

## References

- Cocking, Dean and Jeanette Kennett. 2000. "Friendship and Moral Danger." *Journal of Philosophy* 97: 278–296.
- Frankfurt, Harry. 1971. "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person." *The Journal of Philosophy* 68: 5–20.
- . 1987. "Identification and Whole-Heartedness." In *Responsibility, Character, and the Emotions: New Essays in Moral Psychology*, edited by Ferdinand David Shoeman, 27–45. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1992. "The Faintest Passion." *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 66: 5–16.
- . 2004. *The Reasons of Love*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. (1786) 1948. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. London: Hutchinson and Company.
- Kolodny, Niko. 2003. "Love as Valuing a Relationship." *The Philosophical Review* 112: 135–189.
- Liao, Matthew. 2015. *The Right to Be Loved*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nehamas, Alexander. 2002. "A Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art." In *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* 23: 189–231.
- Scanlon, Thomas M. 1990. "Promises and Practices." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 19: 199–226.
- Smith, Michael. 2011. "Deontological Moral Obligations and Non-Welfarist Agent-Relative Values." *Ratio* 24: 351–363.
- . 2012. "Agents and Patients, Or: What We Learn about Reasons for Action by Reflecting on Our Choices in Process-of-Thought Cases." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 122: 309–331.
- . 2013. "A Constitutivist Theory of Reasons: Its Promise and Parts." *LEAP: Law, Ethics, and Philosophy* 1: 9–30.
- Velleman, J. David. 1999. "Love as a Moral Emotion." *Ethics* 109: 338–374.
- Wallace, R. Jay. 2012. "Duties of Love." *The Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 86: 175–198.
- Watson, Gary. 1975. "Free Agency." *Journal of Philosophy* 72: 205–220.

From Esther Engels Kroecker and Katrin Schaumbroeck, eds., Love, Reason, and Morality (New York: Routledge, 2017)

## 10 Love and Reasons

## The Many Relationships

Thomas Hurka

Commenting on J.M.E. McTaggart's account of love, C.D. Broad said, "love is, in some respects, so sublime, and, in others, so ridiculous, and the two aspects are so closely intertwined, that it is not easy to keep a just mean between cheap cynicism and muddled mysticism" (1938, 129). He thought McTaggart came dangerously close to the mystical extreme, and I think many recent discussions have likewise been too high-minded. Broad hoped to avoid the contrary vice of cynicism by confining himself to "the prosaic paths of platitude and banality," and I plan to follow his lead. I'll argue that love is a complex of many elements and therefore has a complex relationship to reasons. While some elements are supported by reasons, others aren't; while some ground reasons, others don't. This is partly because reasons can bear on love at different points. There can be reasons to start a loving relationship; reasons to continue or end it once it's begun; and reasons, including moral ones, to act one way rather than another during it. But first we must establish what love is.

## 1 What Is Love?

I assume an inclusive view of love, on which it's found in many different relationships. Its forms range from romantic or sexual love through familial love—between parents and children or between siblings—to the mutual affection of close friends and, more weakly, of acquaintances or activity-partners. In all these forms, it's a complex of different attitudes and dispositions, what Broad called "a constellation of cogitative, conative, and emotional dispositions organised around the idea of a certain person" (1938, 120). He labelled it a "sentiment"; others may prefer "syndrome" (de Sousa 2015, 4). But among its elements are a benevolent desire for the other's happiness and whatever else makes her life go well, plus a tendency to be pleased when she's happy and pained when she suffers; a desire to spend time with her and enjoy her company; some belief that she has admirable talents or character traits; a desire for her love, or desire that she desire your happiness and company and, reciprocally, want you to desire hers; a desire to know things, both important and trivial, about her and perhaps to

reveal yourself to her; and a tendency to think about her when she's absent. (Jeske, Chapter 5, this volume, gives a similar list of elements.)

These elements are more present in some relationships than in others. You want a romantic partner's company more intensely than you do a friend's or adult sibling's; you desire your child's happiness more than a golf partner's. The elements can also have different specific objects. In romantic love, your desire to be with the beloved involves, centrally, the desire to share sexual activity with her; your benevolence includes the desire to please her sexually, and perhaps to be the only person who does. As a parent, you want your child's long-term happiness and do things now to benefit her years into the future; your desires about an acquaintance focus more on the present. Despite these differences, the same general desires and dispositions figure in all forms of love.

Some have denied that these elements are essential to love. McTaggart thought you can love a person while getting no pleasure from her company, desiring her ill-being, and knowing she's wicked (1927, 148–150); David Velleman has said you needn't desire the other's company—you can love a meddlesome aunt you can't stand to be with—or want to promote her good (1999, 351–354). But, first, if one of these elements is missing, your love is less complete and not ideal (Franklin-Hall and Jaworska, Chapter 2, this volume). If you love your aunt but avoid her company you'll surely wish she meddled less, so you could enjoy being with her. And a relationship lacking all the elements can't be love. To say, "I have no interest in seeing her, couldn't care less whether she's happy, find nothing admirable about her, and don't care whether she cares for me—but I love her deeply," is unintelligible. While you can lack some listed elements and still love, you need a sufficient number of the others, and complete love requires them all.

Some understand the desires that comprise love in a cognitivist way, so they involve normative thoughts about what's good or supported by reasons. If you desire a loved one's company or happiness, they say, it's because you think those objects are good or ones you have reason to pursue; often this reflects the more general view that all desire involves such thoughts (Kolodny 2003, 143, 145–146, 150–151). Others hold, to the contrary, that in love normative concepts, especially of duty or obligation, are positively inappropriate. Michael Stocker said that if a friend's motive for visiting you in hospital is just that it's his duty as a friend, he's a poor friend (1976, 462); Bernard Williams wrote that to save your wife's life rather than the lives of two strangers while thinking it's permissible to do so is to have "one thought too many" (1981a, 18). On this view, loving desires shouldn't involve normative thoughts but should be more direct. Instead of wanting to be with a loved one because that's something you have reason to do, you should just want to be with her.

To me, the prosaic platitude here is that both types of attitude can rightly figure in love. Though surprisingly common, the view that all desire involves normative thoughts is false to the phenomenology of desire, which often

involves simpler impulses. Thirst, for example, isn't a desire to drink because you see reason to drink; it's just a desire to drink. The same holds of many desires in love. A romantic lover's yearning for the company of his beloved and a husband's impulse to save his wife are too immediate to wait on thoughts about value or reasons; they go straight to their object.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, it's too much to say such thoughts should never be part of love. Stocker may be right that a friend's main motive for visiting you should be a direct concern for your welfare, but she may also think she ought to visit and be strengthened in her motivation by that thought. In a secondary role, such reflections are neither uncommon nor improper. They're also positively needed when loving desires conflict, for example your desire to be with a loved one and your desire that she succeed in her career. Then you have to decide which consideration has more weight. And in some aspects of love, normative thoughts may properly dominate. Imagine that as a parent you refrain from interfering in an adult child's life choices but let her govern herself; here you're surely motivated more by the thought that interfering is wrong than by any simple aversion to doing so, and surely that mix of motives is fitting. Loving desires can either involve normative thoughts or be simpler. Often both forms are present simultaneously, and though in some contexts the simpler form should dominate, in others the opposite is true. To give absolute priority to either is wrong.

## 2 Loving a Particular Person

Loving attitudes concern a particular person. Though you may have some desire for anyone's happiness, you want your lover's, child's, or friend's more; you're also more eager for her company. What ties your love to this person?

At the start of a romantic relationship or friendship—familial love is different—you're attracted by certain of her generic qualities, or by her as having those qualities; after the relationship is established you still love her for certain qualities. Some are ones you were initially attracted by, which have persisted and still delight you. But others you've learned about since. At all times, however, you love a partner or friend in part for some generic qualities.

These qualities can be of different kinds. Some you admire, thinking them objectively good or ones everybody should or has reason to value. Of these, some are moral qualities: you can admire a lover's kindness, honesty, or, more generally, virtue. In traditional fiction, the main characters' virtues are often the principal cause of their falling in love with each other; think of Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*. But other qualities of this kind are non-moral: you can admire and be attracted by another's intelligence, wit, or aesthetic sensitivity. These aren't moral virtues, but you can again think them objectively desirable. A different category of qualities are ones you just like, without thinking others or even you have normative

reason to value them. In romantic love, you can be attracted by the color of your beloved's hair or her particular scent. In love and friendship, you can be drawn by how her interests overlap with yours. You needn't think Scrabble intrinsically better than other activities, but that she enjoys it as you do can prompt and then help sustain a friendship with her. Unlike virtue or intelligence, a lover's hair color and interests aren't things you think anyone else need be drawn by, but they do attract you.

Some writers on love emphasize objectively admirable qualities, especially moral ones, and say that love is most or even only legitimate when it's based on them. Aristotle distinguished friendships of utility, based on how useful someone is to you; friendships of pleasure, based on enjoying her company; and friendships of virtue, based on admiring her character. He thought those of utility the least good type and those of virtue the best; ideal friends admire each other's moral characters and love each other for them (1980, 1155b16–1157b4). Some current writers too say the proper object of love is another's virtue (Whiting 1991; Abramson and Leite 2011).

But this is surely too high-minded. What's wrong or even second-rate about just liking somebody? It may be true that you shouldn't love, or at least start to love, someone you know is vicious, but why must your positive attraction center on her moral qualities? Aristotle's critique of the other types of friendship is unpersuasive. He assumed that in a friendship of utility or pleasure what you really want is just your own good. If you like someone because she's pleasant company, for example, you like her only as a means to your pleasure, which means you don't like her for herself and aren't really her friend. But this doesn't follow. That you enjoy her company can make you want her happiness, success, and even virtue as ends in themselves. This often happens: you're drawn to someone first for largely selfish reasons but then come to care for her altruistically. Love's core is the attitudes it involves once it's developed, and these can aim altruistically at another's good even when it's partly based on benefits she gives you. You typically love a person in part for some generic qualities, but these can properly be of different kinds.

Whatever they are, however, the qualities aren't unique to her. You may love her for her kindness and wit, but other people too are kind and witty, some of them more so. Even her precise combination of qualities can in principle be had by someone else, and to a higher degree. As many have noted, it follows that if you love her only for certain qualities, you'll switch your love or "trade up" the minute someone with more of them appears. But we don't do that or think it's right. Our love is more attached to particular people than one based only on generic qualities could be. What makes it so?

I've previously defended what I think is the common-sense answer (Hurka 1997, 150–153; 2011, ch. 7). What ties you to a particular person isn't concern for something mysterious like her soul or immaterial self. It's that you love her in part for qualities that no one else can share and therefore aren't

generic. They're historical qualities, based on her participation with you in a shared past. Once the two of you took that holiday together or bought and decorated that house or raised those children, no one else can be the very person who did those things with you; no one can replace her in that respect. If you love her partly for historical qualities like these, then to the extent that you do, your love can't and won't transfer to another.

Broad emphasized this point. He thought you can't love a person unless you've met her, and said that later in sexual love the emotion "is determined, in the main, not by the present qualities of the beloved, but by the traces of innumerable actions and experiences in common, most of which can no longer be remembered as separate events" (1938, 117, 121, 123). To justify or give normative reasons for an attachment—to jump to a later topic—a shared history must be satisfying or good or in some way call for a positive response; it can't be one of mutual hatred or abuse. It can be a history in which you jointly do good, either to each other—this is the central case—or to someone else, as when you together raise a child. It can involve unilateral benefiting, as in the relationship of parents to a young child, or the simple sharing of good experiences, as when you together enjoy a good meal or attend an exciting concert. It can also involve jointly suffering evil, when you endure the same trials. But the general idea is that your love for a particular person is justified if it's for her as having participated with you in a history of a certain kind, and though this doesn't follow, the histories that in fact attach us are usually of this kind. We usually love particular people in part for having participated with us in a history that was somehow uniting or good.<sup>2</sup>

Niko Kolodny has also defended a historical view, but with some differences. Because he assumes a cognitivist view of desire, he thinks love involves normative thoughts at two points. If you desire a loved one's happiness, it's because you think you have a reason to, and you think you have that reason because you think your relationship with her is valuable; hence love involves "valuing a relationship" (2003, 137, 143, 145–146, 150–151). Though I agree that normative thoughts like these can be part of love, I don't think they're essential. Instead or in addition, you can have a simpler desire for her happiness and care especially about her because of your history without thinking of that history as good.

In addition, Kolodny's focus on your relationship is at once too narrow and too broad. It's too narrow because sometimes the relevant history doesn't involve a relationship. In *The African Queen* Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn initially dislike each other, but after adventures including piloting a boat down dangerous rapids they fall in love. During the movie they come to see admirable qualities in each other, such as courage and resourcefulness, but, more importantly, they share an important experience. The experience doesn't, however, involve a relationship. They don't think of themselves as related as they pilot the boat, nor do they specially desire each other's happiness or want each other's love. Addressing this issue,

Kolodny says the activities that initiate a relationship are like those of an established one, such as enjoying leisure together, sharing a sense of humour, and exchanging confidences (2003, 169). But as *The African Queen* shows, they needn't be of that sort. They must be important or emotionally involving, but they needn't be or even mimic those of an existing relationship. It's the broader category of shared history that's relevant, not the narrower one of relationship.

Kolodny's idea is also too broad, since not all aspects of a relationship are important for attaching you and your partner. That you've wanted each other's happiness doesn't count for much if you've done so while not interacting, nor does the fact that you admire each other if you've done so from afar. More central are activities in which you've done or experienced things together; they involved causal connections rather than just similarities of attitude. But if not all your relationship grounds your tie but only or mostly shared activities, it's best to highlight this by equating your history just with those activities.

Love therefore has two bases, another's generic qualities and a shared history with her, but the two can intertwine. You can feel more attached by a history if it involved someone whose qualities you admire; this may happen in *The African Queen*. Conversely, you can come to like certain qualities because they belong to someone you've shared a history with. Maybe you were first attracted by her slender waist and smooth skin, but thirty years later her body has thickened and her face become lined. You now cherish her love handles and wrinkles because they belong to the person you've done things with. If you love the way she wears her hat and sips her tea, it's not because you first had an ideal for doing those things and saw that she fits it; you first loved her and came to like those styles because of their link with her. You can likewise become a Scrabble fan because of her. Having first been attracted by some of her qualities, you can come to love some qualities because they're hers.

In part because of this intertwining, love can deepen through time. The longer a relationship lasts, the more you and a partner have done together and the more history you have to connect you. You can also come to admire or like more qualities in each other. Broad had this multi-faceted process in mind when he wrote, "if we may compare prolonged and successful sexual love for a person to the course of a river from its source to the sea, it begins as a violent torrent in a narrow bed full of rocks and shallows; in its middle it receives many tributaries; and in its later stages it becomes a calm wide deep stream." He had to add, however, "Too often, of course, there is no such happy ending, and the stream peters out into the shallows of mere habitual toleration or the swamps of mutual irritation and frustration" (1938, 121-122).

The two bases of love, qualities and shared history, play different roles in different relationships. In familial love the historical side predominates. 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, in part because of the many intimate interactions family life involves. You admire any good qualities your child, parent, or sibling has, but you admire them more intensely than the similar qualities of strangers because of your history, and you like many of her qualities for the same reason. Among acquaintances and even friends, by contrast, qualities such as wit or common interests are the main basis, though as a friendship lasts its past plays a larger role. Romantic love occupies a middle position. It usually begins with attraction—even strong attraction—to another's qualities, and appreciation of them persists throughout. But the longer such love lasts, the more important its historical basis becomes, so by the end of a lifelong romance it is, as Broad said, dominant.

The different bases of love, and their different roles in different relationships, bear on the connection between love and reasons, at the beginning, at the end, and during love.

### 3 Love and Reasons: Beginning

The start of love certainly has causes. If you come to desire another's company and happiness in the way characteristic of romantic love, for example, certain of her qualities cause those desires in you, so you love her as having them. But a further question is whether you have normative reasons to form those desires, ones that make them appropriate or ones you ought other things equal to have. This doesn't assume the desires are under your control; it asks only whether it would be fitting or desirable to have them. As well as causes, does the beginning of love have justifying reasons?

Those who take a subjective view of love, which they often derive from a general subjectivism about normative reasons, say not. To them you have a reason to do something when and only when it will fulfil a desire you have or perhaps would have in ideal circumstances. Except when loving desires serve other ends of yours, you can't have reason to form them. As Harry G. Frankfurt says, using "value" where others use "reason," "It is not necessarily as a *result* of recognizing their value and being captivated by it that we love things. Rather, what we love necessarily *acquires* value *because* we love it" (2004, 38-39).<sup>3</sup> On this view, you have reasons once you've formed loving desires, but you don't have them beforehand.

I assume, to the contrary, that there are objective normative reasons. You can have most reason to do something morally required like keep a promise even if it won't most satisfy your desires, and there can likewise be goods you ought to pursue in your life regardless of whether you want them. It's therefore possible that there are reasons to start to love. Are there?

I believe there are, though there are limits on how specific they are and on their weight. Imagine that if you form a loving relationship with a certain person you'll get pleasure from her company, gain knowledge of her and people generally, and succeed more in your life projects. Since these are

significant goods, they give you instrumental reasons to start the relationship and form the desires it involves. If you want the goods, a subjective view will also recognize these reasons. But on an objective view they exist independently of your wants, so even if you don't care about pleasure or knowledge you ought to seek a relationship that will provide these.

The reasons aren't, however, completely specific. They're not reasons to start a relationship with this person in particular, since there are others loving whom would give you similar benefits. They're at best reasons to love someone or other from the possibly large group of people it would be equally beneficial to love. Nor do they have overriding weight, since someone good in these ways to love may in other respects be less suitable. That a relationship with her would give certain benefits means at most that you have a defeasible reason to love, if not her in particular, then someone relevantly like her.

Now imagine that she has admirable qualities, beginning with moral virtue. This can give you a non-instrumental reason to love her, and in fiction it's often treated as the best such reason; recall *Pride and Prejudice*. But this reason again doesn't distinguish her from others who are equally virtuous, and again is defeasible; someone who's less virtuous can have other qualities that make her better to love. Likewise for other admirable traits such as intelligence and wit, which provide at best a reason to love someone with them and can be outweighed.

It's actually puzzling 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? By spending time with her you can learn more about her virtue and admire more of its manifestations; you may also stimulate her virtuous activity and be encouraged in your own. But you don't want a beloved's company only in contexts involving virtue; you also want to be with her when you're just relaxing or enjoying a meal. Why should her admirable traits make it fitting to want something so unrelated to them? Likewise for wanting her happiness. That she's virtuous or intelligent gives you a reason to want her to retain those qualities and to help her develop them. But, again, in love you want her to be happy and have pleasure when no special virtue or intelligence is involved, as when she's eating a meal. A virtuous person may deserve happiness, and that can be a reason to want it for her, though I don't think the same can be said about intelligence. But when you want her happiness it's usually not with thoughts about desert; you just want her happiness. And if we ask why wanting it is an appropriate part of love, I don't think we'll say it's because of desert; it just is appropriate. But then it's puzzling why admirable traits make that desire fitting when its object is unconnected to them. (I don't have a solution to this puzzle.)

The other qualities you love a person for are ones you just like, without their being objectively good. They aren't ones you have a positive reason

to like or base desires on, but they're also not ones you ought not to like. You're permitted to like them, and are therefore permitted other things equal to care more about the company and happiness of someone who has them. Like an other-things-equal ought, an other-things-equal permission has a weight. If *A* is somewhat more virtuous than *B*, you have stronger positive reasons to love *A*, but *B* may have more qualities you just like, such as her hair color and interest in Scrabble. Your permission to prefer *B*'s neutral qualities can then outweigh your reason to prefer *A*'s good ones, so you may all things considered love *B* rather than *A*. This gives you considerable leeway in whom you love. Not only may you choose among the many people with comparably admirable qualities, you may prefer someone who's less admirable if you like her other qualities more. This isn't always the case. If *B* is positively vicious, it may be on balance wrong to love her rather than *A*. But while the start of love is partly guided by reasons, so some people are other things equal more suitable to love, it's also partly a realm where your desires can permissibly fix on neutral traits. Subjectivists like Frankfurt have rightly emphasized this second, non-rational side of love, though they've wrongly ignored the other, reason-guided one. But both are present.

The other's qualities play the main role in initiating love when, as is often the case, you have little or no shared history. But sometimes, as in *The African Queen*, there is a history connecting you even though it didn't involve an existing relationship. It can then be a further reason to begin to love, and unlike ones based on the other's generic qualities, it does fix on her in particular. Still, in most cases what prompts love is attraction to some of her qualities, where some give you positive though defeasible reasons to love and others you just happen to like.

#### 4 Love and Reasons: Ending

The question whether reasons govern the ending of love—whether this is something you ought or may or must not choose—is more complex, because here both qualities and history are present and can either reinforce each other or support contrary conclusions. Moreover, their relative importance differs in different relationships.

Consider first your relationship with an activity-partner or less intimate friend, which rests mainly on her qualities. If you initially admired or liked some of these, and she still has them plus others you now like, then whatever reasons you had to start the friendship are reasons to continue it. Your shared history, for example of playing Scrabble, is another reason that ties you specifically to her. Given its limits, however, the history is less important in this kind of relationship than her qualities, and both they and your attitude to them can change. Having initially been kind, she can become selfish, or she can lose interest in Scrabble. You can stop finding her style of joking funny or move on to other games. Though these changes may not require you to end the friendship, they surely make doing so permissible.

It's generally accepted that if the commonalities in a less intimate friendship fade, it's not wrong for it to end.

Family relationships, in which the historical side dominates, are very different. Your love for a child, parent, or sibling doesn't depend mainly on her qualities; you love her primarily as your child, parent, or sibling, or as having participated with you in an intimate history. There's therefore much less reason, even in the sense of permission, to end your love when you or the other changes; the history, which is its main basis, persists. Broad thought a mother should continue to love her child even if he "becomes a madman or an habitual drunkard," because "the relation of mother to child still persists and maternal love is in respect of this relationship" (1938, 125). The same holds, though to a lesser degree, among siblings. If your sister takes on qualities you find despicable, you may distance yourself somewhat from her. (Qualities you don't like have less effect.) In extreme cases, it may not even hold for parents. In fiction, parents who disown a child are usually presented unsympathetically, but that's largely because what the child has done, such as marry outside the family's religion, isn't wrong. If your child does something seriously objectionable, such as become a neo-Nazi or a scammer of elderly widows, some disassociation may be permitted and even right. But extreme deteriorations in character are needed here given the central role of history in familial love.

This assumes, however, that the history was a good one, benefiting participants and/or outsiders. If a parent neglected or, worse, abused you when you were young, you have less reason to love her and even have positive reason to distance yourself; likewise if a sibling tormented you. Harder cases involve a mixed history, for example where a parent who raised you with love now interferes excessively in your life or is trying to exploit you financially. Here the question is which part of the history matters most. Some may count the recent history most; on this view the present meddling can outweigh the past love and make it permissible to withdraw. Others may favor the longest-lasting or most beneficial history; for them only a little weakening of love is now fitting. But the general point remains. Even if familial love rests mainly on history, and even if most families' histories warrant love, the wrong kind of history can leave love for a family member less supported by reasons and, in extreme cases, right to end.

Romantic loves and closer friendships again occupy a middle position, given their basis in both qualities and history; let's focus on the romantic case. If a romantic partner still mostly has qualities you admire or like and your shared history has mostly been good, you have two reasons to continue the relationship, ones that make it wrong to end it. But what if her qualities no longer attract you, because of changes in her or in you? What if she no longer loves you? Shakespeare famously said "love is not love which alters when it alteration finds"; McTaggart too thought genuine love will survive any changes in the one loved (1927, 154). Their view in effect gives history absolute priority over qualities, which to me is extreme. Given your

many shared experiences with a long-time partner, much more qualitative change is needed to justify breaking with her than with an acquaintance. But her qualities still have some weight. Exactly how much they have against a generally good history is controversial, and also differs at different stages. The longer your love has lasted, the more history it has and the more support that history can give to continuing it. Broad said we barely blame A if, shortly after falling in love with B, he falls out of love with her because of a change in her qualities, but we blame him much more if he does so after a lengthy relationship: "We are inclined to think that, if A's sentiment for B had been worth much, it would by this time have become so complex and rooted and so largely dependent on innumerable past experiences and actions shared with B that it would have survived the change in B" (1938, 125). Given our greater acceptance of divorce today, we may think Broad's claim exaggerated: even after decades, enough qualitative change can justify separation. But he's surely right that the relative weight of a relationship's history depends on how extensive it's been.

As well as giving reasons to continue love, a history can justify ending it. If interactions that were once of the kind that favor love now involve, in Broad's words, "mutual irritation and frustration" or, worse, abuse, the deterioration can, if serious enough, permit you to end the relationship or, in cases of abuse, positively require it. Your current interactions must be weighed against the earlier better ones, and there are questions about how to do this. Does your recent history count for more because it's recent, or do the earlier good relations matter more because they lasted longer? Some may say that, because of the initial good history, ex-lovers should always retain some affection and concern for each other, even from a distance. Some do, and it may represent an ideal. But others, especially after a serious worsening of their interactions, sever ties completely and don't act wrongly when they do.

Love's two bases, the other's qualities and your shared history, can both favor starting and then continuing love, and in ideal cases they do. But they can also recommend ending it, if her qualities no longer attract you or if your interactions have become hostile. The two can also point in opposite directions, the one still providing reasons to love while the other favors withdrawal. But such conflicts are possible if love has not one but two justifying grounds.

## 5 Love and Reasons: During

In love you have certain desires about another, including for her company and happiness, and they're stronger than your corresponding desires about strangers. Assuming your relationship continues, do you have normative reason to have and act on these stronger desires? (Some call these reasons "of love," as against the reasons "for love" we've discussed so far. And they can include moral reasons.)

If spending time with her will give you pleasure, you have an instrumental reason to do so. Common sense may think you also have an intrinsic reason if a love in which you avoid her company, as in Velleman's example of the meddlesome aunt, is less valuable as a love. But it makes clearer claims about promoting her happiness or, more generally, her good.

If you can save either your spouse's life or the lives of two strangers, common sense thinks you positively ought to save her and act wrongly, even morally wrongly, if you don't. If you instead save the strangers, she can rightly complain that you're not fulfilling a special responsibility you have to her. If rather than help your child with her homework you help two other children who will benefit a little more, that too is wrong. Everyday morality recognizes duties of partiality, saying you have stronger moral duties to promote people's good the more intimate your relationship with them. Broad called this view "self-referential altruism" and illustrated it with the image of concentric circles. Those who are closest to you are in an innermost circle, and your duties to benefit them are strongest; those more loosely related are in more distant circles and the objects of progressively weaker duties, with strangers in an outermost circle (1942, 55; 1971, 279–280). The more intimate your tie to someone, the more reason you have to promote her good.

Nor is this all a relationship does: according to common sense, it makes all moral duties to a loved one stronger. Just as it's more seriously wrong not to benefit her, so it's more seriously wrong to harm her, lie to her, break a promise to her, or coerce her; if you do, she can ask not only "How could you do that?" but "How could you do that *to me*?" Some philosophers have recognized this. Aristotle said, "it is a more terrible thing to defraud a comrade than a fellow citizen, more terrible not to help a brother than a stranger, and more terrible to wound a father than anyone else" (1980, 1160a4–1166). John Rawls thought offences against those you're tied to are worse: "deceit and infidelity are always wrong . . . But they are not always equally wrong. They are worse whenever bonds of affection and good faith have been formed" (1971, 475–476).

What strengthens your reasons or duties in a love relationship? On a "reductionist" view it's nothing specific to love as such. You have moral duties concerning everyone, and certain empirical facts can make those duties stronger. Though these facts can in principle obtain about anyone, they're usually present to a higher degree in a relationship. It's not love as such that makes your duties stronger but certain generic facts that typically go with it (Frankfurt 1999, 171; Sadler 2006, 252–253).

For example, someone you love is vulnerable to you in a way a stranger isn't, so you can cause her more serious harm and have more reason not to do so. Through your relationship you've also created expectations in her, such as that you'll help her when she's in need, which you violate if you don't help. You owe her gratitude for the benefits she's given you, which again strengthens the demand to promote her good, and you can

have duties deriving from commitments. This is clearest when you've made explicit promises, as in a marriage vow. But some say even less formal relationships involve an implicit commitment to care that grounds an obligation like that of promise-keeping (Sadler 2006, 252–253). The duty to fulfill commitments is generic, since you can have it to anyone, but we make more, and more serious, commitments to those we love.

There's something to all these suggestions, but they can't account for all the duties in love, or their specific features and strength. The claim about expectations doesn't explain why you have no less reason to give a loved one unexpected benefits, such as pleasant surprises. Nor does it explain why a parent who's repeatedly interfered in an adult child's life, and created the expectation that he'll keep doing so, nonetheless has a heightened duty to respect her freedom. Many of the suggestions don't fit your duties to an infant, who is too young to have given you benefits for which you owe gratitude, to have formed detailed expectations, or to have accepted commitments. The parent-child relationship is asymmetrical, since its benefits flow mainly in one direction, but so are some adult loves, if one partner is much less well off financially or has a disability. Here the better-off partner's contributions more than fulfil any duty of gratitude, yet he still has a strengthened duty of beneficence.

Many of the proposed explaining duties make just discrete demands. Once you've done the specific thing you were expected or promised to do, your duty is fully discharged; likewise if you've shown gratitude for a particular benefit. But the duties in a love relationship are open-ended: you're to promote a loved one's happiness generally and through time and never lie to or coerce her. This is one reason why the gratitude explanation fails in asymmetrical loves; the better-off partner has already discharged any duty of gratitude. This difficulty is partly met if the parties make commitments to open-ended patterns of benefit and respect. But outside formal relationships like marriage, what's the evidence that these commitments have been made, other than that lovers have the duties they would ground? And do they yield all the relevant duties? Someone who sees nothing wrong in interfering with a spouse's life choices won't commit to not doing so. If he nonetheless has a strong duty not to interfere, it must have a different basis.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, it's not clear that the suggested explanations can account for the duties' strength. Return to the case where you can save either your spouse or several strangers. Not saving her will involve a significant cost for you, the loss of a loved one. But while that can permit you to save her, common sense holds, more strongly, that you ought to save her. That means the additional strength of your duty to her must outweigh the duty to save one or more lives, and it's questionable whether the proposed explaining duties can do that. That your spouse will be momentarily disappointed that you didn't act as she expected hardly suffices, and duties of gratitude are surely too weak to justify several avoidable deaths. There remain duties based on commitments, but these too are often quite weak. Some promises are more binding

than others, and a promise to care specially for a spouse comes high on that scale. But does it really have enough weight to justify several deaths? That conclusion will be more plausible if there are other, non-reductionist reasons to prefer saving her.

R. Jay Wallace has argued, against reductionism, that there are *sui generis* duties of love (2012). If this meant that your duties to a loved one don't overlap at all in their content with your duties to other people, it would be exaggerated. At the most basic level, what you owe her—to promote her happiness, respect her freedom, not lie to or harm her—is the same as what you owe anyone else; your duties are just stronger concerning her. Because they're stronger, the duties sometimes take a specific form: you're required to read bedtime stories to your child as you aren't to other children. But that's just a specific manifestation of your underlying duty to promote another's good. Love relationships don't generate new underlying duties; they just strengthen existing ones. But they do so in a way that's not reducible to other aspects of the duties they affect. Love is therefore a *sui generis* strengthener of non-*sui generis* duties, one that has a distinctive effect on the strength but not the core content of your duties concerning another.

The ground of this strengthening can't be your loved one's qualities, since they don't distinguish her from everyone else. It must instead be your history, and here two questions arise. Why should a shared history strengthen your duties? And what features of it determine how much they're strengthened? Let me start with the second question.

Intuitively, two features of a history matter. I've said that to justify love a history must somehow be good, by benefiting participants or outsiders, or involve sharing an evil like suffering. The first feature is how much of these values your history contained. A past of lovingly giving each other large benefits strengthens your duties more than one that was just slightly rewarding. This is one reason why familial duties are so strong: the history behind them is usually very beneficial. Sharing great trials likewise binds you more than sharing minor ones. The second feature is how much causal interaction the history involved: how much time you spent together, and how many aspects of your lives, including intimate ones, your relationship touched. Here again family histories score highly, since they involve many hours of wide-ranging intimate exchange; occasional superficial dealings with an acquaintance do so less. It may be hard to weigh these features against each other. Are your duties strengthened more by a history of rare but immensely rewarding interactions or by one of frequent less good ones? But the greatest effect comes when the two combine: when you've interacted often and intimately with someone and jointly experienced both great highs and, if unavoidable, profound lows.<sup>5</sup>

Why should a history with these features give you stronger duties? I've previously argued that acting toward a loved one in the special ways they require is a fitting, appropriate, and therefore good response to the values in your history (Hurka 1997, 152; 2001, 202–203; 2006, 233–236; 2013).

It's in general good to have positive attitudes to positive values: to love what's good by desiring, pursuing, and taking pleasure in it for itself (Hurka 2001). It's also good to respond to an evil like suffering by trying to relieve it or somehow benefit the person it afflicts. And it's more fitting to respond in these ways to values you're causally connected to, as you are to those in a history you shared. Goods closer to you are, because of that closeness, greater or more valuable relative to you. This last claim isn't a reductive one. It doesn't explain the greater importance of responding to values related to you in terms of something other than relatedness to you. It assumes relations matter, and combines that assumption with a general thesis about the value of responses to value to hold that it's especially fitting to respond positively to values in a history you participated in. Kolodny has defended a similar view, saying lovers' partiality toward each other is justified because, by responding positively to the values in their history, it "resonates" with those values, and its doing so to a higher degree is appropriate given their historical connection (2010, 42–54).

This view has the merit of explaining why how much a history strengthens your duties depends on the two features mentioned above. If the idea is partly that it's fitting to respond positively to positive values, it's surely more fitting to respond to greater values, such as those in a more rewarding history, or fitting to respond more to them. The view also explains why the history must be to at least some degree good; the fitting response to negative values, like those in an abusive history, is the contrary one of separation or withdrawal. And if the idea is partly that it's especially fitting to respond to values causally connected to you, it's fitting to respond more to a history that involved you more, by including more frequent and more intimate interactions.

The view does, however, face difficulties, of which the first concerns your deontological duties not to harm your beloved one, lie to her, and so on. How can the fittingness of responses to values explain the strengthening of duties that aren't about promoting values? This difficulty can perhaps be met if deontological duties rest in part on claims about value, as they do if there's not only a duty to promote values, as in consequentialism, but also a separate and stronger duty not to destroy or act directly against them (Finnis 1980). Then if a loved one's happiness is a greater good relative to you, your duty not to act against it, for example by harming her, is also stronger.

This answer, however, only points to a further difficulty, which is whether the proposed view fits all the elements of love or gives them the right focus. If you and your partner have had rewarding interactions, you have reason to be pleased by those interactions and to want them to continue in the future; these are responses directed specifically at them. But as part of your love, you want her to succeed and be happy in activities outside your interactions, for example in a career you're not involved in and can't help her with. In an especially clear instance of this, you want her to be happy after you've died



and can hope that, once she's done grieving for you, she'll find someone else to start a new relationship and find new happiness with. How can responding appropriately to your past interactions with her justify caring especially about something so distant from your interactions as her happiness away from you?

It may be said that your past with her includes wanting her happiness, so you have a fittingness reason to continue wanting that. But I argued above that past desires for each other's happiness don't on their own tie you specially to each other; only causal interactions do. And even if they did help tie you together, the resulting reason would have the wrong focus. It would be, initially and primarily, a reason to want to continue wanting her happiness rather than, what should be more central, a simpler reason to want her happiness; it would concern your desire rather than what that desire is for. If you were guided by it, your motivation would show what Williams called "moral self-indulgence," where "what the agent cares about is not so much other people, as himself caring about other people" (1981b, 45); it would focus primarily on you rather than on her. (This is a general worry about "valuing a relationship" views: that they direct your attention in a second-order way to the desires that constitute your relationship rather than, through those desires, to first-order goods such as the other's happiness.) But here the difficulty is just why reasons to respond appropriately to a history of shared interactions should include reasons to want things outside those interactions. Why should a justification for caring more about one thing warrant caring more about another?

I don't have a solution to this difficulty or a satisfying explanation of why your history with a loved one strengthens all the reasons and duties it does. But the following seems intuitive. A loving relationship is an across-the-board strengthener of duties concerning someone one you love, so whatever you ought to do for anyone—promote their happiness, respect their autonomy, not lie to them—you have stronger reason to do for her. And the ground of this strengthening is the history, or the connections and value in the history, the two of you share. That you've done good things together in the past, and perhaps suffered bad ones, strengthens your reasons to do good things with and for her in the future.

## Notes

- 1 On such "plain" desires see Arpaly and Schroeder (2014).
- 2 Michael Smith objects to historical views that it's possible to love or become friends with someone at first sight (Chapter 9, this volume). Though you can certainly be strongly attracted by her qualities at first sight, until you have a shared history with her I don't think you can love her as an individual. If someone with even more attractive qualities came along, you'd switch your love and wouldn't be wrong to do so. (If this doesn't happen in conventional descriptions of love at first sight, it's because the first person's qualities are so dazzling you don't notice anyone else.)

- 3 In Frankfurt's subjectivism, not just any desires constitute love or ground reasons, but only first-order desires backed by higher-order desires to have and act on them. This doesn't materially affect his subjectivism.
- 4 For similar anti-reductionist arguments see Kolodny (2010, 41–42, 50–51); Wallace (2012, 183–187).
- 5 Jeske (Chapter 5, this volume) says she grounds duties of partiality on your relationship itself, not on the value of your relationship. But she then says a relationship must involve caring and that caring is intrinsically good; this seems to make relationships by definition have value.

## References

- Abramson, Kate and Adam Leite. 2011. "Love as a Reactive Emotion." *Philosophical Quarterly* 61: 673–699.
- Aristotle. 1980. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by W. D. Ross. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Arpaly, Nomy and Timothy Schroeder. 2014. *In Praise of Desire*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Broad, C. D. 1938. *Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1942. "Certain Features in Moore's Ethical Doctrines." In *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore*, edited by P. A. Schilpp, 41–68. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.
- . 1971. "Self and Others." In *Broad's Critical Essays in Moral Philosophy*, edited by D. Cheney, 262–282. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- de Sousa, Ronald. 2015. *Love: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Finnis, John. 1980. *Natural Law and Natural Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Frankfurt, Harry G. 1999. "On Caring." In *Necessity, Volition, and Love*, 155–180. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2004. *The Reasons of Love*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hurka, Thomas. 1997. "The Justification of National Partiality." In *The Morality of Nationalism*, edited by Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan, 139–157. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 2001. *Virtue, Vice, and Value*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 2006. "Value and Friendship: A More Subtle View." *Utilitas* 18: 232–242.
- . 2011. *The Best Things in Life: A Guide to What Really Matters*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 2013. "The Goods of Friendship." In *Thinking about Friendship: Historical and Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives*, edited by Damian Caluori, 201–217. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kolodny, Niko. 2003. "Love as Valuing a Relationship." *Philosophical Review* 112: 135–189.
- . 2010. "Which Relationships Justify Partiality? The Case of Parents and Children." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 38: 37–75.
- McTaggart, John McTaggart Ellis. 1927. *The Nature of Existence*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rawls, John. 1971. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Sadler, Brook J. 2006. "Love, Friendship, Morality." *The Philosophical Forum* 37: 243–263.
- Stocker, Michael. 1976. "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories." *Journal of Philosophy* 73: 453–466.
- Velleman, J. David. 1999. "Love as a Moral Emotion." *Ethics* 109: 338–374.
- Wallace, R. Jay. 2012. "Duties of Love." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 86: 175–198.
- Whiting, Jennifer E. 1991. "Impersonal Friends." *The Monist* 74: 3–29.
- Williams, Bernard. 1981a. "Persons, Character, and Morality." In *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980*, 1–19. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1981b. "Utilitarianism and Moral Self-Indulgence." In *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973–1980*, 40–53. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## Contributors with Short Biographies

Dirk Baltzly is Professor of Philosophy at University of Tasmania and Adjunct Research Professor at Monash University. He specializes in Ancient Greek Philosophy and has published three volumes of translation and commentary by Proclus (d. 485)—the pagan polymath who was among the last heads of Plato's Academy before its closure by Christian authorities in the early sixth century. He is currently working on a translation of the only surviving commentary on Plato's Phaedrus from antiquity.

Stephen Darwall is Andrew Downey Orrick Professor of Philosophy at Yale University. He has written widely on the foundations and history of ethics, and his books include *Impartial Reason*, *The British Moralists and the Internal 'Ought,' Welfare and Rational Care*, *Philosophical Ethics*, *The Second-Person Standpoint*, and, most recently, *Morality, Authority, and Law and Honor, History, and Relationship*. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and, with David Velleman, a co-founding editor of *Philosophers' Imprint*.

Andrew Franklin-Hall is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto. He received his BA from Saint Louis University and his Ph.D. from Columbia University. In 2013–2014, he was a postdoctoral fellow with the *Love and Human Agency* Project sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation at the University of California, Riverside. Much of his research focuses on the ethical significance of different stages of life. He has published on questions of parental authority and the autonomy of children and adolescents in *The Canadian Journal of Philosophy* and *The Philosophical Quarterly*. Currently, he is working on projects concerning the moral relevance of dementia patients' former values for substitute decision-making, the phenomenon of identification and estrangement from our attitudes, and the various kinds of reasons for love and other emotions.

Edward Harcourt (Faculty of Philosophy, Oxford University) is Fellow & Tutor in Philosophy at Keble College, Oxford. His research interests include ethics, moral psychology, and the philosophy of mental health