too Many': Love, Morality, and the Ordering of Commitment," in *The Variety of Values: Essays on Meaning, Morality, and Love*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yao, V. (MS) "Grace and Alienation."
- Zangwill, N. (2013) "Love: Gloriously Amoral and Arational," *Philosophical Explorations* 16: 298–314.

LOVE IN CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE

Berit Brogaard

Introduction

The three most central questions in recent psychological and neuroscientific approaches to love are: (1) the question of why people fall in love, (2) the question of what love is, and (3) the question of what causes unhealthy love to develop. This chapter provides an overview and discussion of the main answers to these questions in psychology and neuroscience.

As we will see, some of the main factors that cause people to fall in love are: (1) a readiness to fall in love (Aron et al., 1989), (2) the perceived potential for self-expansion (Aron & Aron, 1986; Aron et al., 1989), and (3) the novelty, unpredictability, and mystery the other person is perceiving as introducing (Dutton & Aron, 1974). All three factors line up with findings in the neuroscience of love. Neuroscientists have shown that people who fall in love have compositions of obsession and reward chemicals that are similar to those found in individuals with obsessive-compulsive disorder (Marazziti et al., 1999).

Falling in love, of course, is different from continuing to be in love. How likely romantic love is to endure is determined by a different set of factors, including feelings of familiarity and similarity between the partners' attitudes and core values (Acevedo & Aron, 2009). This is manifested neurochemically in more stable brain levels of mood and pleasure neurotransmitters as well as an increase in the brain's levels of bonding chemicals (Zeki, 2007).

Newer theoretical and empirical studies of the nature of love have led to several theories of love. One fundamental issue turns on the question of whether love is an emotion or an attribute of a loving relationship. Theories that take love to be an attribute of a loving relationship tend not to be comprehensive enough to capture both reciprocated and unrequited love. This raises a potential challenge for theories that focus too much on relationships in their characterization of love. Most of these theories, however, can be modified to focus more exclusively on the emotions the lover exhibits toward a real or imagined lover and toward the potential for a relationship. Sternberg's (1986) triangular theory of love is a case in point. Although it is originally formulated in terms of three relationship attributes, namely, intimacy, passion, and commitment, it can be cashed out in terms of the corresponding emotions inhabited by the lover.

Even when cashed out in this way, however, the triangular theory does not answer the question of what causes unhealthy love to develop. A more successful account of why unhealthy love develops has been provided within the framework of attachment theory, as originally developed

by John Bowlby (1973) and Mary Ainsworth (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Attachment theory takes people's mental representations of loving relationships—representations that in some cases have been formed in early childhood and in other cases in later relationships—to predict whether people are likely to form healthy or unhealthy love relationships and feel love in healthy or unhealthy ways. Attachment theory by itself cannot fully account for romantic love (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1987). But when supplemented by two additional components characteristic of healthy romantic love (a desire to engage in caregiving and a feeling of sexual attraction), it provides a plausible theory of romantic love (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1987).

Attachment theory was originally developed as an alternative to psychoanalytic approaches to love (Bowlby, 1973). Like attachment theory, psychoanalytic approaches describe love in terms of early childhood experiences or past relationships (Bergmann, 1988). Traditionally, psychoanalytic approaches were more intensely focused on the sexual interactions between parents and child. However, newer psychoanalytic approaches have largely become desexualized (Green, 1995; Stein, 1998a, 1998b). The sexual component of the theories is typically treated as a metaphor that describes attachment patterns. New psychoanalytic approaches are thus similar to attachment theory in their focus and explanatory power (Fonagy & Target, 2007; Blatt & Levy, 2003).

In this chapter I shall focus primarily on romantic love but contrast it with other kinds of love where appropriate. In the first section I will look closer at the question of why people fall in love. I will then address the questions of whether love is best understood as an emotion or an attribute of a loving relationship. I will then turn to the theory of love advocated within the framework of attachment theory. Finally, I will look at some traditional and contemporary psychoanalytic approaches to love.

Why Do People Fall in Love?

One question that has received quite a bit of attention in the psychological literature on love is that of why people fall in love. One promising answer to this question is that romantic love occurs when the attributes that generate general attraction together with certain social factors and circumstances that spark passion are particularly strong. The general attraction attributes are as follows (Aron et al., 1989): 1. *Similarity*. This includes similarity of people's belief sets and to a lesser extent similarity of personality traits and ways of thinking. 2. *Proximity*. This includes familiarity with the other, which can be caused by having time spent together, living near each other, thinking about the other, or anticipating interaction with the other. 3. *Desirable characteristics*. This general attraction attribute is particularly focused on an outer physical appearance that is found desirable and to a lesser extent on desirable personality traits. 4. *Reciprocal liking*. When the other person is attracted to you or likes you, that can increase your own liking.

Two further factors that can help explain why people fall in love turn on mate selection (Aron et al., 1989): 5. *Social influences*. The potential union satisfying general social norms and acceptance of the potential union within one's social network can contribute to people falling in love. Or if a union does not satisfy general social norms or is not accepted by one's social network, this can result in people falling out of love. 6. *Filling needs*. If a person can fulfill needs for companionship, love, sex, or mating, there is a greater chance that the other person will fall in love with him or her.

Five additional factors seem to be required for the love to be truly passionate as opposed to being a kind of friendship love (Aron et al., 1989): 7. *Arousal/Unusualness*. Being in an unusual or arousing environment can spark passion, even if the environment is perceived as dangerous or spooky (Dutton & Aron, 1974). 8. *Specific cues*. A particular feature of the other may spark

particularly strong attraction (e.g., parts of their body or facial features). 9. *Readiness*. The more you want to be in a relationship, the lower your self-esteem and the more likely you are to fall in love. 10. *Isolation*. Spending time alone with another person can also contribute to a development of passion. 11. *Mystery*. If there is some mystery surrounding the other person and uncertainty about what the other person thinks or feels or when he or she will initiate contact, this can also contribute to passion.

Aron et al. (1989) examined which of these factors are most prevalent in college students based on their descriptions of their experiences of falling in love. They found that the most frequently mentioned factor preceding their experiences of love was finding certain characteristics of the other desirable and reciprocity of the experienced emotions. There was a moderate frequency of descriptions mentioning the factors that spark passion (e.g., readiness, arousal/unusualness). There was a low to moderate frequency of descriptions of the other having been perceived as similar to the subject or having spent time with the other.

Aron et al. (1989) argue that the self-expansion model proposed in Aron and Aron (1986) predicts this weighing of factors. On the self-expansion model, we have the greatest propensity to fall in love when we perceive the other person as a way for us to undergo rapid self-expansion. Entering a committed relationship requires giving up some of one's personal autonomy by including the other person in one's life. If the other possesses desirable characteristics, the other person's presence in one's life can be perceived as an expansion of the self as opposed to a loss of freedom (Aron & Aron, 1996).

Work in neuroscience on love supports these findings in psychology. The neurochemical profile of people who are in love is characterized by low levels of the satiation chemical serotonin (Zeki, 2007). Marazziti et al. (1999) found that the density of platelet [3H]paroxetine ([3H]Par) binding sites on the serotonin transporter was significantly lower in subjects who had fallen in love within the previous six months compared to normal subjects. In fact, the density of platelet [3H]Par binding sites in subjects who had recently fallen in love was found to be similar to that of unmedicated patients with obsessive-compulsive disorder. Like the standard antidepressants SSRIs, [3H]paroxetine binds to the serotonin (5-HT) transporter. This inactivates the transporter, preventing it from transporting serotonin from back into the neurons, where it is inactive. A low density of platelet [3H]paroxetine ([3H]Par) binding sites is thus a strong indicator of lower brain levels of serotonin. The authors argue that the obsessive component of new love makes it similar to obsessive-compulsive disorder in its serotonin profile.

It is unsurprising, then, that several of the passion-generating factors, including arousal/unusualness, readiness, and mystery, correlate both with the propensity to fall in love and increased anxiety. Increased anxiety triggers increased blood levels of adrenaline and other stress chemicals. As argued by Dutton and Aron (1974), the feeling of increased levels of adrenaline is sometimes mistaken for a feeling of being in love with a person. Dutton and Aron (1974) found that more men fell in love with an attractive female interviewer when she asked questions in anxiety-provoking situations (a fear-arousing suspension bridge) compared to calm situations (non-fear-arousing bridge). So, even in the absence of most of the other predictors of the onset of romantic love, meeting a person in an anxiety-provoking situation can cause us to fall in love with that person.

Another interesting feature of love is that a felt proximity to a new lover gives rise to high brain levels of the reward and motivation chemical dopamine, whereas distance can lead to cravings. Aron et al. (2005) used functional magnetic resonance imaging to study people who were intensely in love from one to 17 months. The subjects viewed a photograph of their beloved and then after a distraction-attention task they viewed a photograph of a familiar individual. The researchers found heightened brain activation in the right ventral tegmental area and the right

postero-dorsal body and medial caudate nucleus—dopamine-rich areas associated with reward and motivation—in response to the photographs of the individual the subject was in love with. So, when you are in love, the imagined or actual presence of the beloved is rewarding and motivating.

The self-expansion model proposed by Aron and Aron (1986) can explain this result as follows: when a subject conceives of the beloved and him- or herself as forming a tight union, the desirable characteristics of the beloved trigger a feeling of reward. This can prompt us to go out of our way to be with the beloved in order to experience the most intense feeling of reward.

The self-expansion model also predicts that the similarity and propinquity factors should have a paradoxical effect in initial stages of falling in love but should have a more significant influence on the duration of love (Acevedo & Aron, 2009). The main reason for this is that familiarity and similarity make it less likely that the other person will constitute an expansion of you, if you include him or her in your life.

These predictions too are consistent with the findings in neuroscience. Low levels of serotonin are likely counteracted by similarity and familiarity, which can prevent people from falling in love (Zeki, 2007). At later stages of a love relationship, however, these same factors may correlate with higher levels of the attachment and bonding chemicals oxytocin and vasopressin. Oxytocin and vasopressin have been shown to increase during the phase of love relationship that fosters romantic attachment and pair bonding (Zeki, 2007).

Love as an Emotion

Several psychologists have defended the view that love is an emotion (e.g., Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Dutton, & Aron, 1974; Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Gonzaga et al., 2006). Understood as an emotion, love can be taken to characterize its felt manifestations either as a surge of passion or affection or the ongoing disposition to have those feelings for another person (Shaver & Hazan, 1988).

If love is an emotion, this raises the question of whether love is a basic or a complex emotion. The standard view is that there are only seven basic emotions: joy, anger, sadness, contempt, fear, disgust, and surprise.¹ Basic emotions are associated with universally recognizable facial expressions, and they resist analysis in terms of other more basic mental states. Complex emotions, by contrast, are not associated with universally recognizable facial expressions, and they have several components to them—components that can vary from person to person and from culture to culture.

Because love is not associated with universally recognizable facial expressions, and it seems analyzable in terms components such as joy, anxiety, and jealousy, love is generally thought to be a non-basic emotion.

However, Shaver et al. (1996) argue that love should be considered a basic emotion like anger and joy. One observation they make is that 'love is one of the most prototypical emotions in the minds of layperson' (Shaver et al., 1996: 81). Fehr and Russell (1984) asked 200 students to 'list as many examples as you can of the category EMOTION'. They did not define 'emotion'. The subjects top six choice of emotions (out of 196) were: happiness (listed by 152 people), anger (149), sadness (136), love (124), fear (96), and hate (89). Given that emotion theorists rely heavily on everyday knowledge in their analysis of emotions, Shaver et al. (1996) argue, they ought to give weight to this insight.

Shaver et al. (1987) furthermore found that love is a cognitively basic emotion in Rosch's (1978) prototype sense. A concept is cognitively basic when its instances are prototypes. For

example, soccer games are prototypes for *game*, chairs and sofas are prototypes for *furniture*, and robins are prototypes for *birds*. The prototype concepts referring to prototypes are cognitively basic. If the concept of love is cognitively basic, this gives us further reason to include love along the basic emotions.

Shaver et al. (1996) grant that love can take the form of a long-lasting sentiment, which is a dispositional form of the emotion, but they correctly observe that all the standard basic emotions can take the form of a long-lasting sentiment as well. You can be angry with or disgusted by a person for a very long time. Yet the short outburst of anger or disgust is not less basic for that reason. Love is similar to the other basic emotions in that there are brief surges or outbursts of feeling in love or feeling especially loving. These outbursts are associated with universal bodily signals, such as a flushing face, a widening of the eyes or eye-locking, and action-tendencies, for instance a tendency to touch the other person, proximity-seeking, and behavioral synchrony between lovers. The universality of love, Shaver et al. (1996) argue, is uncovered in historical writings and anthropological studies, which reveal that love is universally a very intense feeling that can give rise to romantic anguish and longing. It thus seems that while love as a sentiment is not fundamental and is associated with many emotion and behavior tendencies, sudden surges of love should be included among the basic emotions.

These considerations of basic versus complex emotions raise the question of what kind of mental state an emotion is. One view is that emotions are perceptions of mental or bodily responses to a certain evaluative rendition of an object or event in the external environment (Prinz, 2004; Brogaard, 2015: chapter 3).² For example, fear of a tiger is a mental and bodily response to what is perceived as a tiger presenting a threat to the subject's well-being. Likewise, resenting an ex for breaking up with you is a mental and bodily response to what is perceived as an ex-partner having treated you unjustly. On this account, love of a person is a mental and bodily response to what is perceived as a specific *lovable* person.

The perceived-response theory of emotions lends itself to a particular understanding of rational (or healthy) and irrational (or unhealthy) forms of love. A loving response is rational (or healthy), we can say, just in case (i) there is no misrepresentation of those of the beloved's qualities that fuel the loving response, and (ii) the loving response matches the perceived lovability of the beloved (Brogaard, 2015). If your love harms your well-being, your loving response does not properly correspond to the perceived lovability (or loving qualities) of the beloved. In unrequited love, you may be representing the beloved's qualities correctly. For example, you may be aware of the fact that when a person rejects you, this can enhance your desire to be with that person. Even when unrequited love does not misrepresent, however, it does not match the perceived loving qualities of the beloved. Someone who does *not* love you and likely does not really care about you has a quality that is not loving toward you: they do not really care about you. So, persistently unrequited love is irrational, which is to say that you ought not love the person (however hard it can be not to do that).

Here is another case. For reasons beyond your imagination, you cannot help but perceive your emotionally abusive girlfriend as a lovable person. Your loving response to her thus matches her perceived lovability. However, because you misperceive her as possessing lovable qualities—the qualities that fuel your love—your emotional response is fueled by properties your girlfriend does not possess. Accordingly, your love is irrational, which is to say that you ought not to love her (however hard it can be not to do that).

As we will see below, the unhealthy forms of love depicted by attachment-theoretical approaches to love are cases in which there is a misrepresentation of the qualities of the beloved that fuel the loving response or cases in which the loving response fails to match the perceived lovability of the beloved.

Triangular Theories of Love

An alternative to treating love as an emotion is to treat it as an attribute (or attributes) of a relationship (Sternberg, 1986, 1998; Kolodny, 2003). Robert Sternberg's (1986) triangular theory of love is a well-known instance of this. On this view, love has three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. The intimacy component captures the feelings of being close, connected, and bonded in a loving relationship. The passion component encompasses romance and physical attraction in a loving relationship. Finally, the commitment component refers to a decision two people have made to love each other and maintain that love over time.

According to Sternberg (1986), the three components of love—intimacy, passion, and commitment—constitute different types of love, for instance romantic love, parental love, and friendship love. Intimacy is a shared component in romantic love, parental love, and friendship love. The commitment component is likely to be strong in love relationships with members of one's nuclear family, but it need not play a major role in romantic love. Passion, by contrast, is central to romantic love but is absent in pure instances of the other types of love.

The theory also predicts that there are different types of romantic love. These types include liking (intimacy alone), infatuation (passion alone), empty love (commitment alone), short-term romantic love and friends-with-benefits relationships (intimacy plus passion), and romantic love in a long-term relationship (intimacy plus passion plus commitment).

Sternberg (1998) provides an account of how the three dimensions of love fluctuate and change over the course of a relationship, and why some changes in the components lead to successful relationships while other changes lead to relationship failure. Excessive passion and intimacy, Sternberg (1998) argues, can shorten the length of a relationship. The main positive influence on relationship length is commitment. Evidence for these predictions were found in empirical studies (Lemieux & Hale, 2002). Analyses of the emotions of college students indicated negative correlations between intimacy and relationship length as well as between passion and relationship length. The correlation between commitment and relationship length was found to be positive.

One significant virtue of Sternberg's triangular theory of love is that it easily accommodates nearly all types of love (including romantic love, friendship love, and companionate love). A more problematic feature of the view is that it cannot easily account for cases of unreciprocated love or other forms of unfulfilled love. Love can be experienced as distinct from pure passion even when there is no intimacy and no commitment and even in the absence of a belief that intimacy and commitment will emerge.

The triangular theory can, however, be revised to account for unfulfilled love. For example, we can construe romantic love as consisting partially in feelings of passion combined with an intense longing for intimacy and in some cases also a longing for commitment.

Another problematic feature of the triangular theory is its lack of focus on attachment. Recent empirical studies suggest that passion and secure attachment can both be routes to relationship satisfaction, and that secure attachment likely affects relationship satisfaction through intimacy and commitment (Madey & Rodgers, 2009). Sternberg's triangular theory does not itself focus on attachment, however. Commitment, on his view, is a conscious decision, not a result of an ability to bond with another person. However, it is evidently the case that in a culture where we can freely choose our partner, a conscious choice to commitment is not free-floating but is linked to attachment and passion. As we will see in the next section, because the triangular theory does not treat secure attachment as fundamental for healthy relationships, the theory is not as suitable for predicting which types of love are unhealthy and why they are unhealthy.

A third problematic feature of Sternberg's triangular theory is that the three proposed components appear to overlap significantly. Marston et al. (1998), for example, found six ways of experiencing intimacy (openness, sexual intimacy, affection, supportiveness, togetherness, and quiet company), two ways of experiencing passion (romance and sexual intimacy), and five ways of experiencing commitment (supportiveness, expressions of love, fidelity, expressions of commitment, and consideration and devotion). The overlap of the factors that constitute the three corners of Sternberg's triangle make these components questionable as separate love-defining factors (Marston et al., 1998).

Sternberg's triangular theory of love is not the only triangular theory to be found in the psychological literature. John Alan Lee's (1973) color wheel theory of love is in some respects similar to Sternberg's triangular theory. Lee takes his nine types of love to be composed out of the three components: *storge*, *eros*, and *ludus*. '*Storge*' means commitment or attachment. This love style amounts to a kind of brotherly love or emotionally bland romantic love. '*Eros*' means passion. However, as Shaver and Hazan point out, Lee takes it to denote a kind of love characteristic of a securely attached person in a secure relationship. '*Ludus*' means play or having fun. A person with this love style is exhibiting a pattern of traits and behaviors characteristic of the avoidant individual.

The three basic love ingredients generate what Lee calls the secondary love styles. There are three main compounds. *Mania*, which is composed of *eros* and *ludus*, is a kind of obsessive love, which involves a strong desire to be with the other person with or without commitment. *Pragma*, which is composed of *ludus* and *storge*, is a convenient type of love. It is based on practicality and is normally the result of a decision to be together. *Agape*, which has the basic components *storge* and *eros*, is self-sacrificing love, a form of altruism directed toward the partner. This love style is manifested in a desire to serve the other person and make him or her happy.

Lee's theory predates Sternberg's model and appeared in print simultaneously with some of the first publications on attachment. It is interesting, then, that three of the love styles correspond to secure attachment, anxious attachment, and avoidant attachment. The additional complications of the theory, however, do not seem to add much to attachment theory or Sternberg's simpler model.

Love as Attachment

How our love is manifested is a function of our attachment style and our personality. Bowlby described attachment as an emotional bond that impacts behavior 'from the cradle to the grave' (Bowlby, 1977: 203).³ How we bond with caregivers during early childhood affects how we behave in relationships, how in touch we are with our emotions, and how much we will allow ourselves to love others on a conscious level. The early attachment processes lead to a particular mental model of relationships that continues to shape our interactions with other people as we mature and that predicts how we will interact with romantic partners.

People with a secure attachment style maintain a healthy proximity to other people. They are not afraid of closeness and intimacy, and they do not depend on it in a pathological way. People with an insecure attachment style, on the other hand, avoid closeness with others or their whole existence depends on it.

Attachment theory was first developed as a theory of how children respond to different parental behaviors and how this response pattern affects their relationships later in life. Bowlby argued that in a healthy environment a bonding process occurs between child and caregiver during the first five to six years of the child's life. The caregiver is in a position to recognize and

satisfy the child's emotional needs. When adequate attachment between child and caregiver is lacking, the child grows up with an impaired ability to trust that the world is a safe place, and that others will take good care of him or her. Childhood abandonment, unpredictable parental behavior, unrealistic parent expectations, and physical, verbal, or emotional abuse teach children that their environment is not a safe place and that the people they encounter cannot be trusted.

Children who are abandoned, neglected, or mistreated will inevitably experiment with different ways of coping with the psychic wounds and lack of security. Whatever is most effective influences what sort of attachment style they develop. One youngster may restore some kind of equilibrium by continually seeking the caregiver's attention and approval. Children in this category develop an anxious/preoccupied attachment style—what is also known as a 'resistant' or 'ambivalent' attachment style. If, however, the initial attempts to restore equilibrium do not work, the child will eventually disengage from the external world and retreat into his or her own mind. They will learn that keeping their thoughts and feelings to themselves leads to the least amount of anguish and pain. Children in this category develop an avoidant attachment style (Bowlby, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978).

The anxious/preoccupied attachment style carries with it a 'a tendency to make excessive demands on others and to be anxious and clingy when they are not met' (Bowlby, 1973: 14). Anxiously attached individuals are anxious about and preoccupied with long-term commitment and the availability of their partners. They may also continually experience an unfulfilled need for mutuality, intimacy, and reciprocity regardless of how available and committed their partner is.

Anxiously attached people furthermore become very anxious when facing separation and during separation from the partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Fraley & Shaver, 1998). Yet they tend to behave in paradoxical ways upon reunion with the partner or after their needs are met. Their feeling that the partner abandoned them triggers angry protests directed at the partner or angry withdrawal from the partner when the partner eventually attends to them. A similarly negative response can be seen in connection with relationship conflict, which causes the anxiously attached individual to have a more negative attitude toward the partner and the relationship (Simpson et al., 1996).

Immature, anxiously attached individuals tend to become compulsive care-seekers, wanting their partner to pamper them and take care of them (Schaffer, 1993). In successful cases where the care-seeker's excessive needs are taken care of, this results in a unilateral relationship that provides the care-seeker with support, approval, and attention without any expectation that he or she will show any concern or care for the caregiver. If the care-seeking goal is frustrated by a person who purposely or inadvertently fails to take care of the care-seeker's excessive needs, the care-seeker is likely to lash out with angry insults, passive-aggressive behavior, or angry withdrawal from the partner until the partner gives him or her undivided attention and fulfillment of his or her needs.

It is often overlooked that a preoccupied-anxiously attached individual can possess narcissistic traits. However, the preoccupied-anxiously attached care-seeker is an excellent example of an extremely narcissistic person. Conversations will tend to be focused mostly on their needs. Like a child, they will willingly participate in activities only when they are convenient and entertaining for them. Excessive care-seeking can be an underlying cause of attention-seeking disorders like hypochondria, histrionic personality disorder, and borderline personality disorder (Widiger & Frances, 1985).

Whereas immature anxiously attached individuals are obsessively seeking care, more mature, anxiously attached individuals may become compulsive caregivers, seeking attachment by caring

excessively for a parent, child or partner (Bowlby, 1977; Schaffer, 1993; Blatt & Levy, 2003: 135). In this scenario, the anxiously attached person assumes the role of the excessively, caregiving parent in order to maintain the illusion of true mutuality and unity—the sublime goal of their existence. When a parent assumes this role in his or her relationship to a child, this can turn into a form of constant hovering over the child, also known as ‘helicopter parenting’ (van Ingen et al., 2015).

The second type of insecure attachment is the avoidant attachment style. People who are avoidantly attached cannot form close romantic relationships (Bowlby, 1973: 14). They experience fear when they need to narrow down options by committing to another person, a job or a course of action (Hatfield, 1984). They furthermore show patterns of compulsive self-reliance, refusing to receive from others or give to others.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) identified two types of avoidant attachment: fearful and dismissive. Whereas the fearfully attached is still hoping to eventually connect with a partner yet fears approaching and connecting and pulls away out of fear, the dismissive avoidant person has given up. Avoidantly attached people will likely be commitment phobic and use small imperfections in the partner as an excuse for not getting too involved. They may purposely distance themselves from the partner by acting ambivalently, openly flirting with others or cheating, not listening when the partner is talking, not communicating their thoughts or feelings, and avoiding intimacy or staying out of touch for days or weeks after an intimate encounter.

The avoidantly attached individuals fare slightly better than the anxiously attached individuals when faced with relationship conflict (Simpson et al., 1996). Avoidant people will attempt to avoid conflict, diverting their attention away from the conflict and attachment-related issues. After the conflict, they are likely to behave in less warm and supportive way toward their partner, but unlike their anxious counterpart, they do not view the partner or the relationship in a more negative light.

Attachment is typically viewed as distinct from love. Phillip Shaver and Cindy Hazan, however, have argued that love is best understood in terms of feelings of attachment or dispositions to have those feelings (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Shaver et al., 1988). Attachment, of course, cannot by itself constitute passionate love. Shaver and Hazan adopt a triangular theory of love. Love, they say, is composed of feelings of or dispositions to feel attachment, a desire to engage in caregiving and feelings of or dispositions to feel sexual attraction.⁴

Although there are three components to passionate secure love, the most basic of the three emotions is the feeling of or disposition to feel attachment. The attachment component is a complex emotion, which involves a multiplicity of other emotions, for instance euphoria, joy, affection, security, intimacy, trust, fear, anger, resentment, sadness, emotional pain, disappointment, and jealousy. The other two components of passionate, secure love are influenced by the individual’s attachment pattern, which in turns influences how the individual feels about attachment.

People who are securely attached tend to be in love relationships that have all three components. Avoidant individuals, by contrast, often do not have the capacity for caregiving. Nor do they show any interest in caregiving. They also fail to associate sexual behavior with intimacy and are more likely to have casual, non-committal sexual relationships than committed relationships.

Anxiously attached individuals score much higher on the caregiving components. They are either compulsive care-seekers or compulsive caregivers or both. Their sexual relationships tend to be a means to satisfy unmet needs for security. They often come across as desperate for love.

In their relationships they are likely to be highly jealous and obsessed with their partner as a result of their constant fear of abandonment.

Love understood partially in terms of feelings of attachment has an advantage over other approaches to love. The attachment-theoretical framework forms a unified 'framework for understanding love, loneliness, and grief at different points in the life cycle' (Hazan & Shaver, 1987: 511). It furthermore provides a unified account of what distinguishes healthy from unhealthy forms of love. It is noteworthy that the unhealthy forms of love are cases in which the emotions that an individual experiences do not match the object of her love. Compulsive care-seekers, compulsive caregivers, and avoidant individuals typically do not have a loving response that matches that of their partners. Compulsive caregivers love too much, whereas compulsive care-seekers and avoidant individuals love too little. So, in extreme cases, both kinds of love are unhealthy (or irrational).

Moreover, the love experienced by anxiously attached individuals is very often fueled by an idealization of the beloved. So, the love misrepresents and hence is unhealthy (or irrational) for that reason as well. Of course, one can imagine relationships between two avoidant individuals where the loving responses of each partner match the other person's loving responses perfectly. This form of love would not strictly speaking be unhealthy and likely is not distressing to the partners. But such cases are merely hypothetical.

Love and Psychoanalysis

Love has been at the heart of psychoanalysis since its conception. What distinguishes the psychoanalytic approach to love from the classical psychological approach is, as Bergmann puts it, 'the awareness of the link between adult love and love in infancy' (Bergmann, 1988: 668–669). Most contemporary psychoanalytic approaches are expansions of Sigmund Freud's theories of love. Freud developed two psychoanalytic theories of love (Bergmann, 1988).⁵ One is the theory that love and sexuality are initially combined when the 'child is sucking at his mother's breast. The finding of the love object is in fact a refinding' (Freud, 1905: 222). This phase is also known as the 'oral phase' of the child's psychosexual development (0–1 years of age). This phase is followed by the anal phase (1–3 years of age) and the phallic or oedipal phase (3–6 years). During latency (6–12 years of age) the child learns to repress the sexual component of his or her love for his parents. During adolescence (or the genital phase; 12+ years of age), the sexual impulses reemerge, and if the other stages have been resolved successfully, he or she can enter a loving sexual relationship with a partner. The individual's capacity to love (also known as 'genital love') and engage in a healthy love relationship depends on his or her ability to recombine the capacity for tender love with the re-emerging sexuality. This, however, requires that the individual has fully separated from the parents. Otherwise, the individual will experience the beloved merely as a corrected version of a parent (Bergmann, 1988; Herzog, 2005).

Freud's second theory followed his discovery of narcissism. On the second theory, the separation from the parent is required for us to be able to experience love but it is not sufficient. We fall in love with people that are mirror images of our ideal self. Love completes our deficient narcissist selves. When the love is reciprocated, the tension between self and other is eliminated and the lover experiences a relief from the freedom from envy of the other person's qualities and abilities. This leads to the characteristic feeling of reward in the presence of the beloved as well as an idealization of the beloved. This second theory shares core elements in common with Aron and Aron's (1986) self-expansion theory, which also predicts that we fall in love with people who complement us and who can trigger a feeling of one's own self being expanded.

More recent psychoanalytic approaches to love have become increasingly desexualized (Green, 1995; Stein, 1998a, 1998b), bringing the field closer to attachment theory (Fonagy & Target, 2007; Blatt & Levy, 2003). The sexual phrases inherent to psychoanalytic theory are now primarily thought of as metaphors for the dynamic between the individual and her parents or later a partner. Like attachment theory, modern psychoanalysis also predicts two fundamental ways of being insecurely attached to others (Blatt, 1995; Blatt & Blass, 1990). A fundamental polarity in psychoanalytic theory is that between unity and agency, or relatedness and self-sufficiency (Blatt & Levy, 2003). The anxiously attached individual seeks to preserve unity and prevent loneliness and alienation, whereas the avoidantly attached person seeks to preserve agency, individuality, and personal autonomy (Balint, 1959; Blatt, 1999; Shor & Sanville, 1978). Healthy love requires that one maintains a healthy balance between unity and agency, or relatedness and self-sufficiency.

In the beginning obsessive stages of love relationships in which the love is mutual, the lovers seek an unhealthy level of unity and relatedness (Balint, 1959; Blatt, 1999; Shor & Sanville, 1978). Only when the love matures and neurochemical and hormones return to normal can lovers hope to retrieve a balance between unity and agency. This, however, is also the point at which lovers may go too far in the other direction and seek to be self-sufficient and express their own agency without concern for the other. Many mistake the shift in hormones and neurochemicals that are natural in healthy, long-lasting love relationships for a sudden absence of love. If a person is used to the obsessive feelings of being in love and then suddenly feels nothing but occasional closeness and sexual attraction, he or she is bound to think that something is wrong with the relationship. A natural reaction to that feeling is to seek self-expansion elsewhere, be it through a new lover, a new self-expanding activity, or a renewed dedication to work. This type of behavior is, in fact, predictable in avoidant individuals, who are more likely never to fall in love or to experience only low-intensity love (Feeney & Noller, 1990).

When attachment grows too insecure especially in childhood, it can lead to pathopsychology (Widiger & Frances, 1985). An anxious attachment style in early childhood is a predictor of dramatic personality disorders such as histrionic, borderline, and dependent personality disorder later in life, whereas an avoidant attachment style in early childhood is a predictor of schizotypal, schizoid, narcissistic, antisocial, and avoidant personality disorder later in life (West et al., 1994; Blatt & Levy, 2003). But being insecurely attached to one or more partners in adulthood can also give rise to markers of pathopsychology. Being abandoned by several consecutive partners may push an individual toward a more insecure attachment style, which together with genetic dispositions is a predictor of psychopathology (West et al., 1994).

Securely attached lovers, who manage to find the right balance between relatedness and self-sufficiency, have the capacity to establish mature and mutually satisfying interpersonal relationships within which they can explore new activities and develop their own sense of self (Blatt, 1995). The securely attached lover respects the other person's need for alone time while setting aside time to connect with the other person, thereby giving both parties the opportunity to experience both independence and bonding.

Conclusion

I have argued that the main predictors of why we fall in love in the first place are that (1) we are open to meeting a new lover or romantic partner, (2) we meet another person who provides the potential for an expansion of ourselves, and (3) the person or the circumstances in which we meet the person destabilizes our mood and pleasure chemicals, which generates a kind of obsessive-compulsive tendency in us. While these factors can account for why people fall in love in the first place, they do not predict why romantic love lasts. For romantic love to last there has

to be feelings of or dispositions to feel familiarity, attachment, and similarity of attitudes and core values. These feelings or dispositions correspond to more stable mood and pleasure chemicals and an increase in attachment and bonding chemicals.

Attachment theory, I have argued, appears to have the greatest potential for providing a plausible account of what love is as well as the individual differences in our capacity to love other people in a healthy way. On the view of love proposed by attachment theorists, healthy love is an emotion that consists of feelings of or dispositions to feel attachment, a desire to engage in caregiving and feelings of or a disposition to feel sexual attraction. Unhealthy love typically involves abnormal changes to the attachment or caregiving systems, which can be a result of early parent–child interactions or interactions with friends, family, and partners in relationships later in life.⁶

Notes

- 1 Psychologist Paul Ekman originally argued that there were six basic emotions (joy, surprise, sadness, anger, fear, and disgust). See, e.g., Ekman, P. & Friesen, W.V. (1971). “Constants across cultures in the face and emotion,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 17: 124–129. Contempt, he said, was a mixture of anger and disgust. However, he later included contempt (or “scorn”) among the basic emotions on the grounds that it is associated with a universally recognizable facial expression. Ekman, P. & Heider, K.G. (1988). “The universality of contempt expression: A replication,” *Motivation and Emotion*, 12: 303–308.
- 2 This approach is a natural extension of James’ feeling theory. For discussion, see, for example, Prinz (2004) and Brogaard (2015).
- 3 For more in-depth discussion, see Wonderly (this volume).
- 4 For simplicity’s sake I will treat desires as kinds of emotions, even though desires are ontologically different from emotions (see Brogaard, 2015).
- 5 Bergmann (1988) argues that Freud has three theories. But the one outlined in ‘Instincts and Their Vicissitudes’ is so lacking in content that it hardly counts as a theory. Freud merely observes that love cannot be explained as a sexual instinct but resides in the relationship between the beloved and the ‘total ego’ (Freud, 1914).
- 6 For comments on an earlier version of this chapter I am grateful to Adrienne Martin and audiences at UMSL and the University of Miami.

References

- Ainsworth, M.D., Blehar, M., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). *Patterns of Attachment: A Psychological Study of the Strange Situation*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Acevedo, B.P. & Aron, A. (2009). “Does a Long-Term Relationship Kill Romantic Love?” *General Psychology*, 13(1): 59–65.
- Aron, A. & Aron, E.N. (1986). *Love and the Expansion of Self: Understanding Attraction and Satisfaction*, New York: Hemisphere Publishing Corp/Harper & Row.
- Aron, E.N. & Aron, A. (1996). “Love and Expansion of the Self: The State of the Model,” *Personal Relationships* 3(1): 45–58.
- Aron, A., Dutton, D.G., Aron, E.N., & Iverson, A. (1989). “Experiences of Falling in Love,” *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, August 6, 3: 243–257.
- Aron, A., Fisher, H., Mashek, D.J., Strong, G., Haifang, Li H., & Brown, L.L. (2005). “Reward, Motivation, and Emotion Systems Associated with Early-Stage Intense Romantic Love,” *Journal of Neurophysiology* 94(1): 327–337.
- Balint, M. (1959). *Thrills and Repression*, London: Hogarth Press.
- Bartholomew, K. & Horowitz, L.M. (1991). “Attachment Styles Among Young Adults: A Test of a Four-Category Model,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 61(2): 226–244.
- Bergmann, M.S. (1988). “Freud’s Three Theories of Love in the Light of Later Developments,” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 36(3): 653–672.
- Berscheid, E. & Walster, E. (1974). “A Little Bit of Love,” in T. Huston (Ed.), *Foundations of Interpersonal Attraction*, New York: Academic Press, pp. 355–381.

- Blatt, S.J. (1995). "Representational Structures in Psychopathology," in *Rochester Symposium on Developmental Psychopathology*, Vol. 6: *Emotion, Cognition, and Representation*, ed. D. Cicchetti & S. Toth, Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, pp. 1–33.
- Blatt, S.J. (1999). "Personality Factors in the Brief Treatment of Depression: Further Analyses of the NIMH Sponsored Treatment for Depression Collaborative Research Program," in *Psychotherapy Indications and Outcomes*, ed. D.S. Janowsky. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, pp. 23–45.
- Blatt, S.J. & Blass, R.B. (1990). "Attachment and Separateness: A Dialectic Model of the Products and Processes of Psychological Development," *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 45: 107–127.
- Blatt, S.J. & Levy, K.N. (2003). "Attachment Theory, Psychoanalysis, Personality Development, and Psychopathology," *Journal Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 23(1): 102–150.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and Loss*, Vol. 2: *Separation, Anxiety, and Anger*, New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1977). "The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds, 1: Etiology and Psychopathology in Light of Attachment Theory," *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 130: 201–210.
- Brogaard, B. (2015). *On Romantic Love: Simple Truths About a Complex Emotion*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dutton, D.G. & Aron, A.P. (1974). "Some Evidence for Heightened Sexual Attraction Under Conditions of High Anxiety," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 30(4): 510–517.
- Ekman, P. & Friesen, W.V. (1971). "Constants Across Cultures in the Face and Emotion," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 17: 124–129.
- Ekman, P. & Heider, K.G. (1988). "The Universality of Contempt Expression: A Replication," *Motivation and Emotion*, 12: 303–308.
- Feeney, J.A. & Noller, P. (1990). "Attachment Style as a Predictor of Adult Romantic Relationships", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58(2): 281–291.
- Fehr, B. & Russell, J.A. (1984). "Concept of Emotion Viewed from a Prototype Perspective," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 113: 464–486.
- Fonagy, P. & Target, M. (2007). "The Rooting of the Mind in the Body: New Links Between Attachment Theory and Psychoanalytic Thought," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 55(2): 411–456.
- Fraley, R.C. & Shaver, P.R. (1998). "Airport Separations: A Naturalistic Study of Adult Attachment Dynamics in Separating Couples," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75: 1198–1212.
- Freud, S. (1905). *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Standard Edition 7, pp. 136–243.
- Freud, S. (1914). *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, Standard Edition 14: 73–102.
- Freud, S. (2015). "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," Standard Edition 14: 117–140.
- Gonzaga, G.C., Turner, R.A., Keltner, D., Campos, B., & Altemus, M. (2006). "Romantic Love and Sexual Desire in Close Relationships," *Emotion*, 6(2): 163–179.
- Green, A. (1995). "Has Sexuality Anything to Do with Psychoanalysis?" *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 76: 871–883.
- Hatfield, E. (1984). "The Dangers of Intimacy," in V. Derlaga (Ed.), *Communication, Intimacy and Close Relationships*, New York: Praeger, pp. 207–220.
- Hazan, C. & Shaver, P. (1987). "Romantic Love Conceptualized as an Attachment Process," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52(3): 511–524.
- Herzog, J.M. (2005). "Triadic Reality and the Capacity to Love," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 74(4): 1029–1052.
- Kolodny, N. (2003). "Love as Valuing a Relationship," *Philosophical Review*, 112: 135–189.
- Lee, J.A. (1973). *Colours of Love: An Exploration of the Ways of Loving*, Toronto: New Press.
- Lemieux, R. & Hale, J.L. (2002). "Cross-Sectional Analysis of Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment: Testing the Assumptions of the Triangular Theory of Love," *Psychological Reports*, 90(3 Pt 1): 1009–1014.
- Madey, S.F. & Rodgers, L. (2009). "The Effect of Attachment and Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love on Relationship Satisfaction," *Individual Differences Research*, 7(2): 76–84.
- Marazziti, D., Akiskal, H.S., Rossi, A., & Cassano, G.B. (1999). "Alteration of the Platelet Serotonin Transporter in Romantic Love," *Psychological Medicine*, 29(3): 741–745.
- Marston, P.J., Hecht, M.L., Manke, M.L., McDaniel, S., & Reeder, H. (1998). "The Subjective Experience of Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment in Heterosexual Loving Relationships," *Personal Relationships*, 5(1): 15–30.
- Prinz, J. (2004). *Gut Reactions: A Perceptual Theory of Emotion*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rosch, E.H. (1978). "Principles of Categorization," in E.H. Rosch & B.B. Lloyd (Eds.), *Cognition and Categorization*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, pp. 27–48.

- Schaffer, C.E. (1993). *The Role of Attachment in the Experience and Regulation of Affect*, doctoral dissertation, New Haven, CT: Yale University.
- Shaver, P. & Hazan, C. (1987). "Being Lonely, Falling in Love: Perspectives from Attachment Theory," *Journal of Social Behavior & Personality*, 2(2, Pt 2): 105–124.
- Shaver, P., Schwartz, J., Kirson, D., & O'Connor, C. (1987). "Emotion Knowledge: Further Explorations of a Prototype Approach," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52: 1061–1086.
- Shaver, P.R. & Hazan, C. (1988). "A Biased Overview of the Study of Love," *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 5(4): 473–501.
- Shaver, P.R., Hazan, C., & Bradshaw, D. (1988). "Love as Attachment: The Integration of Three Behavioral Systems," in R.J. Sternberg & M.L. Barnes (Eds.), *The Psychology of Love*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, pp. 68–99.
- Shaver, P.R., Morgan, H.J., & Wu, S. (1996). "Is Love a 'Basic' Emotion?," *Personal Relationships*, 3(1): 81–96.
- Shor, J. & Sanville, J. (1978). *Illusions in Loving: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Intimacy and Autonomy*, Los Angeles, CA: Double Helix.
- Simpson, J.A., Rholes, W.S., & Phillips, D. (1996). "Conflict in Close Relationships: An Attachment Perspective," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(5): 899–914.
- Stein, R. (1998a). "The Enigmatic Dimension of Sexual Experience: The 'Otherness' of Sexuality and Primal Seduction," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 67: 594–625.
- Stein, R. (1998b). "The Poignant, the Excessive and the Enigmatic in Sexuality," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 79: 253–268.
- Sternberg, R.J. (1986). "A Triangular Theory of Love," *Psychological Review*, 93(2): 119–135.
- Sternberg, R.J. (1998). *Cupid's Arrow: The Course of Love through Time*, London: Cambridge University Press.
- van Ingen, D.J., Freiheit, S.R., Steinfeldt, J.A., Moore, L.L., Wimer, D.J., Knutt, A.D., Scapinello, S., & Roberts, A. (2015). "Helicopter Parenting: The Effect of an Overbearing Caregiving Style on Peer Attachment and Self-Efficacy," *Journal of College Counseling*, 18(1): 7–20.
- West, M., Rose, M., & Sheldon-Keller, A. (1994). "Assessment of Patterns of Insecure Attachment in Adults and Application to Dependent and Schizoid Personality Disorders," *Journal of Personality Disorders*, 8(3): 249–256.
- Widiger, T.A. & Frances, A. (1985). "The DSM-III Personality Disorders: Perspectives from Psychology," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 42: 615–623.
- Zeki, S. (2007). "The Neurobiology of Love," *FEBS Letters*, 581(14): 2575–2579.

INDEX

- Abraham 256, 257–9
 Abramson, Kate 280, 281, 283, 458
 absolutist constraints 186
 Adamson, Peter 398, 400, 401
 addiction 29–30
 adrenaline 467
 adult attachment theory 24
 aesthetic love 460–1
 aesthetics *see* eighteenth-century aesthetics
 African ethical theory 313–23; common good
 320–1; communal love and individualistic love
 322–3; compared to Western approaches
 315–16; conflict between love and morality
 314–15, 316–20
Against Love (Kipnis) 152–3
 agape love 266, 456–7, 462; as compatible with
 moral anger 161–4, 178; constancy of 269–70,
 272; defining 157–60; hatred and 163–4; King
 on 157, 158, 159, 160, 163–4, 165–6, 167, 178,
 331; moral anger as expression of 164–7; St.
 Paul on 266, 270; Peirce on 124–6, 441; racial
 injustice and 157, 159–60, 162–7, 331; self-love
 and 159–60
 Agathon 117, 229
 agency 300–8; aiming to bring about love 303;
 attachment and 27–8; beliefs and 303–4, 305–6;
 concatenation view of love 306–8, 310n35;
 evaluative control 303–6, 309n22; intentions
 and 304, 309n21; judgment sensitivity and 306;
 love as active 301–2; perceptual beliefs and
 305–6; reasoning to love 304–6; volitional
 control 303, 309n21
 Ahmed, Shahab 397
 Ainsworth, Mary 23–4, 27, 31n19, 466
 Alcibiades 105, 110, 458
 Alexander, L. 374
 Alexander, Tamara 96
 Alfarabius 396, 397, 399–401
 Allen, Woody 266
 almsgiving 415
 amatonormativity 73–4, 78, 155
 ameliorative projects of analysis 80
 American Civil War and Reconstruction 190
American Horror Story (television series) 95
 Ames, Roger 366
amor fati 205, 209, 450
amour pur debate 424
 Anderson, Elizabeth 345
 Anderson, Kevin 220
 androgyny 95
 anger *see* moral anger
 animals: attentive love of 193–203; human
 humility and 198–9; human self-directedness
 and 195–7; letting go and 199–201; un-selfing
 and 196–7, 199; use-based classifications of
 196
 anthems 246
 anti-subjectivism 334–5
 anxious attachment style 472–4, 475
 apartheid 171, 172, 173, 177–8
 appraisal view of reasons for love 42–3
 Aquinas, Thomas 413–16
 a-rational love 282–4
 Aristophanes 98, 266, 270, 271
 Aristotle 105, 113n1, 163, 205–6, 212, 330; anger
 161; Christianity and 413–16; friendship 14, 15,
 16, 400, 414–15; intellectual attainment 391,
 392; Islamic philosophy and 397; philia 120,
 123, 125
 Arjuna 378
 Armstrong, J. 206
 Arnold, Matthew 181
 Aron, A. 466, 467, 468, 474
 Aron, E.N. 467, 468, 474

- art: aesthetic response to 232, 235–7, 238–9;
 expression theory of 244–6; letting go and 200
 asceticism 373, 374
 Asch, Adrienne 50–1
 Asma, Steven 363
 aspirational love 461–2
 Astell, Mary 433–4, 437
 “At the Fishhouses” (Bishop) 248
 attachment 23–30, 465–6, 471–4; addiction and
 29–30; agency and 27–8; anxious attachment
 style 472–4, 475; avoidant attachment style 472,
 473, 474, 475; capacity to love and 28–30;
 caring and valuing and 25–6, 29–30; compared
 to romantic love 23–6; identity and 28; insecure
 attachment styles 31n19, 471, 472–4, 475;
 pathologies of 28–30, 31n19; psychopathy and
 28, 29, 472, 475; secure attachment style 471,
 473; security and 26–7, 30, 31n10
 attentive love: of animals 193–203; holism and
 202–3; humility and 198–9; letting go and
 199–201; of nature 205–13; un-selfing and
 196–7, 199
 Augustine, St. 410–11, 412, 419n1
 Austen, Jane 459–60
 Austin, Mary 207
 Averroes 397, 405
 Avicenna 397, 401–2
 avoidant attachment style 472, 473, 474, 475
- Badeau, Hector 363–4
 Baier, Annette 279
 Baldwin, James 160, 161, 162–3, 165, 167, 331
 Balzac, Honoré de 40
 Barth, Karl 416, 417
 Bartholomew, K. 473
 Baumgarten, Alexander Gottlieb 235
 beauty 229–39; aesthetic love 460–1; Burke on
 229, 233–4; Cavell on 238–9; disinterested
 230–3, 238; Hegel on 238; Hutcheson on 229,
 230–1, 238; Kant on 229, 231–3, 238; love and
 lust and 233–4; Mendelssohn on 229, 235–7;
 mixed sentiments 235–7; Nehamas on 229,
 238–9; in Plato’s *Symposium* 229–30, 238;
 Schopenhauer on 238; Shaftesbury on 230;
 Voltaire on 431–2
 Bell, Clive 238
 Ben Zoma 385
 benevolence 385, 414–15; at center of moral
 theory 325–32; *see also* neighborly love
 Bentham, Jeremy 441
 Ben-Ze’ev, A. 163, 164
 Bergmann, M.S. 474
Bhagavad Gītā 372, 378
 Bhakti 371–2, 375, 379
 Bible 98, 266, 382, 383, 384, 385–90, 391–2, 409,
 411, 422, 434
 Bicknell, Jeanette 244
- biodiversity loss 220
 bioethics *see* prenatal selection against disability
 Bishop, Elizabeth 248
 Black, Max 268–9
 Black Consciousness Movement 160
 blackmail cases 132
 Bogaert, A.F. 97
 Bossuet, Jacques-Bénigne 423
 Bowlby, John 23–4, 27, 28, 466, 471–2
 Brake, Elizabeth 68, 73, 155
 Brandom, Robert 166
 Brehony, K.A. 97
 Brentano, Franz 327
 Broad, C.D. 322
 Brontë, Emily 271
 Browning, Elizabeth Barrett 266, 267
 Brueggemann, Walter 189
 Buber, Martin 180–1, 185, 188–9
 Buddhism 162, 195, 196, 199, 373–4
 Bujo, Bénézet 315, 317–19, 320–1, 322
 Burke, Edmund 229, 233–4
 Burke, Kenneth 250
 Butler, Joseph 161, 162, 166
- Cady, L.E. 445
 Calhoun, Cheshire 153
 capacity to love, attachment and 28–30
 Carbonell, Vanessa 295
 Carew, Thomas 267
 caring: attachment and 25–6, 29–30; friendship
 and 14; love as emotional caring 252–6
 Carson, Anne 117, 118
 categorical desires 292, 323n1
 Catholicism 98, 99, 413–16
 Catullus 432
 Cave allegory 193, 195
 Cavell, Stanley 238–9
 Charron, Pierre 425–6
 Chaucer, Geoffrey 386
 child abuse 37
 children: abuse of parents 40; marriage and 142,
 148–9, 150; moral resistance to killing 187–9;
 see also parental love; prenatal selection against
 disability
 Chopin, Kate 265
 Christianity 325, 409–10, 442; Aristotelian
 413–16; Aristotelian love and 414–16;
 Augustine 410–11, 412, 419n1; hatred and love
 345; Kantian 416–19; Kantian love and 418–19;
 marriage 98, 99, 415–16, 418–19; materiality
 411, 412; Platonic 410–13, 419n1; Platonic
 love and 412–13; sex and sexual desire 98, 99,
 412–13, 415–16, 418–19; *see also* natural right
 conceptions of love
 Christina, Queen of Sweden 433
Chronicles of Narnia (Lewis) 411
 civic love 178

- climate change 220
 Cocking, Dean 15, 16, 292, 456
 coercion: defining 128–30; *see also* relationship ultimatums
 Collingwood, R.G. 238, 245
 color wheel theory of love 471
Common Humanity, A (Gaita) 297–8
 compassion 158–9, 180, 189–90, 255
 compersion 89
 compulsive caregivers 472–3, 474
 compulsive care-seekers 472, 473, 474
 compulsive self-reliance 473
 conceptual analysis 79–80
 conceptual inaccuracy in disputes about love 76–9
Confessions (Augustine) 412
 Confucian Tradition 359–67, 369; cognitive and affective beginnings of virtue 360–1; conflict between duties to family and others 362–7; interaction of reflection and feeling 361–2; Mencius 359, 360–6, 368; Mohism 360, 363, 364–5; mourning 368; *ren* and love 359–60
 Confucius 359, 360, 363, 364, 365, 368
 Conley, Terri D. 86, 89
 conscience and conviction 182–5
 consequentialism 315, 316; in Indian philosophy 373–4; nearest and dearest objection 289–91; *see also* utilitarianism
 constancy of love 264–72, 454, 455, 458; agape love 269–70, 272; eros 267–9, 272; shared-identity model 270–2
 Cope, Wendy 265
 Corinthians, First Letter to 266, 270, 409, 419
 Corvino, John 74
 Council of Nicea 410
 Coventry, Martha 96
 Coyote, Ivan 94
 creative understanding 159
 criticism, moral anger as 165
Critique of Pure Reason (Kant) 416
Critique of the Power of Judgment (Kant) 231–3
Crying Game, The (film) 265
 Cudworth, Ralph 434

 Dante Alighieri 325, 413
Daodejing 367–8
 Daoist tradition 359, 367–9
 Darwall, Stephen 328
 Day, Dorothy 184
 de Beauvoir, Simone 141, 150–1
Death in Venice 460–1
 Delany, Neil 64, 65, 66
 deontological constraints 186
 deontology 315, 316; in Indian philosophy 374–5
 depersonalization 101–2
 Descartes, Rene 194, 333–4, 342, 423, 425, 426–8, 430, 433
Desert Trilogy (films) 406–7

 “Désirée’s Baby” (Chopin) 265
 Dewey, John 208
Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution, The (Firestone) 152
 Dickie, George 238
 Dickinson, Emily 272
 Dionysian concept 448, 450–1
 Diotima 2, 117–21, 122, 229–30, 266
 disability *see* prenatal selection against disability
Discourse Concerning the Love of God, A (Masham) 434–7
 disinterestedness, aesthetic 230–3, 238
 disputes about romantic love 72–80
 “Do You Love Me?” (song) 243
 Doag, Sue 363–4
 dopamine 467–8
 drawing view of love 292
 Du Bos, Jean-Baptiste 233
 Du Châtelet, Emilie 437
 dualism of practical reason 289–90
 Dummett, Michael 77
 Duns Scotus 268–9
 “Duties of Love” (Wallace) 296
 Dutton, D.G. 467

Early Theological Writings (Hegel) 442
 Easton, Dossie 89
 ego, self and 199
 ego-orientation 195–7
 eighteenth-century aesthetics 229–39; beauty, love, and lust 233–4; Burke 229, 233–4; disinterested beauty 230–3, 238; Hutcheson 229, 230–1, 238; influences on later aesthetics 238–9; Kant 229, 231–3, 238; Mendelssohn 229, 235–7; mixed sentiments 235–7; Shaftesbury 230
Either/Or (Kierkegaard) 445, 446
 Elisabeth of Bohemia 433
 embodiment 93, 100
 embryos 47–9
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo 122–4
Emile (Rousseau) 437
 emotional caring 252–6
 empathy 158–9
 Enlightenment 325, 416, 418
Enumeration of the Sciences, The (Farabi) 400
 environmental integrity 215–23
 Epicurus 113n1, 432, 437
 eros 2, 99, 106, 117–21, 122, 123, 124–5, 157, 266, 413; constancy of 267–9, 272
 “Evolutionary Love” (Peirce) 124–6, 441
Explication of the Maxims of the Saints on the Inner Life (Fénelon) 423
 exploitation: defining 128–30; *see also* relationship ultimatums
 expression theory of art 244–6
Eyes of a Blue Dog (Marquez) 271–2

- faith 253, 256–61; existentially understood 256–9;
 love as conditioned by 260–1; love in the
 structure of 259–60; resignation and 256–9,
 260–1
 falling in love 465, 466–8
falsafah 396
 false beliefs, friendship and 13, 17–20
 Farabi, Abu Nasr 396, 397, 399–401
 fate, love of 205, 209, 450
Father Goriot (Balzac) 40
 Fausto-Sterling, Anne 101
Fear and Trembling (Kierkegaard) 256, 446
 Fehr, B. 468
 Fénelon, François 423
 Ferrand, Jacques 426
 fetishism 101–2
 “The Fiddler of Dooney” (Yeats) 245
Fiddler on the Roof (musical) 243
 Fields, Douglas 163
 filial love 36, 44
 Finnis, John 98
 Firestone, Shulamith 152
 Fishback, Margaret 23
 Fitzgerald, Ella 249
 Foot, Philippa 334–5, 336
For Anne Gregory (Yeats) 268, 269
 Four Noble Truths 373–4
 Francis (pope) 98
 Francis of Sales 422–3
 Frankfurt, Harry 25, 26, 31n8, 42, 43, 205, 278–9,
 349, 454, 457
 Freud, Sigmund 23, 474
 Fricker, Miranda 77
 friendship 13–21; Aristotle on 14, 15, 16, 400,
 414–15; attitudes and feelings 14; Christian love
 as 414–15; Descartes on 430; false beliefs and
 13, 17–20; Farabi on 400–1; interaction and
 14–16; Kant on 144; knowledge and 13, 16–21;
 risks of 20–1; self-disclosure and 15, 16;
 Spinoza on 430; Voltaire on 432
 Fuller, Margaret 146–7

 Gaita, Raymond 297–8
 Gandhi, Mahatma 363
 gay pride 93
 gay rights activism 93–4, 153
Gay Science, The (Nietzsche) 450
 Geisler, Norm 413
 gender: personhood and 100–1; *see also* queer
 desire and love
 gender essentialism *see* marriage
 Genesis 98, 256, 257–9, 383, 385–6
Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (film) 266
 German Idealism 238
 al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid 397, 402–5
 Gheaus, Anca 51–2
 Gibran, Kahlil 271

 gift, life as a 185, 189
 God, as the Necessary Existent 402
 God, love of: in 17th and eighteenth-century
 philosophy 422–5, 427–9, 433–7; intellectual
 love 383, 388–92; in Islamic philosophy 399,
 402–4; in Jewish philosophy 383, 388–90; in
 Kantian Christianity 418
 God’s love 266, 269, 423; in Jewish philosophy
 384–5
 Goldman, Alan 84–5
 Goldman, Emma 148–9
 good life 119, 121–2, 351–3
 green, being 215–23
 greenhouse gas emissions 220
 Griffel, Frank 405
 Guyon, Mme 423
 Gyekye, Kwame 313, 321

hadith 395
haecceities 269
 Hall, David 89
 Halwani, Raja 61, 63, 64, 65–6
 Han-Pile, Béatrice 450
 Hardy, Janet 89
 Hardy, Thomas 265
 Harlow, Harry 23
 Haslanger, Sally 79–80
 hatred and love 344–53; analogous roles in
 motivation 347–9; broad notions of 346–7;
 conceptions of a good human life and 351–3;
 hatred as incompatible with agape love 163–4;
 normative status of 349–51; as opposites 216,
 344–6; politicization of 395–6
 Hauerwas, Stanley 413
 Hazan, Cindy 471, 473–4
 hedonistic concepts of love 430–3; La Mettrie
 432–3; Masham 436–7; Voltaire 431–2
Hedwig and the Angry Inch (film) 96–7
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich 144–5, 238,
 441–4
 helicopter parenting 472
 Helm, Bennett 25
 Henry, Matthew 97
 hermeneutical injustice 77, 78
 Heschel, Abraham Joshua 181
 Hieronymi, Pamela 309n21, 309n22
hikmah 396
 Hölderlin, Friedrich 442
 holism 202–3
 homosexual desire and love: African ethical
 perspective 318; Catholic teaching on 99; myth
 of the other half and 99; Plato on 110–12,
 113n7, 114n13; Voltaire on 431–2; *see also*
 queer desire and love; same-sex relationships
 hooks, bell 74, 75
 Horowitz, L.M. 473
 humanity as reason for love 456–7

- Hume, David 233, 339–40
 humility 198–9
 Hurka, Thomas 281–2, 283, 455, 456
 Hursthouse, Roseland 373
 Hutcheson, Francis 229, 230–1, 238
 hybrid love 285–6
 hybrid view of reasons for love 281–2
 hymns 246, 248
 Hyppolite, Jean 442
- “I Knew I Loved You” (song) 271
 Ibn ‘Arabi 397
 Ibn Hazm 407
 Ibn Rushd 397, 405
 Ibn Sina 397, 401–2
 Idealism 238
 identity, attachment and 28
 Identity of Indiscernibles 268–9
 Ikhwan al-Safa’ 398–9
 impartiality 5–7; in African ethical theory 314–15, 316–20; conflict between reasons of love and moral reasons 288–98, 314–15, 316–20; in Confucian Tradition 363–5; faith and 260–1; of neighborly love 254–5
 incest 318
 Indian philosophy 371–80; Bhakti 371–2, 375, 379; Buddhism 373–4; consequentialism 373–4; deontology 374–5; The Good justifies the Right 373–4; The Good produces the Right 373; Jainism 373, 374; meditation and intimacy 376–80; The Right justifies the Good 374–5; The Right produces the Good 375; self-governance 377, 379, 380; unconservatism 377–8, 379, 380; virtue ethics 373; Yoga 371–2, 375, 376–80
 indifference 177, 216
 infant attachment *see* attachment
 infinite resignation 259, 260–1
Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue (Hutcheson) 230–1
 insecure attachment styles 31n19, 471, 472–4, 475
 intellectual love 398–9; of God 383, 388–92
 International Energy Agency 220
 Iqbal, Muhammad 397
 irreplaceability 454, 455, 456, 458
 Isaac 256, 257–9
 ‘*ishq* 395, 398, 406, 407
 Islamic philosophy 395–407; essence and existence of love 401–2; Farabi 396, 397, 399–401; friendship 400–1; al-Ghazali 397, 402–5; Ibn Sina 397, 401–2; love illuminated 404–6; love of God 399, 402–4; love of learning 398–9; love of politics 399–401; al-Razi 397, 398–9; Sufism 397; Suhrawardi 397, 404–6
 Islamophobia 395–6
 Jainism 373, 374
 James, William 188
 jealousy, sexual 68, 88–9
 Jenkins, Carrie 61, 67, 454
 Jesus 181, 188, 409, 424
Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution (Trocme) 181
 Jewish philosophy 382–92, 397; biblical commandments 385–8, 392; God’s love 384–5; intellectual love of God 383, 388–92; Maimonides 383, 384, 387–90, 391–2, 393n14, 397, 400; moral virtue 391–2; neighborly love 386; Rabbinic tradition 385–8
jian ai 363
 John, Eileen 248
 John Paul II (pope) 269–70
 Johnson, Edward 61–2
 Johnson, Marsha P. 93
 Jollimore, Troy 280, 283, 285, 297, 454–5, 456
 Jones, Isham 271
 Joosse, B.M. 35
 judgment sensitivity 306
 justice: love of 424; moral anger and 166; transitional 169–78
- Kant, Immanuel 48, 49, 98, 99, 100, 102, 143–4, 229, 231–3, 306, 416–19
 “Kantian feminism” 100
 Kauppinen, Antti 157, 164
 Keaton, Diane 266
 Keller, Simon 280, 455
 Kennett, Jeannette 15, 16, 292, 456
 Khemir, Nacer 406–7
 Kierkegaard, Søren 206, 252–9, 441, 444–6; faith 256–9, 261; neighborly love 253, 254–6, 444, 445, 446; resignation 256–9; threats of love 253, 254, 259, 260, 261
 killing, moral resistance to 185–9
 al-Kindi 396, 397
 King, Martin Luther, Jr.: agape love 157, 158, 159, 160, 163–4, 165–6, 167, 178, 331; beloved community 158, 159, 331; mutuality 181, 185, 188–9; nonviolence 180–1, 182–3, 184–5, 187, 189; self-love 160
 Kipnis, Laura 152–3
 Kittay, Eva 53
 Kittay, Leo 53–4
 knowledge: friendship and 13, 16–21; love of 398–9
 Knox, T.M. 443
 Kolodny, Niko 25, 43, 44, 279, 281, 456–7
 Kozey, Emily Hulme 113n7
 Krishek, Sharon 446
 Krishna 378–9
 Krog, Antjie 169, 177–8
- La Mettrie, Julien Offrey de 426, 432–3
Laws (Plato) 106–7, 110, 111, 112
 learning, love of 398–9

- Lee, John Alan 471
 Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm 235, 268–9, 423
 Leite, Adam 280, 281, 283, 458, 459
 Leningrad 337–8
 Leo XIII (pope) 413–14
 Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim 237
 “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (King) 181, 184–5
 letting go 199–201
 Levinas, Emmanuel 197
 Lewis, C.S. 40, 45, 86, 411, 413
 life: as sacred and as a gift 185–9; web of 215–23
 Locke, John 142–3, 199, 230, 434, 436
 Lorde, Audre 161, 162, 163
 “Losing My Mind” (song) 245
 loss of love *see* constancy of love
 “Love” (Emerson) 122–4
 love, defining 215–17
Love and Responsibility (Woytila) 269–70
 love at first sight 281, 283, 284
 love for individuals 453–63; aesthetic love 460–1;
 agapic love 456–7, 462; aspirational love 461–2;
 beauty as reason for love 460–1; constancy of
 love 454, 455, 458; humanity as reason for love
 456–7; irreplaceability 454, 455, 456, 458;
 loving attachment 457–8; no-reasons-for-love
 view 454–5; qualities as reasons for love 455–6,
 458; reactive love 458–60; relationships as
 reasons for love 457–8; shared values as reason
 for love 461–2
Love in the Time of Cholera (Marquez) 272
 “Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing” (song) 242
 love of neighbor *see* neighborly love
 love songs 242–50; expression theory and 244–6;
 music and delivery of 249; poet-as-
 thoughtwriter proposal and 246–8
 love-sickness 426
 loving attachment 457–8
 loving attention: to animals 193–203; holism and
 202–3; humility and 198–9; letting go and
 199–201; to nature 205–13; un-selfing and
 196–7, 199
 loving commitment 65, 66
 Lucretius 432, 437
 Lukács, György 238
 Luther, Martin 246
 lyric poetry 245, 247–8

 McCullough, Derek 89
 McKeever, Natasha 62, 65, 69, 86, 87, 88–9, 90,
 92n10
mahabbah 395
Mahābhārata 372, 378
 Maimonides, Moses 383, 384, 387–90, 391–2,
 393n14, 397, 400
 Malebranche, Nicolas 423–5, 428
Mama, Do You Love Me? (Joosse) 35

 Mandeville, Bernard 230
 manifest concepts 79
 Marazziti, D. 467
 Marcel, Gabriel 181, 185, 187–8
 Marquez, Gabriel Garcia 271–2
 marriage 74, 75, 141–55; African ethical
 perspective 318–19, 320; Aquinas on 415–16;
 children and 142, 148–9, 150; Christian
 teaching on 98, 99, 415–16, 418–19; de
 Beauvoir on 150–1; exploitative offers of
 129–30, 136; Firestone on 152; Fuller on
 146–7; Goldman on 148–9; Hegel on 144–5,
 443; Kant on 143–4, 418; Kipnis on 152–3;
 Locke on 142–3; Mill on 147–8; Plato on 110;
 rethinking 154–5; Russell on 149–50; same-sex
 93–4, 153–4; Schopenhauer on 447; slavery and
 147–8; ultimatums 128, 130, 132–5;
 Wollstonecraft on 145–6
 “Marriage and Love” (Goldman) 148–9
Marriage and Morals (Russell) 149–50
 Marston, P.J. 471
 Martin, Adrienne 281, 282, 309n6, 310n35
 Marxist aesthetics 238
 Masham, Damaris 434–7
 materiality 411, 412
 maternal love *see* parental love
 mechanical-physiological natural right conceptions
 of love 425–30; Charron 425–6; Descartes 423,
 425, 426–8, 430; Ferrand 426; friendship 430;
 love of God 427–9; Spinoza 428–30
Meditations on First Philosophy (Descartes) 333
 Melancthon, Philip 413
 Mencius 359, 360–6, 368
 Mendelssohn, Moses 229, 235–7
 mercenary love 423
 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice 203
 metalinguistic negotiation 81n11
 Metz, Thaddeus 316, 317, 321, 322, 323n6
 “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” (hymn) 246
 Mihai, Mihaela 173
 Mikulincer, M. 24
 Mill, John Stuart 147–8, 175, 208, 441
 Milton, K. 210, 223
Mishneh Torah 388, 389, 390
 Mkhize, N. 315
 Mohism 360, 363, 364–5
 monogamy *see* sexual exclusivity
 Moore, M. 374
 moral anger: as compatible with agape love 161–4,
 178; defining 160–1; as expression of agape
 love 164–7; hatred and 163, 164; racial injustice
 and 157, 161, 162–7
 moral choices 374
 moral convictions 182–5
 moral luck 187
 moral normativity 333–43; anti-subjectivism
 334–5; love 336–7; necessity 337–8; rationality

- 339–41; realism 341–2; self-defense 335–6;
 universality 338–9
 moral realism 193
 moral reasons, conflict with reasons for love
 288–98, 314–15, 316–20
 moral resistance to killing 185–9
 “Moral Saints” (Wolf) 295–6
 moral subjectivism 334–5, 336
Moralists, The (Shaftesbury) 230
 “Morality and Partiality” (Wolf) 294–5
 Moses 384, 385, 390, 392, 434
 mourning 368–9
 Mozi 360, 363
 Mulla Sadra 397, 400
 Murdoch, Iris 193, 194–5, 196, 197, 198–200,
 201, 202, 210, 301, 302, 304–5
 Murphy, Jeffrie 157, 164
 Murphy, L. 453
 mutuality 181, 185, 188–9
My Fair Lady (musical) 242–3
 “My Life Closed Twice before its Close”
 (Dickinson) 272
 myth of the other half 98–9
 mythological physiology 426
- Nagel, Thomas 181, 185–7, 291, 346
 narcissism 423, 472, 474
Nasirean Ethics 400
 Nasr, S.H. 398–9
 national anthems 246
 natural right conceptions of love 422–30; Charron
 425–6; Descartes 423, 425, 426–8, 430; Ferrand
 426; friendship 430; love of God 422–5, 427–9;
 Malebranche 423–5, 428; mechanical-
 physiological 425–30; religious renovation
 422–3; Spinoza 428–30; theologically motivated
 422–5
 naturalistic fallacy 334
 nature: love of 205–13; web of life 215–23
 “Nature” (Emerson) 122
 Nazi morality 335–6, 343n2
 nearest and dearest objection to consequentialism
 289–91
 Nehamas, Alexander 229, 238–9, 460–1
 neighborly love 262n7, 412; at center of moral
 theory 325–32; faith and 260–1; Hegel on
 443–4; in Jewish philosophy 386; in Kantian
 Christianity 418; Kierkegaard 253, 254–6, 444,
 445, 446; Nietzsche 449
 Neo-Platonism 410–11, 419
 neuroscience *see* psychological and neuroscientific
 approaches
 Nicea, Council of 410
 Nicolai, Friedrich 237
Nicomachean Ethics (Aristotle) 113n1, 392, 400
 Nietzsche, Friedrich 441, 448–51
 nonharm 373, 374
 non-identity problem 49
 nonmonogamous romantic relationships 62, 67–8,
 69
 non-rational love 282–4
 nonviolence 180–90; conscience and conviction
 182–5; life as a gift 185, 189; memory and
 189–90; moral resistance to killing 185–9;
 mutuality and 181, 185, 188–9; reasonableness
 and responsibility 181–2; sacredness of human
 life 185–9
 non-volitional love 400
 no-reasons-for-love view 43, 278–9, 454–5
 Normative Impotence 84–5, 86, 90–1
 normative realism 341–2
 Norris, John 433–4, 435, 437
 Nourse, John 233
 Nozick, Robert 129, 271, 320
 Nussbaum, Martha 121, 157, 159, 160, 161–2,
 163, 174–5, 238, 458
- objectification 63
*Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and
 Sublime* (Kant) 231
 obsessive-compulsive disorder 465
 O’Connor, David K. 15
 Okin, Susan 136
On Happiness (Du Châtelet) 437
 “On the Basis of Morals” (Schopenhauer) 448
On the Reality of Love (Suhrawardi) 405–6
 “On the Street Where You Live” (song) 242–3
 “one thought too many” example 291, 295, 314,
 453
 operative concepts 79
 Ormiston, A. 442
 Ormsby, Eric 403
 Ortega y Gasset, J. 206
 other half myth 98–9
 Overall, Christine 86
 oxytocin 468
- pacifism *see* nonviolence
 parental love 36; lack of as fitting or morally
 permissible 40–2; lack of as psychologically
 normal 37–40; loving less or badly 44–5;
 reasons for love 42–4, 283; *see also* prenatal
 selection against disability
 Parfit, Derek 49, 453
 Parmenides 337
 partial love 5–7, 277–8, 280–1
 partiality, threat of 253, 254, 259, 260
Passions of the Soul (Descartes) 426–7, 433
 Patañjali 371, 376–7, 379–80
 pathological love 144, 306
 pathologies of attachment 28–30, 31n18
 pathopsychology, attachment and 28, 29, 472, 475
 Pattison, George 445
 Paul, St. 266, 270, 409, 419

- Paul VI (pope) 414
 Peirce, Charles Sanders 124–6, 441
 perceived-response theory of emotions 469
 perfection: love of 422–5; rational 422
 personality disorders 29, 472, 475
 “Persons, Character and Morality” (Williams) 291–2
Phaedrus (Plato) 107–9, 110, 399
Phenomenology of Spirit (Hegel) 144, 442, 443
 philia 106, 120, 123, 125, 157, 158
 Philo of Alexandria 98
Philosophical Dictionary (Voltaire) 431–2
Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, A (Burke) 233–4
Philosophical Writings (Mendelssohn) 235–7
Philosophy of Illumination, The (Suhrawardi) 405, 406
Philosophy of Right (Hegel) 144–5, 442–3
 Pippin, Robert 448
 Plato 105–13; beauty 229–30, 238; Cave allegory 193, 195; Christianity and 410–13, 419n1; eros 2, 99, 106, 117–21, 122, 124–5, 266, 413; Hegel and 238, 442; homosexuality 110–12, 113n7, 114n13; Islamic philosophy and 397; *Laws* 106–7, 110, 111, 112; marriage 110; materiality 411, 412; myth of the other half 98; *Phaedrus* 107–9, 110, 399; *Republic* 112, 392; sex and sexual desire 99, 110–12, 113, 412–13; shared-identity model of love 266, 270, 271; *Symposium* 2, 98, 99, 105, 110, 117–21, 122, 124–5, 229–30, 238, 266, 267, 270, 271, 392, 413, 458; three kinds of lover 107–9; two kinds of love 106–9, 112–13; women as philosophers 112
 Plotinus 397, 410, 422
 Plumwood, Val 218–19
 poets-as-thoughtwriters 246–8
 political liberalism 181, 189
 political reconciliation 169–78
Politics (Aristotle) 105
 politics, love of 399–401
 pornography 95, 101–2
 Porter, Cole 249, 264
 preferential love 253
 pre-marital sex 148, 150, 154
 prenatal selection against disability 47–57; as failure to love the embryo 47–9; as failure to love the selected child 49–53; as failure to love the siblings 53–6
 President’s Council on Bioethics 49–50
 PricewaterhouseCoopers 220
 Protasi, Sara 281, 455, 457
 Protestant Social Gospel 331
 psychoanalytic approaches 466, 474–5
 psychological and neuroscientific approaches 465–76; falling in love 465, 466–8; love as an attribute of a relationship 465, 470–1; love as an emotion 465, 468–9; love as attachment 465–6, 471–4; psychoanalytic approaches 466, 474–5; triangular theories of love 465, 470–1, 473–4
 psychopathy, attachment and 28, 29, 472, 475
 purity of love 423
 Pūrva Mīmāṃsā tradition 374–5
 quality view of reasons for love 42–3, 280–1, 455–6, 458
 queer desire and love 93–102; fetishism and depersonalization 101–2; myth of the other half and 98–9; Platonic love 98, 99; pornography and 95, 101–2; queer bodies 94–6; sex and personhood 100–1; shame and self-love 96–7; *see also* homosexual desire and love
 queer kinship 97, 99
 Quinn, Warren 455
 Qur’an 395
 racial hatred 163–4
 racism and racial injustice 190, 331–2; agape love and 157, 159–60, 162–7, 331; marriage and 147; moral anger and 157, 161, 162–7
 Radzik, Linda 173
 Railton, Peter 290–1, 314
 Rāmānuja 371, 372, 375, 379, 380
 Raphael 413
 rational love 284–5
 rational perfection 422
 rational will 194
 rationalist views of reasons for love 42–4, 280–2, 286n7
 Rauschenbusch, W. 418
 Rawls, John 181, 186, 189, 372
 al-Razi, Abu Bakr 397, 398–9
 al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din 397
 reactive love 458–60
 Reagan, Ronald 189
 reasons for love 277–86; beauty 460–1; conflict with moral reasons 288–98, 314–15, 316–20; consequentialism and 289–91; gratitude, admiration, and trust 459–60; humanity 456–7; hybrid love 285–6; hybrid view 281–2; loving someone as an individual 453–63; no-reasons-for-love view 43, 278–9, 454–5; parental love 42–4, 283; quality view 42–3, 280–1, 455–6, 458; a-rational love 282–4; rational love 284–5; rationalist views 42–4, 280–2, 286n7; reductionist approach to 288, 289, 293–4, 296; relationship view 43–4, 281, 457–8; separatist approach to 288, 289, 291–2, 293, 294–6; shared values 461–2; vision view 280, 297
 reciprocation 43–4
 recognition-respect 165–6
 reconciliation, political 169–78
 reductionist approach to reasons for love 288, 289, 293–4, 296

- relationship relativity 328
relationship ultimatums 128, 130–6; bluffing
threats 131, 132, 134–6; sincere threats 130–2,
133–4, 135; warnings 130–1, 132
relationship view of reasons for love 43–4, 281,
457–8
religious renovation 422–3
religious resignation 259, 260–1
ren 359–60, 368
*Reproduction and Responsibility: The Regulation of
New Biotechnology* 49–50
Republic (Plato) 112, 392
resignation, faith and 256–9, 260–1
resistance to killing 185–9
Revival of the Religious Sciences in Islam, The
(al-Ghazali) 403
Rhazes 397, 398–9
Ribeiro, Anna Christina 247
Richardson, Henry 328
Rivera, Sylvia 93
Roman Empire 410
romantic love 61–70, 116–26; amatonormativity
73–4, 78, 155; commitment stage 65–6;
defining 74–5; disputes about 72–80; Emerson
on 122–4; future of 67–70; infatuation stage 65;
myth of the other half 98–9; sexual desire and
61–7; social role of 61; ultimatums and 128,
130–6; *see also* attachment; psychological and
neuroscientific approaches; sexual exclusivity
romantic mystique 74
Rosch, E.H. 468
Rosenthal, F. 398
Rosenzweig, Franz 182
Ross, W.D. 327
Rossetti, Christina 271
Rothblum, E.D. 97
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 437
Royce, Josiah 441
Rukeyser, Muriel 185
rule of law 175–6
Russell, Bertrand 73, 149–50
Russell, J.A. 468

Saadia ben Joseph 397
Sachs, Benjamin 129
sacredness of human life 185–9
Sadler, Brook 293, 296
same-sex relationships: African ethical perspective
318; disputes about love and 73, 77–8; marriage
93–4, 153–4; *see also* homosexual desire and
love
Sappho 117
Sartre, Jean-Paul 64
Scanlon, T.M. 87, 300, 306
Scheffler, Samuel 328
Scheler, Max 199, 206
Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph 442
Schiller, Friedrich 236
“The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories”
(Stocker) 290–1
School of Athens, The (Raphael) 413
Schopenhauer, Arthur 238, 441, 447–8, 450
Scruton, Roger 98–9, 100, 102
Second Sex, The (de Beauvoir) 150–1
Second Treatise of Government (Locke) 142–3
secure attachment style 471, 473
security-based needs 26–7, 30, 31n10
Selected Aphorisms (Farabi) 400
self, ego and 199
self-directedness 195–7
self-disclosure, friendship and 15, 16
self-ego 162
self-expansion model of falling in love 467, 468,
474
selfishness, threat of 253, 254, 259, 260, 261
self-love: agape love and 159–60; love of God and
403–4; queer 96–7
self-referential altruism 322
self-soothing 24
Sense and Sensibility (Austen) 459–60
separatist approach to love and morality 288, 289,
291–2, 293, 294–6
serotonin 467, 468
Setiya, Kieran 456, 457, 462, 463
Seventh Homily on the First Epistle of John
(Augustine) 412
sex and sexual desire 3–5, 61–7; African ethical
perspective 320; Christian teaching on 98, 99,
412–13, 415–16, 418–19; Kant on 98, 99,
143–4, 418; myth of the other half 98–9; Plato
on 99, 110–12, 113, 412–13; al-Razi on 398
sexual exclusivity 62, 67–9, 83–91; inclinations
and 87–90; instrumental value of 85–7; sexual
jealousy and 68, 88–9; *sui generis* value of 90–1;
as valuable for its own sake 90
sexual jealousy 68, 88–9
Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl
of 230
Shakespeare, William 265, 270
shame, queer 96–7
shared-identity model of love 154, 266; constancy
of 270–2
Shaver, P. 24
Shaver, Phillip 468–9, 471, 473–4
Shibli 395
Shoemaker, David 176
Shutte, A. 316
siblings 44, 283; prenatal selection against disability
and 53–6
Sidgwick, Henry 289–90
Silverstein, Shel 271
Singer, Irving 447, 450
Singer, Peter 363
slavery, marriage and 147–8

- Smith, Adam 158–9
 Smith, Michael 293, 296, 299n4, 334, 335, 337
 “So in Love” (song) 249
 social gospel movement 418
 social identity, gender and 100–1
 Socrates 2, 99, 105, 107–9, 110, 113n7, 117–19,
 229–30, 266, 267, 458
 Solomon, Robert 154, 158, 160, 163
 Song of Songs 389, 422
Sonnets from the Portuguese (Browning) 266, 267
 South Africa 171, 172, 173, 177–8, 313
 speechwriters 247, 248
 Spinoza, Baruch 202, 385, 390, 428–30
 Sroufe, L.A. 24
 “Stand By Your Man” (song) 270
 Sternberg, Robert 465, 470–1
 Stocker, Michael 290–1
 Stoicism 113n1, 322, 419
 Stolniz, Jerome 238
 Stonewall riots, New York 93
 Strawson, P.F. 458, 459
 Stroumsa, Sarah 398
 Stump, Eleonore 279, 281
Sub Specie Aeternitatis 202–3
Subjection of Women, The (Mill) 147–8
 subjectivist morality 334–5, 336
 Sufism 397
 Suhrawardi, Shihab al-Din 397, 404–6
sui generis value of sexual exclusivity 90–1
Summa Theologiae (Aquinas) 415
 sympathy 158–9, 166, 237
Symposium (Plato) 2, 98, 99, 105, 110, 117–21,
 122, 124–5, 229–30, 238, 266, 267, 270, 271,
 392, 413, 458

 Taylor, Mark C. 442, 446
 Taylor, Richard 62
 temperance 111
Tess of the d’Urbervilles (Hardy) 265
 “The Idea of Perfection” (Murdoch) 301, 302,
 304–5
The World as Will and Presentation (Schopenhauer)
 447–8
 theism 375
 theologically motivated natural right conceptions
 of love 422–5; love of God 422–5;
 Malebranche 423–5, 428; religious renovation
 422–3
Third Man, The (film) 19–20
 Thomas, Laurence 15, 16
 Thomistic Aristotelianism 413–16
 Thoreau, Henry David 184, 205, 207–11
 threats of love 253, 254, 259, 260, 261
Three Edifying Discourses (Kierkegaard) 445–6
Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Nietzsche) 448–50
 Torah 382, 383, 384, 385–90, 391–2
Tradition and Modernity (Gyekye) 313, 321

 tragedy, aesthetic response to 235, 237
Traité de l’amour de Dieu (Malebranche) 424–5
 transcendentalist movement 122, 146
 transitional justice 169–78
Treatise on Love (Ibn Sina) 401–2
 triangular theories of love 465, 470–1, 473–4
 Trocme, Andre 181, 182
 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC),
 South Africa 171, 173, 177–8
 al-Tusi, Nasir al-Din 400
 Tutu, Desmond 171, 173

ubuntu 313, 315, 317, 323n6
 ultimatums *see* relationship ultimatums
 unconditional love 35, 36, 270, 400; *see also*
 prenatal selection against disability; unloving
 parents
 unconditional welcome 54–5
 unconservatism 377–8, 379, 380
 United States Supreme Court 153–4
 unloving parents 35–45; as fitting or morally
 permissible 40–2; loving less or badly 44–5; as
 psychologically normal 37–40; reasons for love
 and 42–4
 unrequited love 40, 44, 272, 281, 457, 458, 469
 un-selfing 196–7, 199
Untimely Meditations (Nietzsche) 451
 utilitarianism 124, 316, 325, 363, 441

 valuing, attachment and 25–6, 29–30
 Vannoy, Russell 62
 vasopressin 468
 Vedānta tradition 374, 375, 379
 Velleman, David 25, 100, 102, 286n7, 314, 456
 Vietnam War 185–7, 189
 Villeneuve, A. 98
Vindication of the Rights of Woman, A
 (Wollstonecraft) 145–6, 437–8
 virtue ethics 345, 373
 vision view of reasons for love 280, 297
 Vlastos, Gregory 120–1, 123, 125, 460
 volitional love 400
 volitional rationality 340–1
 Voltaire 431–2, 437

 Wallace, Jay 296, 298n1
 Walter, Frank 93–4
 Walton, Kendall 246–8
 Walzer, Michael 187
 “War and Massacre” (Nagel) 185–7
 Wasserman, David 54–5
 Watt, Helen 47–9
 Weaver, Bryan 85
 web of life 215–23
 Weil, Simone 193, 195–6, 197, 198, 199, 200–1,
 202
 Wertheimer, Alan 129–30, 136

Index

- Weston, Kath 97, 99
White, Richard 25
Whitehead, A.N. 208
Wiesel, Elie 177, 216
Willard, Dallas 413
Williams, Bernard 41, 182, 291–2, 293–4, 314, 323n1, 328, 453, 454
Williams, Robert 442, 443
Wittgenstein, Ludwig 202
Wolf, Susan 279, 292, 294–6, 298, 299n3, 314, 323n1
Wolff, Christian 235
Wollard, Fiona 85
Wollstonecraft, Mary 145–6, 437–8
Woman in the 19th Century (Fuller) 146–7
women philosophers 17th and eighteenth-century 432–8; Astell 433–4; Du Châtelet 437; Masham 434–7; Wollstonecraft 145–6, 437–8
Wong, David 44
Works of Love (Kierkegaard) 444, 446
World Bank 220
Woytila, Karol 269–70
Wuthering Heights (Brontë) 271
Wynette, Tammy 270
Xunzi 365
Yeats, W.B. 245, 268, 269
Yi Zhi 364–5
Yoga 371–2, 375, 376–80
Yoga Sūtra (Patañjali) 371, 376–7, 379–80
Zangwill, Nick 279
Zen Buddhist philosophy 195, 196, 199
Zhuangzi 367, 368–9
Zimmerman, David 129



Taylor & Francis Group
an **informa** business



Taylor & Francis eBooks

www.taylorfrancis.com

A single destination for eBooks from Taylor & Francis with increased functionality and an improved user experience to meet the needs of our customers.

90,000+ eBooks of award-winning academic content in Humanities, Social Science, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Medical written by a global network of editors and authors.

TAYLOR & FRANCIS EBOOKS OFFERS:

A streamlined experience for our library customers

A single point of discovery for all of our eBook content

Improved search and discovery of content at both book and chapter level

REQUEST A FREE TRIAL

support@taylorfrancis.com



Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group



CRC Press
Taylor & Francis Group