Four Questions Concerning Love and Friendship

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ISBN 978-91-628-9908-0 (print)
ISBN 978-91-628-9909-7 (PDF)

Electronic publication: http://hdl.handle.net/2077/46611

Academic dissertation in Practical Philosophy, at the Department of Philosophy, Linguistics and Theory of Science, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden.

Cover design: Pasadena Studio
Photo: Anton Hull

Print: Reprocentralen Lorensberg, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, 2016

For Judith

Abstract

Title: Four Questions Concerning Love and Friendship
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Language: English with a Swedish summary
ISBN: 978-91-628-9908-0 (print)
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This thesis contributes to the contemporary, analytic philosophical debate about love and friendship. Part of this debate concerns the apparent paradox that, while the fact that a person is your loved one doesn't make her more worthy of concern than any other, still you ought sometimes to treat her better than others. In Chapter 2, I defend impartialism – the view that all justified partiality is necessarily justified from an impartial point of view – against traditional and new criticism of its indirectness. In Chapter 3, I discuss the idea that in order to qualify as a good friend, you need to be partial not only emotionally and in actions, but also with regards to beliefs about your friend. I argue that there is no interesting conflict between friendship norms and mainstream epistemic norms, and present an account of character assessments within friendship as a way of supporting my case. In Chapter 4, I discuss two seemingly inconsistent components of an influential Western, contemporary romantic love ideal: We want to be loved in part because we have something that reasonably appeals to our lover. At the same time we want to be loved unconditionally, regardless of what more or less appealing properties we may gain or lose. I argue that we at closer inspection desire stable, but not unconditional, love, and suggest that this requires a kind of commitment that in turn requires a preparedness to make greater efforts and sacrifices than what has been suggested in the philosophical literature. In Chapter 5, I ask how our intuitions about rational constraints on romantic love should be accounted for. I argue that the view on which love cannot be justified as a response to normative reasons becomes more plausible once we look at how love can be rationalized, as in rendered intelligible, in terms of coherence with the rest of the lover's attitudes.

Keywords: love, friendship, relationships, partiality, special obligations, epistemic partiality, ideal romantic love, rationalization, reasons for love

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I'm very grateful to my main advisor Frans Svensson. You believed in me and my topic from the start and you always treated me like a philosophical equal. Sharing my drafts, ideas, and difficulties with you has made my work so much better than I could have ever hoped for. Thanks also to my assisting advisor Ragnar Francén Olinder for your kind, patient and enthusiastic readiness to assist me in numerous philosophical and practical matters.

Jens Johansson, you repeatedly had me regain my faith in that all this time and effort would finally result in a dissertation. I cannot thank you enough for your friendly support and your willingness to offer insightful feedback on numerous drafts, and also on an early version of almost the entire book.

Many warm thanks to Johan Brännmark for extensive comments on a late version of the entire dissertation draft.

I've had the great privilege to spend my years as a PhD student in various academic environments in Sweden, as well as in the United States. Thanks to Gustaf Arrhenius for inviting me to Stockholm University as a visiting PhD student, to Kjell Svensson for asking me to teach various classes, and to Staffan Carlshamre and Björn Eriksson who took well care of me as the heads of the department of philosophy at Stockholm University.

I would like to thank all the leaders and participants of the joint Stockholm/Uppsala grad seminar in practical philosophy as well as the joint Stockholm grad seminar in practical and theoretical philosophy. Among those are Sama Agahi, Henrik Ahlenius, Per Algander, Emil Andersson, Stefan Buijsman, Krister Bykvist, Karl Ekendahl, Karin Enflo, Björn Eriksson, Lisa Furberg, Kathrin Glüer-Pagin, Jimmy Goodrich, Anandi Hattiangadi, Lisa Hecht, Mats Ingelström, Magnus Jedenheim-Edling, Eric Johannesson, Hege Dypedokk Johnsen, Karl Karlander, Ivan Kasa, Johan Lindberg, Hans Mathlein, Victor Moberger, Jonas Olson, Niklas Olsson-Yaouzis, Daniel Ramöller, Katharina Berndt Rasmussen, Simon Rosenqvist, Karl Pettersson, Henning Strandin, Maria Svedberg, Folke Tersman, Amanda Thorell, Olle Torpman, and Torbjörn

Tännsjö. In this group, Sara Packalén deserves extra credit for helping me structure and handle not only Chapter 4, but also various emotions and anxieties. For the latter I thank Jonas Åkerman as well.

I would also like to thank all the leaders and participants of the higher seminars in practical philosophy at the universities in Gothenburg, Linköping, and Uppsala, as well as the audience at my seminar at the Swedish Congress of Philosophy in Stockholm 2014. Among those who have offered valuable comments are Petra Andersson, Maren Behrensen, David Brax, Bengt Brülde, Erik Carlson, Karl Persson De Fine Licht, John Eriksson, Thomas Hartvigsson, Ida Hallgren, Sofia Jeppsson, Benjamin Matheson, Per-Erik Milam, Ingmar Persson, Joakim Sandberg, Caj Strandberg, Marco Tiozzo, and Anders Tolland. Special thanks to Erik Malmqvist for comments on Chapters 3 and 4, and to Christian Munthe for helpful suggestions mainly regarding Chapter 1, and also for your vast encouragement ever since you advised me on my bachelor's thesis. Also, thanks to Niklas Juth for written feedback on my application to my PhD position.

I am extremely grateful for the three semesters I spent as a visiting PhD student at New York University. Thank you Samuel Scheffler for agreeing to be my sponsor and for taking the time to read and discuss some of my work and queries. Thanks to Stephen Schiffer for handling the application process and for making me feel so welcome.

I was also fortunate enough to spend two semesters at Columbia University. Many thanks to Macalester Bell for letting me sit in on two of your classes, for inviting me as a visiting scholar, and for meeting up with me to chat about my work. Our chats, the syllabuses and the lively discussions in class with Brittany Koffer, Yoni Pasternak and others introduced me to new ways of doing philosophy, gave me ideas for new dissertation chapters, and overall helped me develop and better trust my own philosophical compass. For this I am very grateful.

Thanks also to all the other professors at Columbia, New School, NYU, and Princeton for letting me sit in on your classes and seminars.

Several (other) PhD students and postdocs in New York City have been willing to discuss my work or otherwise assist me in it. I would especially like to thank Martín Abreu Zavaleta, Daniela Dover,

Anders Herlitz, Magdalena Hoffmann, Emilio Mora, Asya Passinsky, Mikael Pettersson, Chelsea Rosenthal, and Erica Schumener. Special thanks to Robbie Kubala for your kind and encouraging discussion and written comments on an early draft of Chapter 4.

Thanks to the National Library of Sweden for giving me a seat in the reading room for researchers, and to Alexander Stathopoulos for listening to my long rants in the dining area.

I've been able to extend my time as a PhD student abroad and in Sweden with generous support from Adlerbertska stipendiestiftelsen, Karl Staafs fond, Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, Stiftelsen Erik och Gurli Hultengrens fond för filosofi, Stiftelsen Helge Ax:son Johnson, Stiftelsen Håkan Ekmans stipendiefond, Stiftelsen Paul och Marie Berghaus donationsfond, Stipendiefonden Viktor Rydbergs minne, and Sven och Dagmar Saléns stiftelse.

Lastly, I want to thank my oh so near and dear Ulf Dernevik, Andreas Landegren, and Stina Petersson for putting up with my ups and downs, for offering me great company, invaluable distraction and emotional support, and in Ulf's case also for checking my Swedish summary. And Judith, being your unusually present aunt for the first two years of your life, and my last two years of grad school, has taught me about love, and brought me the perspective that I needed to finish my thesis. I dedicate this book to you.

Sandra Lindgren
Stockholm, August 2016

Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction

The topic for this dissertation is love and close, intimate, or special relationships. That special relationships matter to us should be obvious. Human existence void of friendship, romantic love, and love within families would seem to be seriously impoverished, lacking in important value. Such attachments strike most people as basic human goods; we see them as part of what makes our lives worth living. Perhaps more colloquially, participating in special relationships of some kind(s) is crucial to most people's physical and psychological wellbeing. Among other things, special relationships tend to give us a sense of purpose, value, continuity, and direction in life, as well as texture to it. They shape us as persons in part by requiring us to exercise and improve our empathy, and by bearing on what we value and how we look upon ourselves, others and the world at large.

The book is not structured around one single main thesis; instead it aims at arriving at more precise, systematic and plausible ways to think about certain respects in which love and intimate relationships relate to value, reasons and rationality. Chapter 2 concerns the debate about how the preferential treatment or partiality that comes with special relationships should be justified (insofar as it is justified). Chapter 3 discusses whether it is typical of a good, virtuous or ideal friend to be *epistemically* partial. Chapter 4 deals with two possibly inconsistent features of the (or at least *a*) contemporary, Western ideal of romantic love. Chapter 5 discusses how (if at all) love is subject to rational constraints.

We may separate between the following (non-exhaustive) kinds of questions regarding love, friendship, and intimate relationships more generally:

i) Questions about their nature.
ii) Questions about their value.
iii) Questions about ideal vs. non-ideal versions of them.
iv) Questions about what reasons and duties they provide us with.

The intimately self-standing chapters of this dissertation deal with issues that are best placed under (iii) and (vi) above. As a way of providing a context for my work, however, I will in this introductory chapter also address, at least briefly, some issues that mostly fall under (i) and (ii). The dissertation is fairly wide in scope and I will not be able to cover all the details in all the debates I will be entering, not even all details in the most important disputes and positions within them. Nor will I be able to thoroughly develop and discuss every disputed concept that I will be using. My aim for this chapter is to try to offer a general background to the chapters to come, introduce some of the assumptions I will rely on, and make some general comments about issues that will not be established in this book, such as the precise nature of the different kinds of special relationships that the book concerns.

After some initial methodological remarks, I will present my focus on love for persons, disambiguate love as an attitude from relationships of love, and note the distinction between formal or conventional relationships and special or normative ones. Then I will address the value-ladenness of love and friendship. After that, I mention some rough similarities and differences between romantic love, family love, and "friendship love" respectively. I then account for the distinctive intimacy of friendship, which I take to be part of the intimacy between romantic lovers as well. I spell out in greater detail one main similarity that will play a prominent role in this book, namely partiality, or preferential treatment, before I end this chapter by giving a brief overview of the chapters to come.

1. Methodological Remarks

1.1 Values, Reasons, Requirements and Oughts

Without taking a stand on the contested question of what is more basic, I will, as is common among philosophers, assume that if something (e.g., love) is a source of normative reasons, then that something is valuable. Correspondingly, if something (e.g., love) is valuable, then there are normative reasons to act, feel or have certain attitudes etc. with regards to it. These reasons are pro tanto: they can

be outweighed by other, conflicting reasons. Nevertheless, given that love and special relationships (i.e., relationships that are intimate and contain love of some kind) have at least some of the significant value we treat them as having, they have bearing on what it is right to do (how to act, feel, think, be disposed, or be like as a person, etc.), or what we ought to do overall, or all things considered. This, since they may be part of a collection of pro tanto reasons that jointly form an overall reason to act. I will understand 'acting rightly' as being "to act as the balance of overall reasons requires you to act", as Philip Pettit (2015: 209) puts it. I will not distinguish between what one has overall 'reason' to do, and what one 'ought' to do, or is 'required' to do. (Cf. Smith 1994: 84; Deigh 1995: 748).

One question I will *not* address is whether love or special relationships are not only extrinsically valuable in that they tend to promote human wellbeing and fulfillment etc., but also intrinsically valuable, or valuable in virtue of what they are in and of themselves. While I will later in this chapter reveal some of my sympathies when it comes to various theories of love and friendship, my ambition is to provide analyses, criticism and improvements of the contemporary debate that do not, strictly speaking, presuppose that any particular, comprehensive theory of love, friendship or special relationships more generally is accepted. Hopefully, though, my work can, to at least some extent, contribute to a better understanding of the nature and value of love and special relationships.

1.2 Clarity and Plausibility as Truth-Conducive

Much of what I will be concerned with in this dissertation are ideas or common ways of thinking about love and intimate relationships, and the ways in which these goods may be thought to matter. It is possible that all influential ideas about these things are mistaken. Perhaps we shouldn't care so much about our loved ones, or the relationships we share with them. Nevertheless we really do care, and this, as well as the ways in which we care, seem to be more or less in order. While accepting this starting point, I will, however, not make any definitive claims about the truth of the ideas I will be discussing. Instead I will mainly try to clarify, analyze and point to what I take to

be strengths and weaknesses of various ideas or suggestions pertinent to the philosophical debate about love and intimate relationships. Without having looked at any empirical data myself, I will be discussing what philosophers take to be widely shared intuitions and experiences. Insofar as we (philosophers as well as non-philosophers) have conflicting ideas about matters in this area it should in any event be good to try to remove unclarities and inconsistencies and to develop more clear and coherent versions of various ideas. Doing so hopefully puts us in a better position to arrive at conclusions about the plausibility, if not the ultimate truth, of various claims about love and friendship.

2. Love for Persons

This book concerns personal love, or, more precisely, love for romantic partners, family members, and friends, and the special relationships of which such love is part. What, then, characterizes such love?

To start, love for persons differs from love for things, activities, or projects such as love for Belgian waffles, mountain climbing, or decorating one's home. As Aaron Smuts points out, the sentence 'Before I met my wife, I loved fried chicken more than anything' sounds funny since there is an equivocation between the love one may feel for fried chicken and the love one may feel for one's wife. (Smuts 2014a: 509) While you can love as in really, really like fried chicken, you cannot love fried chicken in the same, deeper sense as you can love a person (if you are sensible and not confused about what fried chicken is). Love for persons is more closely connected to valuing and is normally seen to involve a stronger sense of identification with its object than love of objects, activities or projects. (Helm 2010) A common feature of all kinds of personal love is that it involves a non-instrumental, qualified concern for its object, the beloved: the lover directs it to her in part for her own sake, and not only for the sake of possible benefits that the love might bring or instantiate for the lover or some third party. (Jeske 1997; Hooker 1999; Velleman 1999)

'Personal love' is ambiguous. First, it may as noted, mean love directed to persons as opposed to mere objects. Second, it may refer

to a love that is personal in the sense of not being directed to *mankind*, but to a *particular* person, where it matters who this particular person is, more specifically. God's love for all persons, and general benevolence for every fellow human being, are personal only in the first sense, whereas the love I am interested in is personal in both senses. Such love is directed to a person as an individual, not as instance of a type. If someone asks you whether you love your child and you answer: "Of course! I love children, so naturally I love my child," it is not clear that you feel the type of personal love that will concern me.

2.1 Classical Notions

In the classical tradition of Western Philosophy, philosophers have distinguished between *agape*, the kind of love God feels for all humans, or the kind of neighborly love frequently referred to within Christianity; *philia* which is, roughly, friendly, or affectionate concern; and *eros*, roughly passionate, or erotic desire. The focus of this book is, however, contemporary, Western notions of, and ideas about, love and intimate personal relationships. Historical studies about how to understand philia, eros, and agape, and how our concepts and ideas about (different kinds of personal) love have changed over time, including studies about the relationship between contemporary, Western ideals about love and their historical roots, are of great interest and may well deepen our understanding of love in our time and part of the world. Nevertheless, they will fall beyond the scope of my dissertation. I will be concerned with (hopefully) intuitive rather than precisely defined notions of romantic love, friendship and family love without considering how these notions relate to the mentioned notions in the classical tradition.[1]

[1] Traditionally, philosophers have seen variations of general benevolence, benignity or "love of humanity" as forms of agape. Contemporary, Western romantic love has been taken to belong to the eros tradition, whereas contemporary friendship has been listed as part of the philia tradition, together with love within families. This categorization of contemporary romantic love and friendship is, however, not unproblematic. For instance, sexual desire around which eros is oriented is not a necessary part of what we now call romantic love (think, e.g., of asexual couples), at the same time as some sort of friendly affection is typically felt between lovers. And

2.2 "Friendship Love"

As hinted to above, I will, in line with the classical tradition, and at least part of the contemporary debate, understand friendship as a kind of love. It might perhaps seem odd to say that insofar as you are friends with a person, you love this person. And perhaps friendship love is normally less intense than, e.g., romantic love and parents' love for their children. As we will see, though, I take the attitudes of a friend, as well as the relationships friends share, to be similar enough to attitudes and relationships of romantic love and family love, for friendship to adequately be seen as to involve love. Nevertheless, I shall sometimes talk about 'friendship and love' rather than about, simply, 'love', foremost when I want to keep the reader from assuming that I only have romantic or family love in mind. Hopefully, it will be clear enough when I'm referring to love generally construed, and when I'm referring to (a) particular kind(s) of love.

Even though the topic for this dissertation is (all kinds of) personal love, I shall in certain chapters focus on a particular kind of love, either merely as a case in point, or because the question at issue arises mainly with regards to that particular kind of love. In this I stay true to the specific debates I am entering. I shall try to be clear about when the claims under scrutiny are taken to apply mainly to a particular kind of love, and when they can be largely generalized.

2.3 Love: Mental State and Relationship

As has been noted above, love can refer either to the mental state of someone who loves, or to the relationships of which such mental state is part. Loving a person is a necessary but not sufficient component of a relationship of love. As many of us have experienced, you can be in love with a person without it being the case that this person loves you back. However, if you are friends with a person there is bound to be some reciprocity in how you feel for this person. Friendship and romantic relationships require certain mutual concern or reciprocated affectionate attitudes among its participants in order to qualify as such

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without the erotic component it is not clear what distinguishes eros from philia. (Cf. Jenkins 2015.)

relationships. This is so even though it might be hard (or impossible) to state an exact point at which a relationship that has a low level of love or affection goes from being a *bad* instance, to being *no* instance, of a romantic relationship or friendship. Family relationships are not in this sense attitude-dependent or necessarily reciprocal. Whether or not you are someone's biological or juridical child, parent or sibling does not depend on whether or not you love or are loved by this person. In fact you may have biological family relationships with persons whose existence is unknown to you. (Perhaps you were separated from your twin at birth, or someone you slept with became pregnant and had a child without ever informing you.)

The philosophical debate about special relationships concerns the kinds of relationships that at least ideally involve love. You may be someone's biological father even though you do not love your child without there being anything non-ideal about this relationship. This might be the case if, e.g., the child is the outcome of a sperm donation. I will disregard these kinds of cases when I talk about family relationships as instances of special relationships. Instead, I will treat family relationships as a subcategory of loving relationships, referring only to the kind of family relationships that ideally contains an element of love.

2.4 Definitions and Value-Ladenness

It might be thought that every investigation of love and friendship should start with a very precise definition of their nature. Provided with such definitions, we may be able to account for how certain features of an instance of love or friendship make it a true or valuable instance of its kind. It may then furthermore be thought that we can from this derive certain "special duties", understood as what is required of a participant in a relationship of love or friendship to secure the distinctive value of such a relationship. This is not the approach I will take in this book, though. It isn't clear that there is any value-neutral way of characterizing love and friendship; rather each characterization usually presupposes a view about their value or moral valence. For this reason some philosophers recommend that we first ask the question of what it is about love that we see as

valuable, and then move on to characterize love in ways that capture this value (see, e.g., Zangwill 2012).

I agree that love and friendship are value-laden concepts: people ordinarily apply them to phenomena they take to be, at least to some degree, valuable.[2] Philosophers may engage in the task of clarifying how much value needs to be in place in order for something to qualify as an instance of love or friendship. But, since we want to allow for better or worse, or more or less ideal, instantiations of love and friendship, we ought not, I hold, include too much of what we value about them into the mere *semantic* characterization of these notions. There has to remain substantial room for normative debate *about* love and friendship, beyond the exercise of providing definitions. Furthermore, it seems difficult to draw any (non-arbitrary) sharp line between love/not-love, and friendship/not-friendship on the basis of how much value is in place (partly just because the normative issues are contested). The distinctions are vague, as I see it, as are the distinctions between good and bad, or more or less ideal, instances of love and friendship. There are, however, clear cases in each category, and this is enough to make the distinctions meaningful in this book, as well as in the debate at large.

To say that these distinctions are vague is not to deny that there certainly is a connection between the value(s) of love and friendship and the issue if some relationship really qualifies as (true) love or friendship. As I see it, a personal relationship of love and friendship – understood as historical patterns of interactions between participants with certain characteristic attitudes, dispositions and ways of acting – can be better or worse as in diverging more or less from ideal friendship or love (however that is characterized). At some point the relationship is no longer an instance of friendship or love. A participant in a friendship or loving relationship who fails to do what is constitutive of a good or ideal participant in such a relationship doesn't thereby immediately end it. Rather, she commits a, however slight, failure of love or friendship. If the failures become more and more frequent and substantive the relationship will worsen gradually

[2] The point about the value-ladenness applies to the mental state of loving a person, as well as to relationships of love.

and eventually it will not qualify as love or friendship.[3] This is so regardless of what we more precisely take to be constitute of these relationships in their ideal form.

3. Shared and Distinguishing Features of Love

Even if were possible to provide a fairly uncontroversial, precise (value-laden) definition of romantic love, family love and friendship, respectively, it is enough for the discussion to come to offer a very basic and characterization of their shared features, on the one hand, and how they differ from one another, on the other hand. Nothing of what I will later claim presupposes that these kinds of relationships and the kinds of love they involve are sharply distinguished. Nor do I take them to be mutually exclusive categories. Nevertheless, I shall in my rough characterization of love below make some general remarks about what I take to be either common or (typically) distinguishing features of different kinds of love.

3.1 Love as Disposition

Philosophers disagree about the nature of the mental state of loving someone. One influential position holds that love is an emotion (See Velleman 1999; Solomon 2003; 2006.). We may however want to distinguish between emotions understood as mental events, often called 'occurring emotions', and dispositions for such events to occur, or 'emotional dispositions'. (Elster 1996: 387) "The loving feeling", often referred to in popular and classic culture, especially with regard to romantic love, is, I take it an occurrent emotion, similar to, e.g., pain. Such feeling of intense warmth or affection can, as far as I can see, be had for friends and family members as well, albeit with a slightly different phenomenological character. It is not uncommon among parents to describe the way they feel for their toddlers in terms

[3] Cf. Sarah Stroud: "Constitutive claims about friendship need not be interpreted as tolerating no lapses or exceptions on the friend's part on pain of immediately exiting the friendship relation altogether. They point rather to a general disposition on the part of the friend to do or feel or believe x, and they imply that when (and to the extent that) you do not do or feel or believe x, this is a failure of friendship." (Stroud 2006: 502)

of being in love, finding their little children fantastic in all sorts of ways, smiling foolishly about things they do, smelling them, wanting to be physically close to them, finding them almost addictive, etc. And there may be situations in which you may experience your love for a friend as the sort of physical sensation that feelings in part are taken to consist in, such as when something terrible happens to this person, or when you, in a sentimental mood, come to think about how much you appreciate, and wouldn't want to be without, your friend. But love can hardly be reduced to a loving feeling. Love is stretched out in time, and we don't always feel anything for our loved, such as when we sleep or when we are entirely focused on something else, like driving in crazy traffic. Love is therefore better understood as an emotional disposition or sentiment, a disposition to have a range of attitudes including feelings, and other emotional responses toward and with regards to the loved one.[4]

What mental states, then, is a person who loves disposed to be in, more specifically and how does this differ between different kinds of love?

Common for romantic love, friendship love and family love is, as I see it, a disposition for non-instrumental concern for the beloved. The relevant type of concern moreover has to involve more than mere well-wishing, such as a disposition to act on the beloved's behalf even when this involves significant personal sacrifices. To love someone is to be, to some significant degree, disposed to feel and manifest in action an intense affection and non-instrumental concern for this person, at least in part for her own sake. Love also involves a disposition to empathize with the loved one, and to be emotionally affected by, or vulnerable to, both good and bad things that happen to her, and to the character and quality of one's interaction with her.[5]

The fact that we become and stay friends or lovers depends on certain dispositions that aren't necessarily present in the love that we ideally feel for a family member. On the intuitive view of romantic love and friendship that I will use as a starting point, the following

[4] For dispositional accounts of love, see, e.g. (Goldie, 2007; 2010) and (Naar 2013).
[5] See, e.g., Samuel Scheffler's account of valuing in (2010a, Chapter 1) for this sort of account of what it is to love a person.

can be stated: If X loves Y romantically or as a friend, X is, in addition to the above stated general disposition of love, disposed to take pleasure in Y's company and in interaction with Y, highly value or appreciate Y and Y's various features, and to have certain desires regarding Y, such as to be with Y, and for Y to reciprocate X's attitudes and emotions regarding Y. In contrast, and as David Velleman notes (1999: 353), a family member, such as a "meddlesome aunt, cranky grandfather, smothering parent, or overcompetitive sibling [can be] dearly loved, loved freely and with feeling [even though] one just has no desire for his or her company."

What, then, distinguishes love between friends and love between romantic lovers? Erotic desire is a common suggestion. But the fact that asexual people may well fall in love and be just like sexually active romantic lovers in every way besides engaging in sexual activity, make the disposition for sexual desire somewhat problematic as a distinctive feature of romantic love.[6] The relevant desire that romantic lovers are disposed to have, is, perhaps, better described as a desire to be in union with the loved one, a desire that is typically lacking in friendship. (Romantic) lovers are disposed to want to form a "we" together by, among other things, being loyal foremost to one another, to feel special to, and be prioritized by, the other. The erotic desire that most lovers, at least at some point, have for each other can be understood as part of the wider desire to be united with one's lover. The desire for unity may also involve a desire to intertwine in projects and plans, or, more generally, to share a life together. (See, e.g. Scruton 1986; Nozick, 1989, Helm 2013a) I wish to remain open on whether more than two people can be part of this kind of romantic union. But even though I do not want to exclude that more than two people can be part of the special relationships I will be discussing – including those of romantic love – I will throughout this book use the conventional two person model as a default.

The emotions, thoughts and feelings that you have regarding your loved one are both signs and expressions of your love (Goldie, 2010: 63), but you can love someone without manifesting your love in a long time, as various factors may stand in the way for such a

[6] See footnote 1 in this chapter.

disposition to be realized. (Naar 2013) Thus, to say that love involves dispositions to have these various attitudes and desires is not to say that these dispositions must always be triggered. Rather a dispositional account is consistent with that some of the dispositions that love consists in is temporally blocked by other desires or the like. For instance, you may not overall want to be with your beloved because it would be bad for your children or it would mean sacrificing your career. Also, your beloved may sometimes be as obnoxious as to block the intense concern and affection that you are disposed to feel for her, or you might be too depressed to be able to experience any loving feeling for your children.

3.2 Relationships of Love

The differences between relationships between friends and lovers on the one hand, and family relationships on the other, partly have to do with the voluntary character of friendship and romantic relationships. Even if we love our family members and wouldn't want to be without them, we do not choose them in the sense in which we choose our friends and romantic partners. There isn't always a particular time at which we choose, or agree, to be someone's friend or lover. Nevertheless we could, at many distinct times of the process of becoming friends or lovers have chosen not to engage in the kind of interaction that gradually turned into a friendship or a romantic relationship. Except for very rare cases, we cannot choose to be a particular person's child, parent or sibling and later change our mind; we can only choose how well we take care of our family relationships.

In addition to being in a relevant sense voluntary, there are several other, rather undisputed similarities between romantic relationships and friendship. For instance, the disposition of the participants in these relationships to take great pleasure in the other person's personal features, and in each other's company, connects to how friends and lover share various activities or projects on fairly equal terms. In fact, we normally become friends or lovers largely because we enjoy sharing thoughts and activities, and such relationships tend to end when this is no longer the case. We do not initiate or end family relationships in this way. The fact that our friend or lover choose not

to end things with us indicates that we are taken to have certain qualities that make us in some sense worthy of their time, concern and company. This in turn reinforces our self-respect or sense of being good or attractive people. (Delaney 1996; Keller 2000) Of course, we can choose not to nurture the love we feel for a family member and, perhaps, indirectly end the family relationship qua loving relationship, but it is rare that we do so just because we do not we see sufficiently many attractive qualities in each other anymore, or do not particularly enjoy sharing activities.[7]

Relationships between parents and children are different from those of romantic love and friendship also in that the former lack the features of symmetry and equality that characterize the latter two. Parent-children relationships are hierarchical due to differences in emotional and cognitive capabilities between adults and children. (Hoffman 2014)

When it comes to differences between friendship and romantic relationships, exclusivity, in particular sexual exclusivity, is often listed as a feature that distinguishes the two (See e.g. Hoffmann 2014) This criterion is, however, becoming more and more controversial. (See, e.g., Anapol 1992 and Klesse 2005; 2011.) I am prone to thinking that there is typically some sort of exclusivity, sexual or not, in romantic relationships that contributes to the lovers seeing the two of them as a union, but I am here unable to go deeper into what this kind of exclusivity may consist in.

Again, since not much in this dissertation (if anything) hinges on that the distinction between romantic love and friendship is upheld, I will not take a stand on the necessary and sufficient criteria of either romantic love or friendship, or on how they differ more precisely from each other. In fact, my discussion will be perfectly viable even if it would turn out that the vagueness of the concepts makes the idea of a clear distinction untenable. There is also a positive side to this, as much of what contemporary philosophers have said about friendship is, to my mind, useful when trying to understand romantic love as well, and vice versa. This is so not least due to the nature of intimacy

[7] See (Cocking and Oakley 1995) on how different kinds of relationships can be differentiated through the different terms on which we enter and end them.

thought to be characteristic of (non-familial) love and friendship. For this reason, I shall in the next section briefly present the view I take to best capture the intimacy of close friendship. This kind of intimacy is, as I see it, also part of romantic relationships together with the intimacy that may stem from the lovers desire to form a union. Since this view of intimacy was originally presented as part of a theory of friendship, I will nevertheless stick to the term 'friend' in my discussion of it.

3.3 The Intimacy of Friends and Lovers

In the philosophical discussion about what (close) friendship is, one main disagreement concerns the character of the valuable intimacy that it involves. A popular idea is to spell out the core of this intimacy in terms of self-disclosure. On what is sometimes called the mirror view of friendship, the nature of this disclosure is about mutual reflection. This view states that we tend to be close friends with people who are similar to us, people whom we can relate to, or identify with. Intimacy is generated as we tend to feel, think and experience things in similar ways as do our friend, and in how we learn about ourselves through having our friend reflecting our strengths and weaknesses. (See, e.g., Millgram 1987; Sherman 1993; Badhwar 2003)

An alternative idea is what is sometimes called the secrets view of friendship, where one discloses one's self to the other by sharing certain private information, regardless of to what extent this will result in a mutual mirroring of personal features. Trust and intimacy is generated as the friends confide in, and become vulnerable to, one another, by giving each other access to intimate details about themselves. (See, e.g., Thomas 1987; 1989; 1993; Annis 1987, White 1999; 2001)

On the view I prefer, though, the intimacy between friends is a matter of creation rather than disclosure of the self. In "Friendship and the Self," Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett (1998) argue that in close friendships, we see ourselves *through* our friend – not *in* our friend, as suggested by the mirror view. We do not discover what we were all along; rather we continuously become the person that we are

partly through the friendship. Furthermore, it is not the mere exchange of confidences or private information that creates friendship intimacy, as suggested by the secrets view, but, rather, sharing *what we value* with our friend, and, importantly, letting each other's values and ways of seeing each other shape our views on who we are.

Cocking and Kennett's "mutual drawing account of friendship" states that "as a close friend of another, one is characteristically and distinctively receptive to being directed and interpreted and so in these ways drawn to one another." (Cocking and Kennett 1998: 503) Close friends, first, possess a special type of readiness, a particular way of being directly motivated and influenced by, each other's interests. If my old aunt wants to attend the ballet, I might accompany her to make her happy, but if my friend Iris is enthusiastic about ballet, I am prone to be infected by her enthusiasm or "at least be interested in understanding and appreciating it, simply because she loves it." (ibid: 504) The point is not that a friend will be willing to do whatever her friend wants to do, such as any immoral, idiotic, or dangerous or highly trivial pursuit. The point is that the interest of one's friend sometimes suffices as a motivation to pursue a certain activity in a different way than the interests of others do.

Now, anyone's *serious* interests normally move us to act. For instance, if someone is having a heart attack, we are likely to attend to him and/or call an ambulance. In close friendship, though, one is distinctively likely to be moved by less serious interests: the fact that your friend wants to go with you to a hip hop concert may well be reason enough for you to do so, even though you are not into hip hop. The responsiveness to the friend's interests involves a willingness to be affected by her perspective just because it is her perspective. One is particularly open to seeing value in various things and activities, just because the friend finds these things valuable, and not because of the merits one independently takes them to have. This aspect of intimacy is about (mutually) possessing an openness to, in this sense, treat one's friend's interests or concerns as reasons in themselves.

Secondly, friends interpret each other's character, personality or "self" in a way that influences and enriches the friends' sense of the

self. Similarly to how a portrait painter highlights certain features of the person she portrays more than others, friends recognize and emphasize some of each other's character traits or things about each other more than others. Seeing yourself through your friend's eyes changes your self-conception and affects how you will continue to express the trait your friend emphasizes. Her interpretation of you shapes your self-awareness and character-development, and will also bear on the structure of your friendship or on how you relate to one another. (ibid: 513) If, e.g., I am close friends with Judy and she teasingly points out to me that I always want to be right, I may be surprised at first, only to accept that I am probably like that, and, perhaps, self-ironically exaggerate this feature of mine in her company to amuse her. I may however, on a general level, be led by her remark to take myself a little less seriously. If, however, I've become obsessed with my work, I may no longer appreciate Judy's lighthearted interpretation of my self-importance, but rather feel annoyed with it and generally misunderstood. Or perhaps Judith's involvement in New Age psychology has had her reinterpret the tactile warmth she once saw in me into now being an invasion of her space. (ibid: 505; 521-2). If we become less willing to accept each other's interpretations of ourselves the intimacy diminishes gradually. At some point it is gone, and with it a central aspect of what is distinctively valuable about friendship.

A benefit with the drawing account is its ability to explain the rather uncontroversial observation that a rigid person – a person who is unwilling to be changed by people, relationships, experiences, circumstances, insights, or the world at large – is unfit for close friendship. Their lack of flexibility doesn't mean that they cannot see themselves in others, or share secrets with or confide in a person. But to be rigid entails a limited openness to being shaped, developed molded or "drawn" by a friend through mutual direction and interpretation. (ibid: 519- 520) Cocking and Kennett write that it is "central to the establishment and maintenance of the intimacy of [close] friendship" that my distinctive receptivity "both to the other's interests and to their way of seeing me" has me "develop in a way that is particular to the relationship; the self my friend sees is, at least in part, a product of the friendship" (ibid 1998: 505) The static or

inflexible character of a rigid person can thus be contrasted to how "the self is conceived as a relational thing" within close friendship, on the drawing account. (ibid: 505)

Cocking and Kennett point to a particular kind of merging of perspectives within a friendship, how our outlook on, and sensitivity to, ourselves, each other, and the world get affected by that of our close friend: "That we are distinctively disposed to engage in each other's activities and to be responsive to the way the other thinks and feels about things sheds light on how the shared valuing that goes on in friendship, and the intimacy that comes with this, are guided and shaped within friendship." (ibid: 518) The friends may develop an interest in something neither one was previously interested in, or develop some certain disposition that neither one of them had before. As Cocking puts it, "friends create reasons and values together, including in ways that take each [friend] quite beyond where they were or might have imagined in isolation." (Cocking 2013: 9) The dynamic and reciprocal nature of friendship not only means that friends change in light of the other person's suggestions and interpretations, but also that their ongoing shared interaction and valuing may take them in directions neither one of them would have suggested separately, had they not been friends. Intimacy is created when friends share their thoughts and feelings about each other and (other) things that they care about, and they together create an evaluative perspective that is more than the friends' respective outlooks put together. Philosophers like Keller (2000) and Jollimore (2011) have held that something similar is true also of romantic love, and this is, as mentioned, also my view.

In sum, I understand personal love as a disposition for non-instrumental concern for the loved one. Romantic lover and friends are furthermore disposed to desire reciprocity and, in the case of romantic love, a desire to be in union with the loved one. The character of romantic relationships and friendship is more voluntary and equal in character than family relationships. Being in union with the loved one is part of the intimate character of romantic relationships. Another part of the intimacy is created as the lovers mutually interpret and direct each other. This way of drawing one another is also distinctive of close friends, but not of family members.

Insofar as siblings involve in this interpretation process, the particular siblingship can be understood as involving an element of friendship.[8]

However, the shared feature of love and special relationships that has attracted the most discussion among philosophers is probably the feature of partiality or special treatment, to which we now turn.

4. The Partiality of Close Relationships

A large part of the philosophical debate about the normative significance of special relationships concerns their element of special treatment, or the various ways in which we are more concerned about our near and dear than about others – often seemingly appropriately.

4.1 How Are We Partial?

Most of us are somewhat disposed to general benevolence in that we are, at least to some extent, motivated to benefit others, whoever they are, especially when the assistance comes at a low cost to ourselves. We may, e.g., donate money to charity, bring a child who is lost in the mall to the information desk, give street directions to a stranger, and so on. However, when it comes to our friends, lovers, and other people with whom we share intimate or special relationships – our "intimates" as I will call them – we do countless things that we wouldn't do for others, sometimes even when our assistance comes at significant cost to ourselves.[9] You may, e.g., let your ticket to the Beyoncé concert you have been excited about for months go to waste in order to keep your friend company as her spouse just told her she is leaving her for another woman, or you may turn down a wonderful career opportunity in a different country for the sake of your child or your romantic partner.

A person and things about her such as her needs and preferences tend to trigger our concern in attitudes and actions differently, and to do so more extensively, insofar as this person is our intimate. If you,

[8] For reasoning on why parents and children cannot be friends, see Hoffmann (2014).

[9] In the debate, the terms "relative" and "associate" are often used instead of "intimate" as to denote the person with whom one shares a special relationship. See fn. 15.

e.g., see your own child and another child fall down from a climbing frame, seemingly hurt and scared, your focus will presumably be primarily on your own child whom you will immediately run to comfort and protect. Or, when being ask to help someone move house, you are likely to agree when the person asking is a friend but not when a stranger in the supermarket is the one asking you. Our disposition to privilege the interests of our intimates in our actions has to do with how we privilege them in our deliberations. While most of us are generally benevolent in spirit, for instance by taking it to be a good thing that any person is better off rather than worse off, we tend to favor scenarios in which an intimate gets a benefit to scenarios in which some other person gets the same benefit. For instance, we prefer it that our friend, rather than a stranger, gets the job both of them have applied for. Likewise, we disfavor scenarios in which an intimate is harmed more than scenarios in which some other person is harmed. For instance, we prefer it that someone else's child is bullied instead of our own child.

There is further emotional and cognitive partiality involved in special relationships, e.g., in how we prefer the company of our intimates to the company of others, and in how we think more, and generally better, of our intimates than of others, at least in certain respects. We often find our intimates more pleasant, interesting, fascinating or funny than we find most other people. We also worry more about our intimates than about others and are more emotionally vulnerable to how our intimates are doing and to how they treat us, than to how others are doing and treat us. If, e.g., someone is mean to you, or tells you that he never wants to see you again, this will affect you more negatively if this person is your romantic partner than if he is a stranger in a bar. And, if you hear on the local radio that there has been a car accident and that one person is now in a coma, you may feel bad for a moment before your start thinking about something else. But if you find out that this person is your close friend you are likely to experience some extended emotional distress.[10]

[10] Keller (2014) and Cross (unpublished manuscript) use examples like these when explicating reasonable partiality.

4.2 Permitted and Required Partiality

Manifestations of partiality, or special (preferential) concern or treatment seem in very many cases to be perfectly in order. That is, it often seems we should be, or are justified in being, partial to our near and dear, even though we may sometimes exaggerate the extent to which we treat them specially. In any event, it isn't only the case that we *do* give preferential treatment to our loved ones; we often seem to take it for granted that we have good reasons for doing so, reasons that we wouldn't have had in absence of our special relationships with them.[11] Our intimates are more important to us than other people, and this is seemingly how it should be; the ways in which our intimates matter more to us than others are appropriately or justifiably reflected in our actions and attitudes. It often seems to matter whether a person is your friend, lover or family member for how you ought to feel or act with regard to this person. You are permitted to do special things for your intimates that you are not permitted to do for others. You may, e.g., show up unexpectedly at your romantic partner's workplace on a Friday afternoon with a packed bag and take him to a cabin in the country over the weekend. You are not, however, permitted to similarly "kidnap" *someone else's* romantic partner. You are also required to do certain things for you intimates that you are not required to do for others. For instance, spouses have a mutual duty not to abandon each other without any explanation, whereas two people who go on a blind date are not required to explain their sudden disappearance from each other's lives.[12]

Furthermore, in order to even count as to love or be friends with someone we need to be partial to this person. (See e.g. Telfer 1971: 231-237; White 1999: 81; Scheffler 2010b) Were we not to (be disposed to) treat this person specially, then she wouldn't be our friend or loved one. Relationships of friendship and love are in part attitude-dependent relationships in this particular sense: they require some level of special concern (characteristic of either relationship) in

[11] I will, as is common in this debate, ignore other possible grounds for special treatment or special reasons (e.g., moral desert) and use these terms only to refer to the treatment or reasons that are in some sense relationship-dependent.
[12] For an account of which relationships justify partiality, see Kolodny (2010).

order to qualify as friendship or love. If you gradually lose your special concern for your friend or romantic partner and start treating her more and more like you would treat just any person you would first be a bad friend or lover and, at some point, you would cease to be a friend or lover at all. And, while you do not stop being a (biological or legal) parent in case you were to start treating your child no differently from how you would treat anyone else's child, you would no doubt seem to be defective as a parent, and at some point you wouldn't be said to feel parental love for your child anymore.

4.3 Partiality as a Moral Demand

Relationships of love and friendship are generally regarded as central components of a good and meaningful life, and we have prudential reasons to initiate, cherish and sustain special relationships. This means that we have prudential reasons to do what is required in order to keep our relationships healthy, such as supporting our intimates in various ways. As the remarks in the previous section suggest, though, it is in a further sense not entirely up to you whether you should treat intimates specially: you *owe* it to your intimates to treat them specially, and may occasionally *wrong* them if you are being indifferent between them and non-intimates. Your intimates have special claims on you, certain legitimate expectations on you to be partial to them which do not depend on you yourself thereby being better off. You cannot simply give up your 4-year-old child for adoption just because you find that parenthood has made your life worse, and you cannot simply ignore your friend's desperate request on your voicemail to keep her company at a difficult time just because you were planning on catching up on your sleep. To nevertheless do so is not merely a violation of etiquette or of societal or relationship norms; it seems to warrant moral criticism (regardless of whether the particular lack of special concern is also imprudent). If a person shares a special relationship with another person and for no good reason fails to be, or do what is required of her either as a good friend, lover or parent etc., for instance by showing indifference between her intimate and a complete stranger, we tend to think that this person is blameworthy.

Observations like the ones above have led philosophers to treat reasons and obligations stemming from special relationships as a subset of *moral* reasons and obligations: We are sometimes morally required to treat our intimates better than others. Special reasons or duties toward intimates are normally understood as to be pro tanto reasons or duties: they can at least sometimes be outweighed by other conflicting reasons or duties. Philosophers generally agree that special relationships generate moral demands which, in the absence of conflicting and stronger demands, it would be morally wrong not to meet.

4.4 Accommodating Morality and Close Relationships

Because of the central role of love and close relationships in our lives and of how drained human existence would appear without them, it is of great importance for every moral theory, and for theories about value in general, to affirm or be at least consistent with a plausible view of the value and reasons of love and close relationships. Sarah Stroud writes that "[i]f living up to the demands of a particular moral theory would preclude friendship, and thus a good life, many moral theorists would take that to be a compelling, even decisive, argument against that particular moral conception." (Stroud 2006: 520.) Similar claims are often made also about romantic love and love within families.

While few philosophers question the claim that there is *a* normative significance of special relationships, they disagree about how it is to be understood more precisely and what its practical implications are. No one denies that we ought to be differently concerned with a particular person depending on whether or not we share a special relationship with her. Instead philosophers ask why, or in virtue of what, the fact that a person is your intimate bear on what kind of concern you are permitted or required to give that person. Philosophers also ask when, how, and how much one ought to treat one's intimate specially, and attempt to clarify similarities and differences between the duties stemming from different kinds of special relationships.

4.5 Impartialist and Partialist Accounts of Partiality

One challenge to the project of accommodating personal relationships in moral theories arises from the way in which the special duties and reasons that are commonly thought to be entailed by such relationships seem to conflict with the moral duties we have toward all persons equally.[13] Since we have limited resources of, e.g., time, money and energy the special concern we give to our intimates leaves us with less resources to spend on assisting strangers in need. Special treatment of intimates thus involve costs on third parties, and it is of philosophical interest to account for why (if at all) we have reasons to treat our intimates differently from, and often better than, strangers.

More generally, the idea that we ought to be partial toward our intimates may appear to be in conflict with a bearing idea of most influential moral theories, namely that morality is essentially impartial, and that the specific identity of persons doesn't matter in itself for how anyone should be treated. While there are different ways to spell out how more exactly this impartiality requirement of morality should be understood, the idea is roughly that every person counts equally; that each person counts for one and no one for more than one. No person's good, needs, interests, happiness, autonomy, and so on, are, as such, more important than any other's. Moral requirements or duties are fundamentally about making sure that everyone's equal moral status is respected. Different ethical theories have different views of what such respect entails in particular situations. However, while most philosophers accept the existence of such impartial moral duties, they also recognize moral reasons to treat one's intimates specially. This creates an apparent tension within theories of the morality of love and friendship that is important to account for. A

[13] For an argument that terms like 'duties' and 'claims' are ill-suited for philosophical discussions of friendship, see Wellman (2001: 224-230). Wellman argues that being a good friend should rather be understood as a virtue; that being a good friend is about developing particular dispositions of friendship. It seems to me though, that we can talk about considerations that speak in favor of or against developing certain dispositions and thus that the idea of friendship as a virtue can be made to fit with my talk of pro tanto reasons. The question is still what makes your favorable dispositions toward your intimates called for.

good such theory needs to explain *what it is about* our friends and loved ones that requires, or allows us, to treat them specially. This can be done either by showing how impartial moral duties require or allow for partiality on a practical level, or by advancing an ethical theory that allows for partial moral reasons in addition to our impartial ones. Views on this matter can thus either be labeled impartialist or partialist accounts of special reasons or reasons of partiality.[14] The distinction is roughly about whether or not all special reasons and duties can be reduced to, in the sense of being explained by or derived from, general (impartial) duties.[15] While both impartialists and partialists agree that it matters morally that a certain individual is your intimate, only partialists hold that it matters *as such*. Impartialists, on the other hand, hold that all reasons for partiality are, fundamentally, impartial reasons. The normative significance of special relationships is, according to impartialists, derived from how the shared history of interactions that they consist in tends to involve an especially dense collection of factors that trigger general or impartial moral duties. Factors that trigger duties to just any person, such as an ability to easily assist, or having led someone to depend on you, are simply likely to line up and be particularly strong in the context of special relationships. You shouldn't give special treatment to a person just

[14] We might think of a position that states that reasons for special treatment are a mere illusion, that relationships are not in *any* way relevant for how we should treat others, and that it is entirely inappropriate to be *at all* practically guided by them. I'm not sure whether any philosopher has ever defended such a position and I will in any event ignore it. (Cf. Kolodny 2003b)

[15] In the debate about special obligations to intimates, as well as to co-nationals or co-patriots, different terms are used to denote roughly the same distinction. Christopher Wellman (2000) talks of "reductionism" and "associativism," instead of impartialism and partialism, while David Miller distinguishes between "universalism" and "particularism" (1995; 2007) Even more frequently used are the terms "reductionism" and "non-reductionism", which Samuel Scheffler introduced in his (1997) with regards to whether the normative significance of special relationships can be reduced to the significance of a more fundamentally important moral relationship (such as being vulnerable to someone or in a position to easily benefit her). Niko Kolodny adopts Scheffler's terminology and defines reductionism as to state that "we have reason, *de re*, to treat specially the people who happen to be our relatives, but not [as nonreductionism claims] reason, *de dicto*, to treat specially our relatives, under that description." (Kolodny 2003b: 1-2).

because she is your intimate, but, more fundamentally, because you thereby promote the overall good or respect her properly, or the like. (See e.g., Railton 1984, Baron 1991, Brink 2001.)

According to partialists, on the other hand, this is not the best understanding of our special obligations. On this view, it can and often does matter in itself that a person is your intimate: you ought to give her special treatment *just because* she is your intimate. Even if you *can* give an impartialist explanation of why an instance of partiality is justified, it is often the wrong story, say partialists. Special relationships have direct bearing on what we ought to do and there are reasons for partiality that are not reasons in virtue of being morally significant from an impartial perspective. (See, e.g., Cottingham 1986, Scheffler 1997; 2001; 2004, Kolodny 2003, Jeske 1997; 2008, and Keller 2013.)

4.6 Partiality as a Non-Moral Demand

As mentioned above, philosophers have traditionally viewed special reasons and obligations as moral reasons and obligations. While this will also be my position in the chapters to come, it might be useful to say something about an alternative, non-moral construal of special reasons, and to explain why I will not discuss it separately.

A premise for the impartialist/partialist debate, on my construal, is that insofar as a consideration bears on what we should do all things considered, such a consideration is by definition a moral reason. This use of terminology is not accepted by all philosophers, in particular Bernard Williams (1981; 1985) and Susan Wolf (1992; 1999; 2012). Williams and Wolf hold that the value and reasons of special relationships cannot be accounted for within a moral framework; special relationships rather possess a non-moral value and provide non-moral reasons that may sometimes be in irresolvable conflicts with our moral reasons. On this alternative construal, all moral obligations are ultimately impartial in character, but there are additional non-moral reasons to treat intimates specially, and it can sometimes be reasonable to do so even though morality does not permit such partiality.

According to Williams, special relationships are part of the set of desires, concerns and commitments that constitute our character, our individuality or personality. These "ground projects" or "identity-conferring commitments" as Williams calls them, are conditions for our existence as agents, in the sense that they couldn't be given up with less than that the agent gives *herself* up. They are what drives us or keeps us moving forward, and it is unclear, says Williams, why an agent should at all go on living without them.[16] On Williams's view, moral demands and demands arising from our ground projects are bound to conflict fairly frequently, and it is absurd, he thinks, to hold that what we ought to do all things considered is always to follow the (impartial) demands of morality. If that were the case it would always be impermissible to act on the reasons given by our ground projects – which significantly provides meaning to our lives – whenever those latter reasons conflict with moral reasons. (Williams 1981)

Wolf argues that morality is best characterized as being impartial at its core, but holds that morality is expected to do too much and that it cannot adequately capture the central role special relationships play our lives. (Wolf 1992) Although Wolf takes there to be both moral and self-interested reasons to favor intimates, she takes there to be a third, distinctive source of reasons for such partiality grounded in values such as human integrity, meaning or fulfillment - all reasons that are not derived from moral or narrowly self-interested considerations. As an example, Wolf presents a case of a mother who stays up all night to make a costume for her daughter's party the following day. This hardly improves the mother's wellbeing, and it is clear, says Wolf, that there are several morally more worthy causes that she could spend her time on than this one. Still, according to Wolf, the mother may reasonably take herself to have decisive reason to stay up all night to make the costume. (Wolf 1992. See also Wolf 1999 and 2012.)

As we have seen above, partialists hold that in at least some (and maybe quite a few) cases, the reasons for partiality that are reducible

[16] "A man may have, for a lot of his life or even just for some part of it, a ground project or set of projects which are closely related to his existence and which to a significant degree give a meaning to his life." (Williams 1981: 12)

to impartialist reasons do not provide the full or adequate story of justified partiality. The partialists' core claim is that there are reasons for partiality that are not explained by what speaks in favor of such partiality from an impartial perspective. These reasons for partiality are, in the literature, commonly seen as moral reasons, in part because agents who violate their special obligations are often subjected to moral criticism.

I will count Williams and Wolf to the partialists' theoretical camp since they claim that a consideration that bear no weight from an impartialist perspective, e.g., the consideration that *your* wife is about to drown, or *your* daughter needs a costume for tomorrow, may have direct bearing on what you ought to do all things considered. I will do so even though they themselves hold that partial considerations are by definition non-moral considerations. My interest is in the disagreement about whether the fact that a person is our intimate can bear directly or indirectly on what we ought to do all things considered, not on what is the best way to characterize different kinds of considerations that matter for what we are permitted or required to do, all things considered. I will neither assume that all moral reasons are necessarily impartial in character, nor that they are not, albeit touching on considerations that may help us take a stand on this issue (in particular in Chapter 2).

5. Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter 2. Here, I will be concerned with the very phenomenon of partiality to, or special treatment of, one's near and dear. As mentioned above, partialists hold that one's special relationships play a fundamental normative role, in the sense that they bear directly on one's reasons and duties. Impartialists deny this, and hold that all reasons and duties to be partial are at bottom explanatorily reducible to or derived from the reasons and duties we have with regard to any person. It is commonly thought that while impartialist accounts have the main benefit of being theoretically parsimonious (stipulating only one fundamental source of reasons), the main benefit of partialism is its commonsensical character, that it is more intuitive and in line with our everyday life experiences. In this chapter, I consider one

traditional and one new way of stating the case that the complicated and indirect justifications of partiality, offered by impartialists, render impartialist accounts implausible.

The traditional criticism of impartialism focuses on the self-effacement of impartialist theories: that the agent, in order to act rightly, must not be motivated by the very considerations in virtue of which the act is justified. Critics hold that this means that an ethical life is a life a life in which one is alienated from one's values and loved ones. This is, I hold, not a convincing criticism of impartialism as such, but is, at most, a convincing criticism of certain impartialist views.

I go on to discuss a new criticism of the indirectness of impartialist justifications. While this criticism also targets the split between normative reasons and motives it does so in a new manner. The claim is that impartialist accounts ought to be rejected since they entail that in situations where we have the clearest sense of being moved by our real reasons, namely when we act out of love and friendship, we are nevertheless systematically mistaken about what our reasons really are. I agree that this entailment would be a theoretical cost but argue that impartialist views do not necessarily entail this.

Chapter 3. Traditionally, the debate about friendship duties, or about what is required of, or characterizes, a good friend, has focused on how a good friend is disposed to act and feel with regard to her friend and how she should be moved to provide various forms of special or preferential treatment. In two recent articles, Simon Keller and Sarah Stroud have separately argued that such partiality is not enough; in order for you to be a good friend your friend also needs to possess a special standing in your epistemic or belief-related compartment. When you face new information about a friend you are, as a good friend, less oriented toward arriving at true beliefs than you would otherwise be, or than a detached observer would be. In such situations your beliefs and ways of interpreting and concluding things from the given data are affected not only by truth-related considerations, but also by the special concern you have for the needs and interests of your friend. As a result your beliefs about your friends are systematically more positive than your beliefs about non-friends or than the beliefs of a detached or disinterested observer would be.

Being epistemically irresponsible or partial by having one's belief and belief-forming processes being slanted in one's friend's favor is a way of realizing intuitive friendship goods such as support, encouragement and trust in that the friend is a good person, according to Keller and Stroud.

I argue that what is seen as an indication of epistemic irrationality or bias in this debate is either not part of what makes a person a good friend, or can plausibly be accounted for as to not entail a violation of the relevant epistemic norms. It is *not* part of being a good friend to systematically ignore, reinterpret, downplay or otherwise marginalize the relevance of information that puts a friend in a bad light in ways that violate mainstream epistemic norms, in Keller and Stroud's similar, rough construal of such norms.

As I see it, though, there is a difference between the descriptive beliefs we form about people and the evaluative interpretations we make of them. I agree with Keller and Stroud that mainstream epistemology would regard any divergence from the detached and disinterested point of view as bias or epistemic impairment when it comes to descriptive beliefs. However, I am not as sure that this holds for interpretations of a person's character in light of some new, bad-sounding information about the person, as Stroud seems to think. I make a case for this by offering an account of character assessments within the context of friendship, including the role of beliefs in such assessments.

Chapter 4 deals with a tension in the (or at least *a*) contemporary, Western romantic love ideal. On the one hand we desire to be loved in part because there is something about us that reasonably appeals to our lover, and, on the other hand, we want to be loved unconditionally, and, thus, regardless of what qualities we possess. These desires are allegedly inconsistent in that they cannot both be met at the same time: Love cannot both depend on that we have certain (positive) qualities and be felt regardless of what qualities we have. I consider and grant the argument that considerations of self-respect support property-dependence as a feature of ideal love. This argument is often used to dismiss unconditionality as a potential feature of ideal love due to its inconsistency with property-dependence. I note, though, that the inconsistency in question can

strictly speaking be removed if the points of time at which love is property-dependent and unconditional are made explicit. However, mere consistency with property-dependence doesn't make unconditionality a plausible feature of ideal love, and I go on to consider a recent argument to that effect. I find the argument unconvincing, though, and I devote the rest of the chapter to trying to get clearer on what in the vicinity of unconditional love it is that we may want, given that we also want love to be property-dependent. I suggest that we want love to be stable and that the stability we want is preferably given by some kind of commitment. I end the chapter by defending and expanding on Simon Keller's idea that the character of the properties for which we are ideally loved can account for why ideal love is likely to remain in place. Ideally, says Keller, we are loved because of properties that make us into someone with whom our lover would like to change and develop over time. I argue that more emphasis should be put on the efforts required of ideally committed lovers to not gain the properties that will make it hard for the other lover to love them, and the efforts required to not be easily discouraged by changes in the other lover.

Chapter 5. Philosophers tend to disagree whether love is the kind of thing that can be more or less rationally felt and my final chapter aims to contribute to this debate. More specifically, I am interested in the best understanding of what seems to be rational restrictions on loving a particular person. To say that ideal love, or the best love there is, causally depends on some properties of the beloved is one thing, but are we irrational if we do not respond with love to a person whom we take to be in some relevant sense good to love? The reasons view is normally understood as giving an affirmative answer. Love is not simply more or less good or fortunate, but can also be more or less justified as in being an appropriate, suitable, fitting or apt response to the nature of its object.

I argue that a first and second version of the reasons view of love either have implausible implications, or are theoretically puzzling. According to the no-reasons view, on the other hand, love can be neither rational nor irrational, and love is therefore always rationally permissible. As such, the no-reasons view fails to account for the intuitive connection between love and rationality.

In the main part of the chapter I propose an alternative way to understand rational constraints on love which can explain away some of our intuitions about love being rationally justifiable in the sense that reasons views of love try to account for. On my version of what I call the rationalizing view of love, proposed in its original form by Katrien Schaubroeck (2014), there are no justifying reasons for love, but only rationalizing reasons, i.e., considerations that make love intelligible in the sense of being in line or consistent with the rest of the lover's attitudes. By looking at clear cases in which love cannot be rendered intelligible in the sense I specify, we can derive conditions that need to be in place in order for love to be rationalizable, and thus, as I see it, rationally permissible in a different, but relevant, sense. The rationalizing view may complement the no-reasons view and help remedy the main objection to the no-reasons view: that it is revisionary when it comes to our intuitions and ways of talking about rational and irrational love. I conclude that this is at least one reason to prefer the no-reasons view to the two versions of the reasons view of love.

Chapter 2. Impartialism, Partialism, Motives and Reasons

1. Introduction

As we saw in Chapter 1 (section 4), impartiality is a core feature of most influential moral theories. The idea is, roughly, that every person counts, and no one counts for more than any other. No person is as such more worthy of concern or respect than any one else, and this is reflected in how we ought to treat each other, and in how such moral conclusions may be justified. Yet, as we also saw, it seems in order that we care more about people with whom we share a special or intimate relationship than we do about others, and that we treat our "intimates" differently and often better than we treat others. Sharing a special relationship with someone comes with a disposition to favor her to others, for instance in how much one thinks about, feel for, and is prepared to be of assistance to her. In many cases, such partiality or preferential treatment of intimates seems morally permitted or even required. Our intimates have special claims on us, we owe them more than we owe just any person, they can legitimately expect us to be more concerned with them and to treat them better than others. Among other things, we should spend more time, energy, emotional and economic resources on our own children, friends and other loved ones than on other people. We should also have different emotional responses to various states of affairs depending on whether or not they concern an intimate of ours. For instance, we should prefer it that our friend rather than her colleague gets to keep her job, and that our child rather than his classmate escapes the class bully. These attitudes ought to be reflected in our dispositions to act. For instance, if you can assist only one of two equally needy persons, one of which is an intimate, you ought to assist your intimate.

In sum, being indifferent between your intimates and others in attitudes, dispositions and actions, and thus to *not* be partial to your

intimates would often seem to merit moral criticism. You ought to treat your near and dear specially, or else you are disregarding your moral duties or reasons to do so.[17]

I take the picture sketched above to be uncontroversial among philosophers and non-philosophers alike. Does this indicate that morality isn't impartial after all? Partialist philosophers have answered: "Yes, in the sense that our impartial duties are not exhaustive. We have fundamentally partial duties to our intimates as well." Impartialist philosophers have denied this conclusion. Instead they have argued that there is always a more fundamental explanation for why you ought to give a person special treatment than that this person is your intimate. All justified special treatment is indirectly justified by being impartially motivated on a more basic level. In this chapter I will first account for some traditional criticism of the indirectness of impartialist theories. I will then discuss a new argument in the partiality debate that targets the indirectness of impartialist accounts in a different manner.

1.1 Outline

The traditional criticism against impartialist theories concerns their non-commonsensical character. The focus of this criticism is often the element of self-effacement: that impartialist theories recommend us moral agents to, in our daily life, not be guided or moved by what is (according to these theories) the criterion of rightness. Partialists hold that to not be moved by one's values makes it hard for a moral agent to genuinely enjoy the goods of love and friendship. If the true ethical theory is impartialist in character an ethical life would therefore be characterized by alienation from one's values and/or from one's near and dear. Critics hold that such implication renders impartialist theories implausible at best, and at worse it disqualifies them from being ethical theories at all, given that an ethical life is a good life conceptually speaking. I account for impartialist accounts of partiality

[17] As mentioned in Chapter 1 (1.1; 4.3), special reasons and duties are normally understood as to be pro tanto. The underlying assumption is that if you have a special reason or duty to §, then, in the absence of other, overriding reasons or duties, you ought to §.

in section 2, and for such traditional partialist criticism in section 3. I conclude that there are versions of impartialism that can escape the traditional self-effacement criticism and that it is therefore not a reason to reject impartialism as such.

In section 4, I discuss Simon Keller's new contribution to this debate. Keller doesn't rule out that an acceptable ethical theory may tell us that what ought to move us in everyday life is different from our real (i.e. normative or justifying) reasons, and Keller is not criticizing any alienation that such element of self-effacement may entail. To claim that our real reasons are different from what moves us when we act out of love and friendship is instead a ground for rejection, says Keller, since such a claim implies that we are *systematically mistaken* at times when we take ourselves to be in closest contact with our real reasons. While I agree with Keller that the mentioned implication would be a reason to reject an ethical theory, I disagree that impartialist theories have this implication.

Section 5 offers a summary of the chapter.

2. Impartialist Accounts of Special Duties

As I noted above, and in Chapter 1 (section 4), philosophers generally agree that it often matters morally that someone is your intimate, but disagree about what fundamentally grounds such moral significance. Impartialists hold that the moral significance of someone's property of 'being your intimate' is always derived from, or explanatorily reducible to, more basic and impartially significant properties which, in the given context, call for special treatment. Special treatment is required of you to meet your impartial duties. This is not to deny that pointing to one's relationship is often sufficient for an agent to justify her special concern for a certain person. But, say impartialists, what is doing the justificatory work is, ultimately, other factors in the context of your special relationship.

2.1 Consequentialist Justifications of Partiality

According to consequentialists, our special reasons and duties are derived from our general duty to promote the overall good. While we have reason to benefit any person inasmuch as this will serve that aim,

we also have reason to focus more on our intimates since we have so many opportunities to do them good, and can normally do so more efficiently than with other people because of various things that come with a special relationship. This is partly about being in an especially good epistemic position with regards to our intimates (we know well what they benefit from), partly about having comparably easy access to them (we have much contact with them and can easily assist them), and partly about our emotional ties to them (we are naturally inclined to benefit them which makes the cost for us to do so low).

Participating in special relationships furthermore involves raising expectations in one's intimate, and to explicitly or implicitly promise to pay particular attention to her. Consequentialists tend to hold that not only is keeping promises a practice that is useful to stick to on a general level, it is moreover extra painful when someone you love breaks a promise or deviates from your expectations. Therefore, you have especially strong reasons to keep your promises to your loved ones, and to meet their legitimate expectations on you. (Mill 1998 [1861]: 59; Sidgwick 1981 [1907]: 439ff)

Keeping promises and meeting expectations are parts of cherishing the trust, reliance and dependence that are central features of special relationships. The consequences are normally better if we do not let down a person who trusts in, relies on, or is dependent on us, and these reasons are likely to be accumulated and intensified in the context of a close relationship. Our intimates are often particularly vulnerable to us, in the sense that they are highly affected by what we do, and would suffer significant emotional damage from being neglected by us.[18] Analogously, our intimates tend also to benefit particularly from receiving certain goods – say a hug, general appreciation, or just company – from us, rather than from any random person.

More generally, it is often argued that special treatment of intimates is justified in virtue of being a necessary means of maintaining one of the most valuable things in life: special

[18] See Goodin (1985) for a particularly persuasive broadly consequentialist attempt to derive all special reasons from reasons to attend to those that are particularly vulnerable to us.

relationships. If we didn't give our friends and loved ones special treatment, institutions of love and friendship would not be upheld and the world would be a much worse, if even bearable, place. In this sense special duties can be derived from the consequentialist duty to promote the overall good. (See, e.g., Railton 1984 and Arneson 2003.)

All of this give us reason to focus more on our intimates than on others when we try to do good and to avoid doing harm. Reasons for special treatment may thus be reduced to impartial reasons to keep promises, or to otherwise behave in ways that we have deliberately led people to expect us to behave, to promote the good in the most efficient way we can, and to make room for a central component of a good life.[19]

2.2 Deontological Justifications of Partiality

Deontologists would, like consequentialists, point to how duties that we have to just any person are accumulated in the context of a relationships, while denying that these duties fundamentally hold because, and insofar as, they are in service of the overall good. More exactly how this justification proceeds vary depending on the type of deontological theory considered.

2.2.1 Rossian Justifications

W.D. Ross (1927; 1930; 1939) suggests a justification along this line, based on the seven prima facie duties that he takes us to have. Among these are the duty of beneficence and the duty of non-maleficence, providing access to reasons for special treatment between intimates that resemble some of the consequentialist ones. This since duties of beneficence and non-maleficence apply more frequently and more intensely within special relationships, giving us comparably more occasions both to benefit and to harm intimates than non-intimates.

[19] Wallace (2012) gives a good overview of how three groups of principles 1) reliance and trust, 2) vulnerability, and 3) reciprocity and gratitude provide derivative reasons for special treatment on the impartialist account that he ultimately rejects. I am not convinced that these groups of principles can be clearly distinguished, though.

Furthermore, the general duty of fidelity will often apply in special relationships as intimates frequently make various kinds of promises to each other. This is also true of duties of reparation and of gratitude. If, e.g., someone does you a favor, you have a pro tanto duty to reciprocate or show gratitude toward that person, whoever she is, according to Rossians. Special relationships are likely to involve quite a few favors, and it can be held that some of your reasons for special treatment of an intimate can be reduced to reasons to reciprocate or show gratitude.[20]

2.2.2 Kantian Justifications

Kantian deontology is differently structured from Rossian deontology as it builds on the idea of an ultimate principle of moral permissibility of acts (or maxims), rather than duty (beyond the obvious one not to do what is impermissible). Therefore, there may not seem to be any principled problem with partiality on Kantian views: as long as we do not violate the ultimate principle which has to do with avoiding treating any person as a mere means, we may be permitted to be more concerned with our near and dear than with others. We may also have further moral reasons for partiality to intimates arising from duties of beneficence in similar ways as in the case of Rossian deontology and consequentialism. But, unlike duties of respect, such duties are imperfect duties, on Kantian views: While we are always required to treat people with respect, imperfect duties such as duties of beneficence don't have to be followed in every situation where the agent can do so. In particular, there is no absolute Kantian requirement to take every (affected) person into equal consideration when we act. We have duties of beneficence because we cannot rationally will that no one ever acts on the maxim (out of the intent) to help others. This grounds a duty of easy rescue, but it is far from obvious that we do not comply with this duty if we focus more on our loved ones than others than would benefit more from our concern. First, we have some choice regarding how and when to

[20] Justifying special treatment in terms of gratitude is most common for filial duties (adult children's duties toward their parents). See, e.g., (Sommers 1986). For a rejection of the idea that children owe their parents reciprocal sacrifices, see (English 1992).

discharge this duty. Second, there is no Kantian duty to help as much as possible, or to prioritize strictly according to need. Again, the ultimate test will be provided by the principle of moral permissibility: if a particular preferential treatment of intimates passes it, then such favoring complies with what the duty of beneficence requires. [21]

This explains how Kantian moral theory allows for special treatment of intimates, but it doesn't really explain our intuition that we are sometimes *obligated* to prioritize our intimates to others. Neo-Kantians, though, have attempted to derive special obligations from the principle to not treat any person merely as a means. Marilea Bramer expresses this well in her dissertation *Taking Relationships Seriously: The Place of Personal Relationships in Kantian Moral Theory* (2008):

> [i]f we look at why we think duties in personal relationships are different from duties in general, then we might conclude that there are times when, if we consider the needs of the people in personal relationships with us to be equal to the needs of strangers, we are not treating those in personal relationships with us as ends. Part of the respect we owe to others is to treat them as people who are capable of choosing a life plan and directing their lives according to that plan. When we are not in a personal relationship with someone, we are justified in treating them in a way that is consistent with what most rational agents would generally want. But when we do have a personal relationship with someone and so we know and are involved to some degree in our intimate's life plan, we need to treat her in a way that takes those facts into account. To ignore this is to ignore that she is an agent capable of choosing her own life plan, including us in that plan and directing her life according to that plan. To ignore our relationship with a person in our interaction with that person is to fail to show proper respect for her autonomy. (Bramer 2008: 101-102)

Bramer's point is that respecting an intimate requires that one's relationship with her is reflected in how one treats her.

2.2.3 Natural Law Ethics

Thomas Aquinas is the central figure behind religiously based natural law ethics. Within his theory, partialist duties such as 'honor thy father

[21] For this interpretation of Kant, see Barbara Herman "Agency, Attachment, and Difference" (1991) and "The Scope of Moral Requirement" (2001). See also Onora O'Neill's "Kantian approaches to some famine problems". (1980).

and thy mother' are simply assumed as part of the fundamental natural law principle to act in accordance with God's plan by doing good and to avoid doing evil. Special treatment is furthermore permitted as long as certain side constraints are met, such as that you do not lie, kill an innocent person, or commit blasphemy. (Aquinas (1896) [1485]; Murphy 2011)

On libertarian (non-religiously based) developments of the natural law ethics, there is no positive duties to do good or the like, and thus no duties to be partial. However, any amount of partiality is permitted as long as you do not violate your negative duty not to infringe on anyone else's liberty. (See e.g., Nozick 1974)

None of these theories provide any explanation of why, more specifically, we ought to, or are permitted to, give special treatment to our intimates. Without any account of the source of reasons for partiality these theories are also unable to explain in any detail how reasons to give special treatment to intimates can be weighed against competing reasons. I shall therefore disregard natural law ethics in the discussion to come.

In sum, impartialists – consequentialists as well as deontologists – hold that while special relationships matter by affecting the circumstances in which we are to meet our impartial duties, they do not in and of themselves make a difference for how we ought to treat one another. We have special duties to care in particular for our intimates, not simply because they are our intimates, but because, in the context of a special relationship, special treatment is a means to, or constitutive of, meeting our impartial duties.

3. Traditional Criticism of Impartialism

I shall start with a brief account of partialism and the broader theoretical context in which the criticism of impartialist indirect justifications has been made before I turn to the more specific traditional criticism of impartialism.

Partialists hold that reasons and duties derived from impartial or general duties are not exhaustive: there are genuine special duties as well. Y's property of 'being X's intimate' can sometimes bear directly on what X ought to do; its normative significance is not always

explanatorily reducible to how the relationship X and Y share actualizes or strengthens duties that X owe to any person. Some reasons for partiality are thus fundamentally partial: there are considerations in favor of being partial that are not contingent on their appearance as viewed from an impartial perspective, or from the point of view of the universe, as it were. According to partialists, we owe certain things to our intimates simply because they are our intimates, and while fundamental reasons of partiality are not always overriding, an agent might at least conceivably be required all things considered to act in a way that conflicts with what is demanded from an impartial point of view.[22]

3.1 The Commonsense of Partialism vs. the Theoretical Parsimony of Impartialism

Explanations have to come to an end somewhere, and partialists like Scheffler and Jeske can be read as suggesting that on our best theory, we have to simply assert, or accept as primitive, that the fact that a person is one's intimate bears directly on what one ought to do.

Impartialists, however, tend to stress that any confidence in non-derived special reasons would seem ungrounded insofar as it requires theoretically implausible and unnecessary assumptions. As they see it, partialist theories should be rejected since non-derived reasons of partiality are arbitrary or mysterious additions to the impartial

[22] Different partialist views explain in slightly different ways the non-derived normative significance of someone's being your intimate. According to the relationships view, the special relationship that you share with a person is itself a fundamental source of reasons of partiality. (Scheffler, 1997; Kolodny 2003a) The projects view instead takes reasons of partiality to be grounded in the fact that your identity is partly constituted by your special commitments to various persons. You have reasons to be partial to someone because your relationship with her is a fundamental source of meaning in your life. (Williams 1981; Wolf 1992). Proponents of the individuals view take reasons of partiality to be grounded instead in the mere individual who is your intimate and whose inherent value makes a different claim on you than does the inherent value of other individuals. (Murdoch 1970; Blum, 1980; Velleman 1999; Keller, 2013.) Keller's main thesis in *Partiality* (2013) is that his version of the individuals view offers the best account of partiality. I am largely sympathetic to his criticism of other partialist views, even though, as will be clear below, I am skeptical to his dismissal of impartialist views.

demands of morality which we can and, for reasons of theoretical parsimony, should do without. (See e.g. Wellman 2000)

Since most partialists accept that impartial demands are *one* fundamental feature of morality, we may ask why the existence of another kind of reasons than those grounded in impartial demands needs to be assumed. Why add another source of reasons for special treatment if reductive accounts of these reasons are available? Ockham's razor has taught us that the fewer entities we need to assume, or the fewer assumptions we need to make in a theory, the better it is, all else being equal.

According to partialists, though, all else is not equal. They regard the impartialist accounts of the special goods and demands of special relationships to be revisionary of our ordinary experiences and counterintuitive to an extent that theoretical virtues like systematicity, elegance and theoretical parsimony cannot compensate for. Andrew Mason has called this "the phenomenological objection" against impartialism. It states that "we have more confidence in the existence of special obligations (even when we disagree about their content) than we do in any complex story about how they are entailed by generic principles, and hence no such story could provide the real justification for them." (Mason 1997: 429-30).

More specifically, partialists take the impartialist picture to rest on a misunderstanding of the role that special relationships play in our lives. We take special relationships to matter as such, or at least we do not experience them as being significant merely in virtue of providing contexts in which a bunch of factors trigger and intensify general duties. Partialists take this to suggest that even when it is possible to give a coherent impartialist story about why an agent in a given situation has reason to favor her intimate to others, it is often the wrong story. "[T]he chief virtue of [partialism] is," as the impartialist Christopher Wellman puts it, "supposed to be its ability to explain the significance of our relations without telling an unnecessary and cumbersome story." (Wellman 2000: 553) There are certain things that we owe our intimates simply in virtue of their being our intimates. Justifying special treatment in terms of how such treatment serves some impartial moral principle is not only a detour, it is in clear tension with how we in general value our relationships and of how

we ordinarily conceive of, and talk about reasons to give special treatment to intimates as we go about it in our daily lives.

Partialists take the impartialists to have the burden of proof by not being content with how we, according to partialists, ordinarily take it to be enough that someone is our intimate for us to be (at least pro tanto) justified in giving her special treatment on many occasions. For instance, Samuel Scheffler writes that

> [a]lthough it is clear that we do in fact cite our relationships to other people in explaining why we have special responsibilities to them, many philosophers have been reluctant to take these citations at face value. Instead, they have supposed that the responsibilities we perceive as arising out of special relationships actually arise out of discrete interactions that occur in the context of those relationships. (1997: 190)

Scheffler states, rather than argues for, that "'reasons of partiality' [bear] directly on the rightness and wrongness of actions" (Scheffler 2010b: 98), that these reasons have "direct moral significance" (ibid. 100) and are embedded in how we value special relationships. To value a relationship non-instrumentally *just is*, in part, to see it as a source of reasons for partiality. (See Scheffler 2001: 100-101, 121-122; 2004: 147-150) Diana Jeske is another partialist who holds that derivative accounts of partiality are not intuitively satisfying and that the "commonsense one" (i.e., partialism) is therefore to be preferred. (Jeske 2008: 14; 29-42)

Again, impartialists agree with partialists like Scheffler and Jeske that the awareness that our friend, child, or beloved needs us, or would benefit or be harmed by something we might do, ought to move us differently than the awareness that just any person needs us or would be affected by some potential act of ours. But, say impartialists, even though the fact that a person is our intimate ought to matter to us and move us to act in certain ways rather than others, this fact has in itself no justifying force. Our normative reasons for partiality are something else and more fundamental. The impartialist justification of partiality is thus indirect, having to do not with our intimates as such, but with how favorable treatment is a way of doing something that is impartially called for.

According to Michael Stocker, the talk of indirect justification is

> [i]mplausible in that we do not seem to act by indirection… in such areas as love, friendship, affection, fellow feeling, and community. In those cases our motive has to do directly with the loved one [or] the friend [etc.], as does our reason. In doing something for a loved child or parent, there is no need to appeal to, or even think of, the reasons found in contemporary [impartialist] ethics. (Stocker 1976: 463)

This quote may be taken to illustrate a more specific criticism of impartialism than do mere statements about its non-commonsensical character. As I take it, the objection against the indirectness of impartialist theories is roughly that (1) when we act out of love and friendship we act for the sake of our intimate. (2) Impartialist theories are implausible for implying that acting for the sake of the intimate is never directly justified, but justified only insofar as it is justified from the impartial point of view.

Let us start with the traditional form in which this criticism has been made before turning to a new argument provided by Simon Keller.

3.2 Self-Effacement and Alienation

Traditionally, complaints have been made about how impartialist theories seem to alienate the moral agent from her values and loved ones as they recommend agents to be moved by considerations other than those that justify their acts when favoring their loved ones. Two examples frequently referred to in the self-effacement debate, as it is often called, are due to Bernard Williams and Michael Stocker. Williams asks us to consider a husband who is standing at a pier under which his wife and a stranger are about to drown. The husband is able to rescue only one of them and rescues his wife. Stocker instead asks us to consider Smith who manages to find time in his busy schedule to travel across town to visit his friend in the hospital, where the friend is lying, bored and restless, recovering from a longtime illness.

Impartialists provide a fairly complicated story of why these acts are justified (as they are normally assumed to be). The story has do with how this type of act is justified from an impartial point of view, e.g., because this is what friendship or love requires, and there are reasons of utility or respect to meet such requirements.

Williams argues, though, that a husband who saves his wife upon thinking that 'this is what every person in the kind of situation I am in is morally required to do' would be prevented from acting out of love for her, as he would have "one thought too many." (Williams 1981: 18) The husband should save his wife just because she is his wife. The search for a further justification would be offensive, not the least to his wife. To be guided by the impartial good would detach or alienate moral agents from their loved ones. Such commitment to the impartial good would stand in the way of enjoying the goods of love and friendship since love and friendship requires that one focuses on the friend or beloved herself without any additional thought(s). (Williams 1973) Stocker writes in a similar manner that it should be enough for Smith that his friend is in the hospital, bored and restless, for him to take the time and effort to go and visit his friend. If Smith instead does so driven by the thought that this is what duty recommends, this would indicate a detached attitude toward the friend, and Smith's act will not be an act of friendship. (Stocker 1976)

3.2.1. Consequentialism and Self-Effacement

Consequentialist impartialists tend to agree with Williams and Stocker and other partialists that considerations that lack normative force when regarded from an impartial point of view – e.g., that it isn't just any person but *my wife* or *my friend* who needs my help or company – should often figure in our motives and aims when we give our intimates special treatment. At the same time, consequentialists appeal to the need to distinguish between the criterion of rightness, on the one hand, and what ought to move us to act on the other: Although considerations about the impartial good are what make right actions right (and wrong actions wrong), it doesn't follow that thoughts about the impartial good should guide us in our daily behavior.[23] Rather, we should, according to consequentialists, try to adopt the decision procedures, and cultivate the motives for actions, that generate (or are likely to generate) the best outcome overall. Since

[23] The distinction between criterion of rightness and decision procedure traces back to writings by the early utilitarians Bentham 1961 [1789], Mill 1998 [1861], and Sidgwick 1907 [1874].

it is likely that thoughts about the impartial good will stand in the way of realizing the impartial good we shouldn't generally be guided or moved by such thoughts in our daily whereabouts. (See, e.g., Parfit 1984, Railton 1984, and Tännsjö 1998.) Thus, consequentialists have generally no problem accepting that their theory is self-effacing, that it recommends moral agents to not be motivated at all times (if ever) by the considerations that justify their actions, since doing so will, on at least some occasions, prevent the agent from doing the right thing.

E.g., Peter Railton's "sophisticated consequentialism" states that an ethical agent should, out of a commitment to consequentialism, not be guided by the overall good in every decision that he makes, e.g., when saving a drowning spouse. Instead he ought to invoke the dispositions he takes to be in service of the overall good, and alter them only if he is led to believe that they do not, or no longer, serve the overall good. (Railton 1984)

Railton's consequentialism may seem to escape Williams's criticism: The husband in Williams's example will not have one thought too many just because he is committed to consequentialism. Rather, he should save his wife out of pure concern for her. He will do so insofar as he, as a loving husband, has cultivated the value-promoting disposition to be especially concerned with her alone, without any further thoughts about how such special concern is in service of the overall good. Still, what ultimately justifies his act are more fundamental, impartial considerations. The husband's prioritization of his wife to the stranger is justified as it follows from his having a disposition that is justified in virtue of being a necessary part of his sharing an impartially valuable loving relationship with his wife.

Now, partialists may want to insist that not even a sophisticated consequentialist would be able to enjoy the goods of love and friendship, and that, consequently, his acts of special treatment wouldn't be indirectly justified in virtue of being required for the realization of such goods. The idea would be that a sophisticated consequentialist isn't able to commit to a person in the way that is required in order to qualify as a lover or a friend. This since being so committed is inconsistent with having an underlying readiness to terminate the special relationship if one comes to believe that it would

be overall best if one were to be the kind of person who would do so. (Cocking and Oakley 1995. See also Woodcock 2010.)

Stocker, too, doubts that a person who has an underlying commitment to the impartial goals of influential moral theories is able to act out of love or friendship. Doing so requires acting for the sake of one's intimate, and this conceptually rules out any other final goal than the beloved as a person. (Stocker 1976: 456-7) He writes:

> What is lacking in [versions of utilitarianism and deontology] is simply- or not so simply- the person. For, love, friendship, affection, fellow feeling, and community all require that the other person be an essential part of what is valued. The person – not merely the person's general values nor even the person-qua-producer-or-possessor-of-general-values – must be valued. The defect of these theories in regard to love, to take one case, is not that they do not value love (which, often, they do not) but that they do not value the beloved. Indeed, a person who values and aims at simply love, that is, love-in-general or even love-in-general-exemplified-by-this-person "misses" the intended beloved as surely as does an adherent of the theories I have criticized. (1976: 549)

As Stocker sees it, an underlying commitment to the general value of love stands in the way for the focus on the mere person, a focus that is required of an act to be an act of love and friendship. It is thus doubtful that the impartial goods of love and friendship can actually be achieved by a person whose impartial commitments underlies her actions, even if she is not directly motivated by these commitments. Stocker's main objection to self-effacing ethical theories has to do with what kind of ethical lives we would lead if we were required to suppress our values or thoughts about what we deep down regard as fundamentally good or right in our daily interpersonal interactions. Some important functions of ethical theories are, according to Stocker, to guide our actions and to account for what is a morally good motive in and of itself. Self-effacing theories do not seem to fill these functions. Further reason to doubt whether self-effacing theories should even count as ethical theories is, according to Stocker, that an ethical life is a good life and a good life involves, at the very least, harmony between our values and beliefs, to "be moved by our major values" and to "value what our major motives seek." (1976: 454) If a self-effacing theory is true, though, we need to make sure

not to be moved by our real reasons and values, in order to act rightly and function well as ethical creatures. This would make it "impossible for a person to achieve the good in an integrated way". (1976: 455) As ethical agents we would be prevented from enjoying the inner peace of letting our values guide our lives, we and our lives would be "essentially fragmented and incoherent" and constitute an existence of psychological disharmony or moral schizophrenia. (Stocker 1976: 456. See also Stocker 1996.)

In sum, Stocker criticizes impartialist theories for how they, in part due to the element of self-effacement, imply that an ethical life is a life characterized by alienation and detachment from one's values as well as one's intimates.

Some consequentialists may perhaps respond that if a commitment to the correct moral theory is in fact alienating in roughly the ways critics suggest, and this make agents who are committed to it unable to maximize the good, then the correct moral theory may be self-effacing as in being esoteric. We should, in order to act rightly, remain ignorant of the truth of consequentialism and instead keep the deeply held normative commitments that we hold and which allows us to lead the best possible lives.[24] That the correct moral theory should be kept a secret (at least to the majority) isn't a very attractive position to take, however.[25]

Another way for consequentialists to resist the self-effacement criticism might be to question whether *any* plausible ethical theory, including various kinds of virtue theories that Stocker and some other partialists seem to prefer to impartialist theories, can avoid being self-effacing.

Simon Keller (2007) points out that a virtue theory that is not self-effacing would say that it is always acceptable for an agent to be

[24] Hare (1981: 46-47) and Sidgwick (1907: 489-90) may be taken to suggest something along these lines.

[25] Michael Smith writes that it is uncontroversial that "a plausible normative theory would underwrite our most deeply held normative convictions." (2001: 173). Smith can, however, see no reason "to believe a self-effacing moral theory when the reason that it is self-effacing is that, on the one hand, it morally requires us to have some of the deeply held normative convictions that we do, and, on the other, it is itself blatantly inconsistent with the truth of those normative convictions." (Smith 2001: 194)

moved by the thought that she is acting in full compliance with the virtues or that the action in question would be performed by a fully virtuous person. While being motivated by thoughts of manifesting (virtuous) honesty does not make you dishonest, being movtivated by thoughts about manifesting modesty does make you immodest, as Keller points out. Even though not all virtues are self-effacing, Keller argues that many of the central one are: you cannot let the aim of manifesting them guide your acts, since being so guided would prevent you from being virtuous. To take another of Keller's examples, "[t]he person of true fortitude acts with the motive of achieving her goals or honouring her principles even in adversity, not the motive of being fortitudinous, nor the motive of acting as the fully virtuous person would." (Keller 2007a: 227)

On this line of reasoning, we may hold that a person who is only committed to her friend on the condition that she takes this to be what a virtuous person would do would not strike us as a good friend, nor would she seem to be to be less alienated from her friend than Railton's sophisticated consequentialist. Although your resemblance with a virtuous person is what should, insofar as virtue ethics is true, be used to assess how ethically well you do in the particular situation (or your life as a whole), what guides your daily behavior should instead be a sensitivity to the particular situation, or the like. Thus, virtue theory is also two-leveled and involves an element of self-effacement: we cannot be guided by what may be considered as the criterion of rightness – our resemblance with a fully virtuous person – in order to be a fully virtuous person. (Cohen, 2012)

Now, it should be noted that virtue ethics is self-effacing in a different manner than is consequentialism. While consequentialism is self-effacing in the sense that being moved by that which makes the act right makes it impossible to do the right thing, virtue ethics is self-effacing in the sense that being motivated by that which makes an act right makes it impossible to do the right thing *in the right way*.[26]

If Smith is moved by thoughts about the overall good rather than thoughts about his friend when visiting her at the hospital, he will not be acting like a good friend and will thereby fail to promote the overall

[26] I owe this point to Johan Brännmark.

good. On a virtue ethics account, though, Smith visiting his friend in the hospital *is* the right thing to do (in virtue of being what a virtuous person would do). This is so, even if Smith is failing to be fully virtuous insofar as he is moved by the thought that this is what a virtuous person would do rather than being moved by his friend alone (assuming that this is what would move a virtuous person). Still, there is something right about Smith's behavior, according to the virtue ethicist. In any event, the element of self-effacement seems less troublesome for virtue theory than for consequentialism. A moral agent need not suppress her values entirely in the potentially alienating way that Stocker criticizes, but can be guided by her values without thereby being entirely prevented from approximating a virtuous life.

3.2.2 Self-Effacement and Deontology

The self-effacement charge against impartialist theories is, I take it, that being moved by your impartial moral duty will make you unable to realize the great goods of love and friendship, for these goods preclude being moved by such duties. Furthermore, a split between reasons and motives is said to involve a detachment that will also stand in the way of doing what is justified from an impartial point of view. As such it targets consequentialism, according to which our sole fundamental duty is to promote the best outcome (even though it is far from a decisive worry).[27] The self-effacement charge itself can, however, be questioned, if understood as a general criticism of impartialism. As Marcia Baron (1984) has argued, there are other and more plausible ways to understand what duties of love and friendship consist in, and also the role of a sense of duty in our everyday life. The concept of duty is implausible if we construe it too narrowly or outwardly, says Baron. Moral duties are not only about performing certain body movements; part of what one ought to do is to "cultivate certain attitudes and dispositions, e.g., sympathy rather than resentment or repulsion for the ailing; a cheerful readiness to help and

[27] For a neutral value-based deontic alternative to consequentialism that aims to both capture the main motivation behind consequentialism and account for our partialist intuitions see Maguire (forthcoming).

to find ways in which one can help out." (Baron 1984: 204) No matter if we, e.g., make a case for the friendship duty for Smith to visit his friend at the hospital in some broadly Rossian or broadly (Neo-) Kantian terms, the duty is, if we reason with Baron, not only about Smith's having a physical encounter with you but also to try to help, comfort or cheer you up. If Smith is actually doing what his duty tells him to do he is not only paying you a visit, he also has the appropriate attitudes and dispositions when doing so: Smith will be expressing genuine affection or concern, and will not be thinking about the impartial good. (ibid. 205)

Furthermore, says Baron, for Smith to act out of concern for what he believes is right is not to say that Smith ought to be governed by the thought that this is what morality requires him to do in each particular situation, such as when he is presently visiting his friend. Nor does it require Smith to reflect on the moral status of some particular conduct immediately before he is about to act. There are right times and there are wrong times for reflecting on the moral status of various forms of conduct, and the period immediately prior to action will frequently be one of the wrong times. (Baron 1984: 208) Baron writes:

> On the conception that I am recommending, duty is seen as attaching primarily not to individual actions but to *conduct*, to how one lives, and only derivatively to isolated actions. The definitive feature of someone who acts from duty is her commitment to doing what she really ought to do – and to determining what she ought to do – and this is significant as a long-term, wide-ranging commitment, governing all one does. (…) On my view, one should (ideally) always act from duty, but this is only to say that all of one's conduct should be governed by one's unconditional commitment to doing what one morally ought to do. To say that one should always act from duty is not to say that one should always act from duty as a primary motive. One's sense of duty will serve generally as a limiting condition and at the same time as an impetus to think about one's conduct, to appraise one's goals, to be conscious of oneself as a self- determining being, and sometimes to give one the strength one needs to do what one sees one really should do. (1984: 209)

Impartialists who construe duties in the ways Baron suggest may be able to escape the self-effacing criticism. Acting from duty doesn't

necessarily make one's concern for one's friend less deep or less genuine, thereby preventing an agent from doing what is good from an impartial point of view. Thus, there can be harmony between one's reasons and motives. To think otherwise rests mainly on a too narrow characterization of the content of the duty, and, furthermore from misconstruing the psychological function of a sense of duty. As Baron writes, it is actually part of being a good friend to be moved by the thought that 'helping out at times like these is what one ought to do' when the concern we have for her for one reason or another on its own fails to sufficiently motivate us in the particular situation. She gives the example of pushing yourself to the hospital where your anxious friend is awaiting surgery, even though the weather is nasty, hospitals make you uncomfortable and you are more inclined to stay at home reading. (Baron 1984: 210) Or, you may be tired of picking up the pieces of your friend who, despite your insistent warnings, always ends up heartbroken after the one disastrous love-affair after the other. You're out of patience and sympathy when he comes to you yet again in search of support, but you know he needs it and that you should give it to him and so you do so. (Baron 1984: 210, citing Norman 1981: 169).

To sum up section 3: Partialists criticize impartialist accounts for being non-commonsensical partly due to how their indirect justifications of partiality are, as partialists see it, in tension with everyday life experiences. Criticism that concerns the self-effacement of impartialist theories have been used to explicate what more precisely is wrong about the more complicated and indirect justifications of partiality that impartialists tend to give. However, this criticism doesn't quite hit all versions of impartialism. Marcia Baron's remarks show that there are ways to understand duty and to be guided by one's conviction of what one ought to do, that may enable impartialists to escape the self-effacement criticism.

I conclude that the traditional self-effacement criticism of impartialism fails to show that the indirectness of impartialist justifications of partiality renders all versions of impartialism implausible. Simon Keller has recently presented a different argument as to why the indirect character of impartialism is indeed a reason to reject impartialism as such. We shall now turn to this argument.

4. Keller's Phenomenological Argument

While Keller's phenomenological argument against impartialism also builds on a proposed split between motives and normative reasons, his target is not the mere self-effacement of impartialist theories or the alienation or detachment that it may bring along. His target is instead how impartialist theories imply that we are *systematically mistaken* about our reasons at times when we seem the most certain of what they are. Keller objects to how impartialist views construe our real (i.e., justifying) reasons of partiality as being so different from what we experience them to be when we act out of love and friendship. He argues that, because we in these situations have one of our clearest senses or experiences of being moved by the same considerations as those that actually make our acts worthwhile or justified, we have reason to think that "the correct account of our reasons of partiality is not self-effacing, and that the [partial] reasons we take ourselves to have within our special relationships, in the paradigmatic cases and when things seem to be going well, are our real reasons."(Keller 2013: 26)

According to Keller, "our motives can sometimes reveal something about our reasons; we might learn more about your reasons for favoring your friend by looking more closely at your motives for favoring your friend, in a case in which your motives appear to get it right." (Keller 2013: 4)[28] The experience of acting well within special relationships constitutes such a situation: it involves one of our clearest senses of responding to our real reasons, to that which actually and fundamentally makes our acts worthwhile or

[28] We should note that Keller distinguishes between 'motives' or 'motivations' on the one hand and 'reasons' on the other. What he has in mind the common distinction between motivating reasons and normative or justifying reasons. A (normative) reason is a state of affairs, a consideration or a fact which tells in favor (or against) acting in a certain way, whereas motives (motivating reasons) consist of the content of the thoughts which move an agent to act. This motive may or may not correspond to a fact which, in turn, may or may not constitute a (normative) reason. (You may believe that your friend is in need and the content of this belief may figure in your motive for being there for her, even though, as it turns out, your friend is in fact not in need.)

justified.[29] By getting clearer on what moves us to give special treatment to our near and dear we may therefore learn something about what justifies such partiality. And, says Keller, close examination of the phenomenology of partiality shows that what moves us to give special treatment to an intimate are thoughts about *her*, the mere individual to whom we are partial, thoughts whose content would not serve to justify special treatment from an impartial point of view.

What is problematic about impartialist theories is not necessarily the self-effacement per se, says Keller, but rather that such theories get our reasons of partiality wrong when they tell us that they are something entirely different from what we experience them to be when we act out of love and friendship. You can agree with this objection, says Keller, even if you do not take there to be anything inherently problematic about an ethical theory that is self-effacing:

> A theory might say, for example, that, as you play tennis, you should have motives that involve taking it to matter that you win the match, even though, really, it does not matter whether you win; it only matters that you have fun. Such a theory would be self-effacing, but that does not mean that it faces the objection I am articulating here. (Keller 2013: 86)

Keller argues that (the content of) thoughts like 'she could really use my company now' tend, not only to move you to take the time to visit your friend in the hospital but, also, at the same time, give you a sense of why doing so is worthwhile, why this is something you have a reason to do. In this way your motive for special treatment strikes you as a real or genuine reason. On impartialist accounts of partiality, on the other hand, we are strictly speaking mistaken when we see considerations other than impartial ones as reasons to give special treatment to our intimates (even though the mistake might in practice be called for in the service of impartial morality). Rather it is some (allegedly) far-fetched impartial fact that really or fundamentally gives you reason for special treatment. According to Keller, though, the

[29] 'Experience' is often used as a factual term: you cannot have an experience of something if this something doesn't exist. I will, however, like Keller talk about experiences as something that can be mistaken or illusory.

fact that our special treatment serves some impartially good purpose clearly strikes us as the *wrong* ground for the special treatment we give our intimates. And, he continues, "absent some very powerful argument, it is reasonable to insist that our experiences of acting out of love and friendship are not illusory."(2013: 86) Considerations about what an impartial morality requires seem to play no role here, and an agent who nonetheless has such considerations figuring in her motives will not only be prevented from doing good, as highlighted in the traditional debate about self-effacement, but would strike us as to be misguided about what her reasons really are. Impartialist views thus imply that we are systematically misperceiving our reasons at times when we most clearly take ourselves to be moved by our real or right reasons, and that constitutes a good reason to reject impartialist accounts of reasons of partiality. (Keller 2013: 85-86; 129)

We may summarize Keller's argument as follows:

1. If a view says that our ordinary experience of reasons of partiality is mistaken, then, due to the character of this experience, we have a good reason to reject this view.
2. Impartialism says that our ordinary experience of reasons of partiality is mistaken.
3. Therefore, we have a good reason to reject impartialism.

4.1 Moral Phenomenology May As Such Be Unreliable

One way to question (1) could be to argue that our phenomenology when it comes to reasons is not reliable and so the fact that a view implies that it is mistaken in some regard(s) is not a good ground for rejecting the view in question. This is perhaps what an error theorist might be tempted to say. The idea would then be that metaphysics does not allow for the existence of normative reasons and so therefore any experience of such reasons will be mistaken. I will disregard this sort of criticism. Instead I will assume that if we have a clear experience of reasons of a certain kind then this does indeed indicate that there are reasons of this kind. This is so even if there are other considerations that should have us deny the existence of such reasons, such as that they are metaphysically queer, or that a

commitment to their existence implies a commitment to something (otherwise) absurd.

4.2 Distorting Factors

Even on the assumption that experiences of reasons *normally* tell us something about the nature of such reasons, a further objection to (1) might be that this is unlikely to be the case within the context of special relationships because of some distorting factor(s). Therefore, it might be thought, the fact that a theory suggests that our experience of reasons of partiality is illusory is not a good reason to reject that theory.

Peter Singer (1972) has argued that someone who is in our vicinity, e.g. a child drowning in a pond that we happen to pass, strikes us as having a stronger moral claim on us than someone who is further away but whom we can in fact assist just as easily. But, says Singer, this is a misperception since mere geographical distance does not affect our moral duty to assist people in need. Similarly, Derek Parfit (1984) has argued that we tend to experience people who are temporally distant from us (future generations) as being less worthy of our moral concern than temporally close (presently living) persons. To impartialists, this is a misperception since the time of birth of a person doesn't as such bear on how she ought to be treated. Social proximity such as sharing race or gender also seems to affect the extent to which someone's interests or needs strike an agent as requiring one's concern. Impartialists could then perhaps argue that the same mechanisms which for morally arbitrary reasons make us experience the moral claims of geographically, temporally or socially proximate people as stronger than the claims of people who are more distant in these respects, affect our experience of reasons to give special treatment to our intimates, and that this therefore undermines the reliability of our experience of reasons as an indication of what reasons we really have. The worry would be that the emotional and physical proximity we have to our intimates not only make the normative force of their interests and needs appear particularly clear to us, but also, as a consequence, has us overrate the normative

significance of our intimates. Therefore, our experiences of reasons are particularly unreliable within the context of special relationships.

Now, we might want to be careful about drawing conclusions about how we experience people's moral worth from our emotional reactions or moral emotions. Our lesser aversion for temporally distant states of affairs and for the suffering of strangers shows that we do not feel aversion in proportion to the level of misery or badness. But more is required to show that we experience people in the distant past or distant future, or strangers in general as being less worthy of moral concern.[30]

In any event, Keller's argument is consistent with our proximity to our intimates making us overrate the normative significance of their interests. His claim is that we have a particularly clear sense that the considerations that move us to be partial *themselves* speak in favor of the special treatment in question. This feature of our experience of reasons of partiality makes it implausible to suggest that our experience is mistaken, according to Keller. Singer and Parfit may say that, even a particularly clear experience of reasons, such as the one we might have when we see a child drowning in a pond, is unreliable because of our morally irrelevant proximity to this child. But, again, even if we were to agree that morally irrelevant proximity to a person leads us to overrate the *normative weight* of her interests or needs, or the *extent* to which such considerations speak in favor of our acting in a certain way, this doesn't as such affect the reliability of a different feature of our experience of acting out of love or friendship, namely the sense of being moved by one's real reasons. And this is the feature that Keller cares about. I therefore think that (1) still stands.

4.3 No Particular Experience of Reasons

Keller's characterization of our experience of partiality may at first glance seem a bit too intellectualized. He writes:

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[30] Another conclusion to draw from our moral psychology in this context is to hold that our reaction seems largely appropriate and that the fittingness conditions of aversion are contoured by the temporal and relationship distance between the subject and the object of the attitude. (See Blanshard 1961: 288. See also Bell 2010.)

> The times when we act well toward those with whom we share special relationships – when we respond immediately to the needs of our parents, make a sacrifice for the sake of a friend, or do something that brings joy to our children – are some of the times when we seem to see most clearly what matters, when we seem to be in closest contact with the really important things in life. It would be both implausible and depressing to suggest that when we act well within special relationships we systematically misperceive our reasons. It is difficult to see what sort of philosophical argument could convince you that when you act out of your special concern for your friends, your partner, or your family, the things that really provide you with reasons are different from the things that seem to provide you with reasons. (2013: 27)

Someone might then question (1) by questioning whether our phenomenology of partiality really involves any particular experience of reasons, and whether it is therefore really a cost to reject the reliability of such an experience. It might seem typical of the (numerous) times in which we, as Keller puts it "act well" toward our intimates, that we do so more or less automatically or, in any event, without much reflection on whether or not we have good reasons to do so.[31] In fact, such characterization of our phenomenology seems slightly detached in the manner Williams and Stocker criticize (as to involve "one thought too many"). The sense of being in contact with what truly matters in life indicates a focus on some general feature in the situation rather than merely on the particular person for whom one acts. The ability for an account of partiality to avoid this implication is, as mentioned, a main motivation for partialist accounts in the first place.[32]

In order to assess Keller's argument in its entirety I shall, nevertheless, set aside these worries for now. I shall assume that there is a way for Keller to describe this experience of reasons of partiality in a less intellectualized and generalized way. Perhaps we do, on some

[31] In fact, this seems to hold for most of our conduct. Julia Annas (2004) uses that feature to argue in favor of the view that practical rationality is really a skill. However, she thinks that a virtuous person, *if asked* about the reasons for acting as she does, *can* come up with an answer. Also, as noted earlier, Baron (1984) has pointed out that it is frequently a bad idea to reflect on the justification of an act right before (or while) acting.

[32] Thanks to Joakim Sandberg for making me push Keller on this point.

level, experience things we do for our intimates as making sense, to be worth performing, and in that sense merited or supported by good reasons. And to the extent that we have an intuitive sense of responding to reasons, it may be the most clear when we focus mainly on our intimates as the particular persons they are. Also, this sense of our act as being worthwhile or as making sense may not be as clear in other contexts, such as when we do similar nice things for non-intimates. I shall, then, for the sake of the argument grant (1) understood as saying that a distinctively clear sense of acting out of concern for something that really matters occur at times when we are moved by our particular intimate to give her special treatment, and that it therefore would be a particularly high cost for a theory to say that our ordinary experience of partiality is mistaken.

4.4 No Sense of the Source of one's Reasons

Keller's second premise is that impartialist theories imply that our ordinary experience of reasons of partiality is mistaken. In order to assess this premise we need to further scrutinize Keller's characterization of the phenomenology. In particular, we shall look at whether it indicates an evaluative commitment to partialism and is therefore inconsistent with an evaluative commitment to impartialism.

My main criticism of (2) is that to have a particularly clear sense *that* our act is worthwhile when we focus on our intimate as an individual is not necessarily to have a particularly clear experience of *why* our act is worthwhile or, more importantly, that it is *fundamentally justified* by the considerations (about the individual) that trigger our response.

Keller's case for (2) is that we see our particular intimate as being that which makes our act of special treatment worthwhile, and that this is an illusion on impartialist views since the fact that individual X is X (rather than Y) has no normative significance from an impartial point of view (no matter how such point of view is understood more precisely).

Keller writes:

> There is a distinctive experience associated with acting out of love or friendship, or giving special treatment to a person with whom you share a special relationship. That experience involves being moved to perform certain actions, and incorporated within it is a sense of why those actions are worth performing, or by what reasons the actions are supported. …It is only when we can think directly of the person for whom we act that we can have a clear sense of why we act. So far as our motives of partiality are concerned, then, our reasons of partiality make essential reference to particular, specified individuals. Fully to articulate our reasons of partiality, as we experience them within our motives of partiality, we need to mention the particular people with whom our special relationships are shared. (2013: 93-94)

Now, I think Keller is right to say that acting out of love or friendship involves being moved by thoughts in which the identity of the intimate is an essential part, and that this often involves an experience of acting on our real reasons. It is less clear to me, though, that that we thereby take ourselves to be moved by the exact considerations that *fundamentally* justify our special treatment.

4.4.1 The Role of the Intimate's Identity

I agree that to act out of love or friendship is to act out of a commitment to the particular person that you love or are friends with. As stated in chapter 1, I see it as a conceptual feature of loving or being friends with someone that the needs or interests of your beloved or friend have a special place in your deliberations. If you love or are friends with a person, you necessarily have a higher sensitivity to considerations in which her needs or interests are part, than to similar considerations in which similar needs or interests of a non-intimate are part. This means that in order for you to qualify as a friend or as to love someone you are (under certain specified conditions) disposed to being moved or triggered to do X by considerations like 'this person: my friend/beloved, would benefit from my doing X' and not by considerations like 'there is a person who would benefit from my doing X'. (Pettit 2015, Ch. 1) If, instead, your disposition to treat a person specially is only triggered by thoughts such as 'everyone should care first for their intimates' or 'this is what is required of me to sustain this flourishing relationship,' or 'I need to do this or otherwise I might lose her', you manifest a

commitment to the impartial good, to the relationship, or to what is good for yourself in the long-term, respectively. The same goes for thoughts such as 'these are the needs and interests of an intimate of mine' or 'this is what a good friend or lover does'. Being moved by such considerations would show a commitment to being a good lover or friend, but would not manifest your commitment or attachment to your intimate. If your particular sensitivity to your friend is never triggered *unless* these other sorts of considerations are at hand, you might be able to act like a friend would act but you wouldn't actually be one. In order for you to act out of love or friendship, it has to matter essentially for the motivational pull that considerations about your friend have on you that this person, your particular friend, is part of the consideration; in acts of love or friendship you are at least in part moved by considerations about your intimate "rigidly individualized". (Pettit 1997: 158-9 and 2015)

Now, my criticism of (2) concerns what, if anything, this feature of our experience commits us to when it comes to the fundamental nature of our reasons and, thus, exactly why impartialism would have to dismiss this experience as mistaken. I am not convinced that our clear sense is that we are moved by the very same considerations that justify our special treatment of our intimate *end of story*, rather than sensing that this particular individual simply gives us good reason to be moved to treat her specially. The individuals for whom you act clearly matter, you experience them as to be worthy of your efforts. This is not what is at stake in this debate. It is not controversial that what moves you to make sacrifices or simply do nice things for your intimate – namely her interests, needs or desires – are normatively significant or reasons providing. The question that divides impartialists and partialists is, rather, how and under what conditions such considerations justify your treating *her* specially, and in most cases better than relevantly similar people with whom you do not share a special relationship.

4.4.2 Situation Construal and Sense of Justificatory Source

One way to question that we take our intimate to be the fundamental source of justification for preferring her interests and needs to others' equally important interests and needs is to suggest that we in many

cases of special treatment take ourselves to have reason to attend to this particular individual, without necessarily sensing any reason for partiality. Keller writes that

> [o]ften the experience of finding reason to act well toward someone with whom you share a special relationship is an experience of focusing closely on that person, looking at her in isolation from others and hence not from the impartial point of view. Your reasons of partiality often become more evident the more you focus on the individual in front of you and the less attention you pay to the wider context. (2013: 128)

But, according to the present objection, there seems to be a difference in the experience we have when we find ourselves moved to, on the one hand, do nice things or make sacrifices for our intimates, and, on the other hand, when we find ourselves in a situation where we are moved to prioritize our intimate's less significant interests to other people's more important interests. In most cases of acting well within special relationships we do not have any explicit thoughts about whether what we are now doing is to favor them to relevantly similar people. Nevertheless, our action can accurately be described and conceived as such. To conceive of the same act differently may involve a different phenomenological experience of the normative character and strength of various considerations that figure in one's motives. Our experience of being moved by that which justifies our act may well be considerably clearer when we experience it simply as doing something nice for a loved one, than when we instead or also experience it as an act in which we clearly favor the needs or interests of an intimate to other people's equally important needs or interests. According to Keller, though, this element in our phenomenology of partiality is present also, and roughly as much, in the latter kind of scenario.

4.4.3 The Asthma Case

Keller discusses a case where a woman chooses to spend her inherited money on her two-year-old son's expensive asthma treatment, despite having promised to donate the money to a foundation that she knows will provide cheap and efficient cures of blindness to several children in impoverished parts of the world. At the time she made the promise

to the foundation, the son's asthma hadn't begun to show, and in order to ensure a good treatment for her son she has to cancel the donation to the foundation. In such a situation, says Keller, "the parent appears clearly to have the duty to care first for her child" (2013: 127) even though this duty does not arise from impartial moral considerations, assuming that the parent is as well placed to provide as great benefits for several other children, and that the foundation expects her to meet her promise, whereas her two-year-old is too young to have any expectations on her to buy him the medical care he needs for his asthma. She may well consider explicitly these impartial considerations but still believe that it would be wrong of her to not prioritize her special duty to her son. (Keller 2013: 37-39; 127-8)

According to Keller, the asthma case illustrates that what reasons of partiality tell us is to respond to our intimate as an individual, and we take ourselves to have such reasons even when we don't think that these reasons, involving the specific identity of our intimates, would have bearing on what we ought to do as judged from an impartial point of view. Our reasons strike us as not being "determined always and only by impartial considerations." (Keller 2013:128) Keller's point is that reasons of partiality are of a different kind than impartial reasons. "[O]nce we pay attention to the value of a particular person, that value takes on its own life, so to speak. It gives normative guidance in its own right, and not always in a way that serves impartialist goals." (Keller, 2013: 152) The point is not that we in most or many cases take our reasons of partiality to *outweigh* our impartial reasons, the point is that "we take ourselves to have reasons that are *not answerable to assessments from the impartial point of view*." (Keller 2013: 129, my emphasis.)

4.4.4 Commitment neither to Impartialism nor Partialism

Keller writes:

> When you favor your own child over other more needy children, you may well have the experience of thinking, 'This is not an act that would be recommended from the impartial point of view, and I do not think that it is something that parents in general do or should do for their

> children, but it is what my child needs, and that is good enough reason for me." (2013: 128)

Let's agree with Keller that, were we to be placed in the mother's situation, considerations that essentially concern *him*, her son, would be enough for us to be moved to prioritize him – any belief that doing so is impartially justifiable would be superfluous. But, while the mother may have a clear sense that her *dispositional bias* is justified – that it strikes her to be in order that the needs of her son move her differently than the needs of others – she is, I think, unlikely to have a clear sense of what fundamentally justifies such a bias. Contra Keller, I want to argue that there is no part of this experience that entails that an impartial story *cannot* be given of why her bias is justified.[33] Importantly, we cannot conclude from her *lacking* the belief that it is impartially called for that her son's needs move her more than those of other children that she is committed to the positive stance that the special claims her son make on her are fundamentally grounded in him and therefore irreducibly partial. The experience may be agnostic on this point. Even if Keller is right to claim that we do not take our reasons of partiality to be based on impartial considerations, it would be a mistake to infer *on that basis* that we are committed to believing that our reasons of partiality are irreducibly partial. Compare this to how I may lack any clear sense or belief 'that God exists' without thereby having the sense or belief 'that God does not exist'. I may simply lack any sense or belief of whether or not God exists. Similarly, our phenomenology of partiality might not involve any commitment to *either* impartialism or partialism.

As I see it, our phenomenology as we act out of love or friendship does not take a stand on the justificatory source of our bias: While we take ourselves to be justified in being moved more by the interests of our intimates, I do not believe that our experience entails anything about *why* this is (ultimately) the case. Keller writes that "[w]hen you act for the sake of your friend, parent, or child, it seems to you as though the source of your good reason for acting is there in your friend, parent, or child herself." (2013: 94) I agree that a clear sense

[33] I am grateful for helpful discussion with Jens Johansson with regard to this argument.

that the story ends there irrespective of any further, impartially motivated conditions having to be met in order for your intimate to constitute such a source *would* commit us to partialism. As far as I can see, though, the sense of being justified when acting for the sake of your intimate involves no sense of any fundamental source of the justification.

When acting out of love and friendship we often have a clear sense of being triggered by things that matter and that our being more triggered by the interests of our intimates is appropriate, but I have argued that such experience lacks any sense of *why* this is the case, i.e., about the fundamental normative explanation for why we are justified in being biased, or rightfully moved more by certain things that matter than of other things that matter. This means that impartialist theories do not have to say that we are mistaken about what our real reasons are. My claim is that our phenomenology is not fine-grained enough to support either the view that the considerations of our intimates ground non-derived reasons of partiality, or the view that their normative significance is to be derived ultimately from some impartial consideration. We cannot establish any evaluative commitments just by looking at our phenomenology of partiality in the distinct situations in which we give special treatment to our intimates.

5. Summary

Impartialists agree with partialists that the awareness that our friend, child, lover needs us, or would benefit or be harmed by something we might do, ought to move us differently than the awareness that just any person needs us or would be affected by some potential act of ours. But, say impartialists, even though the fact that a person is our intimate ought to matter to us and move us to act in certain ways rather than others, this fact has in itself no justifying force. In this chapter, I have discussed one traditional and one new way of arguing that the indirect and more complicated justifications of partiality to intimates that impartialist accounts of partiality tend to offer is a reason to instead prefer partialist accounts of partiality. Both line of arguments target a split between normative reasons and motives.

Traditionally, impartialist accounts have been criticized for being self-effacing, i.e., for recommending agents to not be moved by their real (i.e., normative or justifying) reasons. I agreed that it is a cost for a theory to say that an ethical life is a life in detachment from one's fundamental values, and that the element of self-effacement might make it hard for certain impartialist theories – in particular certain versions of consequentialism – to make room for love and friendship. However, all or most ethical theories can be construed as to be self-effacing to some extent, but, more importantly, far from all impartialist theories are self-effacing in ways that have the mentioned implications. I then went on to see whether Simon Keller's new, phenomenological argument against impartialism could make a more plausible case for that the indirect and more complicated justifications of impartiality is a reason to reject such accounts of partiality in favor of partialist ones.

Keller argues that "our experience as we act within our special relationships" – what Keller calls "the phenomenology of partiality" – supports partialism through involving an evaluative commitment to non-derivative or fundamental reasons of partiality. According to Keller, it is not only the case that we take ourselves to be *justifiably* partial to our intimates; in paradigmatic cases of acting well toward them, we also have a particularly clear sense of being *moved by our real reasons*. It is when we act out of love or friendship that we most clearly seem to ourselves to be most guided by considerations that make one's act worthwhile or worth performing. And, says Keller, what move us are considerations that are essentially about the *particular individual* who is our intimate. From an impartial point of view, however, these considerations are strictly speaking no more important than similar considerations about any other person. Our clear sense that our particular intimate makes our special treatment worthwhile or justified thus entails an evaluative commitment to partialism, says Keller. He doesn't object to the element of self-effacement per se. Instead, impartialist accounts should, as he sees it, be rejected since they imply that we are systematically mistaken in what we take to be one of our clearest perceptions of reasons.

I expressed some worries about how Keller's characterization of how we seem to ourselves to be in contact with reasons when we act

out of love and friendship might appear intellectualized and involve "one thought too many", just like the impartialist views he is criticizing. For the sake of the argument, though, I agreed that our experience of acting out of love and friendship is paradigmatically an experience of being moved by considerations for which partiality appears to us as being worthwhile, and that these considerations essentially refer to our intimate as an individual.

My main disagreement was with the premise that the moral phenomenology thus construed would commit us to partialism. Our sense of reasons as we act out of love is simply not fine-grained enough to involve a commitment to *either* partialism *or* to impartialist accounts of partiality. So, even if we grant that acting out of love or friendship is sometimes an experience of responding to justificatory considerations in the sense that the needs, wants, wishes clearly appear to be worthy of our special concern, there is no element in the experience concerning *why* this is so, or any sense of the conditions that need to be in place in order for this bias to be justified. Just because we are not committed to the idea that there *is* a more fundamental story to be told – a story about why a biased sensitivity to considerations about a particular person has justificatory force if the bias stem from love or friendship – it doesn't follow that we are committed to the idea that there is *no* more explanatory basic justification to be given.

To conclude, both the traditional self-effacement criticism, and Keller's new, phenomenological argument target the indirectness of impartialist accounts of partiality by finding the disintegration between normative reasons and motives troublesome, albeit in different ways. While the traditional self-effacement criticism provides a (non-decisive) reason to reject certain, but far from all impartialist views, Keller's new argument fails entirely.

Chapter 3: Good Friend, Bad Believer?

1. Introduction

Friends give each other preferential treatment. For instance, friends are disposed to feel more affection for, be more supportive and appreciative of, and be of more assistance to their friends than to non-friends.[34] Part of being a good or meritable friend seems furthermore to be to view one's friend with a friendly eye so to speak, to be less prone to forming negative beliefs, and more prone to forming positive beliefs about one's friend, and to interpret her doings, actions and character more favorably than someone else's doings, actions and character. Does this mean that a good friend is *epistemically* partial? This has recently been suggested by Simon Keller (2004) and Sarah Stroud (2006) and is the issue that will concern us in this chapter.

Of course, no actual person is fully epistemically rational or unbiased. But our question is whether there is a friendship norm to be epistemically irresponsible: is a friend a good or better friend partly *in virtue of* being epistemically irresponsible, irrational or biased when dealing with information that concerns a friend?[35] Is it characteristic and distinctive of a good friend to violate epistemic norms concerning truth-oriented beliefs and belief-forming processes when the information one faces concerns one's friend rather than a non-friend?[36] To instead suggest that good parents overrate the virtues,

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[34] I will use 'non-friend' and 'stranger' more or less interchangeably even though the group of non-friends is wider since it also includes people you know or are acquainted with.

[35] As in most of the literature in this area, I will not use 'information' as necessarily factive. Instead I will use 'information' to refer both to what is merely *presented* to us as facts, *and* to what is in fact the case.

[36] To ask this question is not to ask whether it is impossible to be a good friend without being epistemically partial, but rather to ask whether such partiality is one of the things that typically make someone a good friend.

accomplishments and prospects for their children and are notably reluctant to believe bad things about their children is not very controversial. To say that this also holds for friends is less obvious, and in any way, less frequently claimed. While I think that most or all of what I say in this chapter holds not only for friendship but for romantic love as well, I will stay true to the literature and talk only about friendship.

Now, the answer to whether there is any interesting conflict between norms of friendship and norms of epistemology of course depends on disputed matters about how these norms are to be understood more precisely. It is beyond the scope of this chapter (and the dissertation as a whole) to defend either any complete substantive account of what signifies a good (as in virtuous or meritable) friend, or what signifies what I will interchangeably refer to as a (ir)rational, (ir)responsible or (un)biased epistemic agent. When it comes to my claims about what makes someone a good friend, I will talk in fairly general terms with the hope that what I say can be embraced by several more specific (and plausible) accounts of friendship (even though I, as mentioned in chapter 1, am myself leaning toward the mutual drawing account). The epistemic norms I will be discussing are those that Simon Keller and Sarah Stroud – whose work I will be focusing on here – refer to simply as "epistemic norms" (Keller 2006: 229-30), or "the epistemic standards held up by mainstream epistemological theories" (Stroud 2004: 499) Thus, the suggested conflict that will concern us is one between intuitive friendship norms and what is in this debate referred to as generally accepted or fairly undisputed epistemic norms having to do with truth-tracking or truth-oriented beliefs and practices that aim at, and are conducive to, forming such beliefs.

1.1 Outline

In section 2, I discuss Simon Keller's claim that the kind of support that good friends provide each other is typically realized when they function somewhat like coaches, e.g., by overestimating their friend's abilities, accomplishments, or the like. According to Keller, one is typically a good friend partly in virtue of expecting and believing

better of one's friend than one's evidence suggests, and in virtue of efforts to place oneself in situations or states of mind that will likely result in beliefs that are more positive than the beliefs one would form about a non-friend. I argue that the differential conduct and beliefs Keller ascribes to the typical good friend are either not required of a good friend, or not indications of epistemic irresponsibility.

In section 3, I discuss Sarah Stroud's claim that epistemic irresponsibility is required to maintain the mutual esteem that friendship partly builds on. To be friends with someone is, as Stroud sees it, in part to take him to be a good person, and in order not to jeopardize such a belief you have to be epistemically irresponsible when responding to information that reflects badly on your friend. I claim that, on an intuitive picture of friendship it is first and foremost important not to have *false* negative beliefs about one's friend, and that this may require extra epistemic efforts. I hold that these efforts do not violate the epistemic norms with which we are concerned. I agree with Stroud that friends tend to interpret their friends comparably more favorably than they interpret others, e.g., in marginalizing certain new negative information about their friends in their overall conception of them. I question, though, that this requires epistemic irresponsibility by questioning two of Stroud's underlying assumptions. First, that there are obvious interpretations of what character trait a course of conduct manifests, and of how it reflects on a person overall. Second, that it follows from mainstream epistemology that these types of interpretations are biased in virtue of, and to the extent that, they diverge from the interpretations of a disinterested or detached observer. I do so in part by offering an account of the character assessments of friendship and the role of evaluative beliefs in such assessments.

In section 4's concluding remarks, I hold that neither Keller nor Stroud has succeeded in showing that friendship requires distinctive violations of what Keller and Stroud take to be mainstream epistemic norms.

2. Keller and the Epistemically Irresponsible Good Friend

Simon Keller (2004) argues that part of what makes someone a good friend is, typically, her tendency to in various ways overestimate her friend.[37] Someone is a good friend partly in virtue of having more positive beliefs about her friends than what her evidence suggests, and by being influenced by her (epistemically irrelevant) special concern for her friends when forming beliefs about them:

> Good friends believe in each other: they give each other the benefit of the doubt; they see each other in the best possible light. (…) When good friends form beliefs about each other, they sometimes respond to considerations that have to do with the needs and interests of their friends, not with aiming at the truth, and that's part of what makes them good friends. (Keller 2004: 330)

According to Keller, there is a distinctive friendship good in having a friend who is epistemically irresponsible by being "inclined to believe certain things independently of the evidence" and whose belief-forming mechanisms do not "aim unflinchingly at the truth" (Keller 2004: 338). This good gives rise to friendship norms that violate epistemic norms about having true, well-grounded beliefs. These demands or norms of friendship should not be understood as to be about consciously forming beliefs for reasons that are unrelated to the truth. Since believing something is in part to take it to be true or to represent the world as being in a certain way, such belief-formation would presumably not be psychologically possible. Keller's idea is rather that a person is normally a better friend in virtue of indirectly managing her beliefs for instance by choosing to act, or put oneself in situations, so as to improve the likelihood of ending up with more positive beliefs about her friend. (Keller 2004: 347-8)

Now, norm conflicts happen all the time, and no one is likely to fully abide by every epistemic norm in every conceivable scenario regardless of what or whom one is forming beliefs about. For one thing, prudential norms are unlikely to always be consistent with

[37] The same essay appears with only slight revisions in Keller's *The Limits of Loyalty* (2007).

epistemic norms. Like many other things in life, being an epistemically responsible agent requires time and energy which we have a limited amount of, and we might from time to time scrutinize our sources of information less thoroughly than we could have done, in favor of achieving some other goal of ours which also require our time and energy. The interesting question in this context is, I take it, whether you, as a typical, characteristic or paradigmatic friend, are under a *distinctive* pressure to violate epistemic norms when your friend is concerned, i.e., a pressure that you lack outside the realm of friendship.

I shall therefore discuss whether Keller gives us reason to think that the following features are good-making features of a friend: 1) having *less evidence-responsive* beliefs about one's friends than about non-friends, and 2) engaging in belief-forming processes that are *less truth conducive* when the piece of information one faces concerns a friend rather than a non-friend.

2.1 Epistemic Irresponsibility as Realizing Friendly Support

As Keller sees it,

> [i]t's encouraging, motivating and reassuring to have friends who are inclined to believe that things for you are improving, that your business venture will work out, that you will surely get published eventually, that you look good in your new outfit, and so on, even as you realize that their beliefs are less than fully reliable. It's one of the good things about having friends. (Keller 2004: 340)

Having friends who are epistemically unreliable in that they simply "won't believe" that you performed badly is part of what makes friendship good, says Keller. There is a certain kind of support that your friend is able to offer you, a certain way of, as he puts it, "being on your side" that is realized by your friend's insistence to think well of your personal qualities and capabilities, performances or prospects, without consulting her evidence. To share your thoughts and interests with a friend, and to take an active interest in hers, is to escape a little from your individuality, or to reduce the intensity of being you. This is in part why it's good to share. To have a supportive friend is, or can

be, to have someone who sees value in your projects and commitments, even when you – weary or self-doubting – do not. (Keller 2004: 343)

Furthermore, someone who is always realistic about your dreams and aspirations, and is clear-sighted about your shortcomings and can tell exactly when you have been the weak link or have performed badly, or who is able to make correct predictions about such matters, fails to provide the type of encouragement, motivation and reassurance that is characteristic of a good friendship. (Keller 2004: 335; 338; 340)

Now, I agree with Keller's premise that support and encouragement constitute characteristic friendship goods. The question is if epistemic irresponsibility understood as comparably less evidence-responsive beliefs, and less truth-conducive belief-forming practices, are distinctive ways of realizing such friendship goods. In order to see if Keller offers plausible reasons to think so, it shall be useful to discuss the main example he offers to state his case.

2.2 Eric and Rebecca the Aspiring Poet

Eric's close friend Rebecca has asked him to come and hear her perform at a poetry reading. Rebecca is nervous about the reading, but has decided to go through with it anyway much because she is hoping that a literary agent who is attending might want to publish her poetry. As it happens, Eric is a regular visitor at this particular poetry venue and has formed the well-grounded belief that the poetry read here is almost always pretty awful and very unlikely to attract any attention from a literary agent. Eric wasn't previously aware that Rebecca is writing poetry and nothing in his evidence about her indicates that she will be better than other people who perform at this venue, or that there's a reasonable chance that the agent will be interested in publishing her poetry.[38]

[38] The example is arguably not very well chosen. If Eric and Rebecca are really that close friends, one might think that Eric should know about poetry being a great passion of Rebecca's. But perhaps we can imagine that they met fairly recently but that they bonded immediately and became close friends very quickly.

Keller makes three remarks about Eric, on the assumption that Eric and Rebecca share a characteristic good friendship. Eric will, first, neither expect that Rebecca's poetry to be pretty awful, nor that it is unlikely to impress the literary agent. This is so even though nothing in his evidence suggests that her poetry will be better than the pretty awful poetry that he normally hears at this venue. Secondly, Eric will alter his epistemic conduct in making sure to listen with a more "sympathetic ear" to Rebecca's poetry than what he normally does at these poetry events. Thirdly, listening with a more sympathetic ear will facilitate his coming to believe that her poetry is in fact pretty good and likely to be of interest to the literary agent. Such beliefs are considerably more positive than those he would have formed about the exact same poem, read in the exact same way by a stranger. (Keller 2004: 331-333)

It is worth pointing out that this example is not meant to show that *any* person in Eric's situation would be a better friend in virtue of violating epistemic norms,[39] that good friends *always* let their special concern affect how they form beliefs about their friends, or that they *always* form more favorable beliefs about their friends, than about other people, or that the special efforts of friends to interpret their friends sympathetically *always* land in interpretations that are favorable. Keller is also not suggesting that one may become a better friend by virtue of *vast* violations of epistemic norms, such as to believe in plain falsities, or to disregard overwhelming evidence that makes our friend come off badly in one way or another. The example is just meant to illustrate how somewhat subtle manifestations of epistemic irresponsibility in situations like Eric's are part of what typically makes a person a good friend. (Keller 2004: 334-5)

As I see it, other settings than a poetry reading might have worked better to evoke the intuitions Keller wants to evoke. Nevertheless, I think his example can be made use of to point to certain ways in which it might *seem* as though epistemic irresponsibility is a feature of

[39] Keller admits of exceptions to epistemic irresponsibility being part of what makes friendship good or valuable. For instance, particular friendships between two competent self-assured philosophers may not become better in virtue of its participants being epistemically irrational when responding to information that concerns the other. (Keller 2004: 338)

good friendship, even though there are, as I shall suggest, more plausible accounts of what is going on. Let us address each of Keller's three remarks about Eric's being a better friend partly in virtue of violating epistemic norms.

2.3 Higher Expectations vs. Changes in Behavior and Non-Epistemic Attitudes

According to Keller, Eric should have higher expectations on how well Rebecca will perform as a poet than his evidence suggests. Keller writes:

> If some stranger were about to give the reading, then Eric would believe that the poetry he is about to hear will probably be pretty awful, not of the type that's likely to impress a literary agent – and he'd have good evidence for his belief. Seeing as he's Rebecca's good friend, though, and seeing as he is there to offer her support, he ought not, before she takes the stage, have those beliefs about her. He ought not be expecting that the poetry about to come out of Rebecca's mouth will be awful. Yet the fact that Rebecca is Eric's friend, rather than a stranger, does not make it any less likely that her poetry will be awful, and there's no need to imagine that Eric, as a friend, should think that it does. (2004: 332)

Keller tries to describe his case so that having different and more extensive evidence does *not* explain Eric's higher expectations. Not only is it news to Eric that Rebecca fancies herself as a poet, Keller also assumes that Eric is not friends with her because she is artistic or has a way with words, or the like. Furthermore, says Keller, even if we are in general drawn to people who we think overall well of and whom we therefore can expect to possess certain positive features, we have no reasons to believe that they are generally more talented than others, at least not if the talent in question is unrelated to why we are friends with them. (Keller 2004: 336) We should perhaps add that in the example, it is also assumed that Eric has no reason to think that Rebecca is particularly good at assessing her own abilities and talents, and that she is therefore particularly unlikely to get her hopes up about performing well and perhaps getting published unless it is fairly realistic that she will.

Provided that Eric's evidence does not in any way suggest that Rebecca's poetry will be better than what is normally the case at these poetry events, should we accept Keller's claim that Eric is a good friend in part in virtue of expecting against his evidence that it will be? As I see it, any intuition that Eric ought to have epistemically unwarranted heightened expectations can be explained away by non-epistemic friendship demands on Eric.

First, Eric ought to alter other (non-belief-related) attitudes insofar as he is a good friend. He certainly has comparatively more reason to hope or wish that Rebecca's poetry will be good and that it will impress the literary agent, and also to have a more positive attitude toward such a scenario than toward similar scenarios involving strangers. Depending on how sensitive he takes Rebecca to be, he might have reason to dread the likelier scenario in which Rebecca does not perform very well, insofar as he suspects it might upset Rebecca whom he cares deeply about.

Secondly, if it means a lot to Rebecca that Eric *tells* Rebecca that he expects her to do well, he might have a friendship reason to say things such as "I'm sure that you'll do great." Such a friendly support is, however, consistent with Eric in fact not being sure about this (how could he be?) and with him having serious doubts that Rebecca's poetry will be good enough to impress any literary agent.

Insofar as it still seems disturbing that Eric doesn't manage to hold back his well-founded belief that Rebecca will not do well as a poet it is hardly his mere belief that indicates a lack of friendly support, I think. A possible failure in friendship is instead due to Eric's focus, namely that the lack of high-quality poetry is what is at the top of his mind when he anticipates Rebecca's performance. We may expect Eric to not believe but rather to *feel* differently about the poetry event when he knows that Rebecca is performing (or once he spots her there) as the event may now have a certain glow that it would otherwise lack. To speak metaphorically, it is a sign of Eric's friendly devotion to Rebecca if both the poetry event and Rebecca's performance become more alive to him, than the same event would have been had there been only strangers performing. This, however, has nothing to do with how well he expects her to do as a poet. Eric may then have mixed feelings toward the event insofar as he also

worries about and dreads the scenario that Rebecca will be upset if she won't do as well as she hopes.

As Keller sees it, though, Eric should, as Rebecca's friend, put himself in a sympathetic mindset in order to increase the likelihood that he will actually believe that her poetry is pretty good when he hears it. To expect Rebecca's poetry to be better than his evidence suggests is, says Keller, part of doing so. But even if we were to agree that Eric ought to try to increase the likelihood that he will form such a positive belief about Rebecca's poetry (a premise to be discussed in the next section), why should we think that high expectations regarding her performance would have such an effect? High expectations may well lead Eric to be disappointed when Rebecca starts reading, at least if there is a blatant discrepancy between what he hears and what he expected to hear.

There may thus be a friendship demand on Eric to alter his other (non-belief) attitudes, to sound and appear more certain that Rebecca will do well than he actually is, and to not have her likely failure as a poet at the top of his mind when he anticipates her performance. But this is not to say that he would be a better friend in virtue of expecting against his evidence that she will in fact be pretty successful.

2.4 Sympathetic Interpretations

Keller's second point is that Eric's special concern for Rebecca has him altering the ways in which he forms beliefs about Rebecca's poetry, e.g., by listening more sympathetically to Rebecca's poetry than he otherwise would.

> In listening as a friend, he will allow the poetry to strike him in the best possible light; he'll actively seek out its strengths, and play down its weaknesses; he'll be disposed to interpret it in ways that make it look like a stronger piece of work.(…) He should put himself into a situation under which it's more likely that he'll form certain beliefs, but his reason for putting himself into that situation is not one that bears upon the likelihood that those beliefs are true. (Keller 2004: 333-4)

As a good friend, Eric will, according to Keller, make various special efforts to increase the likelihood that he will form certain beliefs rather than others (that Rebecca's poetry is good, rather than bad).

Such differential epistemic conduct is epistemically irresponsible, says Keller, since our reason for the alterations is not to improve the likelihood of the truth of the resulting beliefs.

Now, we might want to question Keller's claim that the support and encouragement Eric owes Rebecca by being her good friend places *any* demands on his beliefs and ways of forming them. We might suggest that the relevant demands or norms instead concerns non-belief-related actions. It seems very plausible that as a good friend you should not communicate every belief you have about your friend – especially not every negative thing you have to say about her. And in case you have to state one of your negative beliefs about her you should, as a friend, certainly be careful with respect to *how* you communicate your belief. Regardless of the beliefs Eric forms about the quality of Rebecca's performance as he listens to it, he should perhaps make an effort to show at least *some* appreciation of it. Perhaps Eric should as a good friend act in a way that is inspiring and encouraging to Rebecca during and after her reading, e.g., by listening attentively and with great interest, and by thanking her afterwards, and perhaps even by paying her some small, general or vague compliment, even if the performance wasn't that great.

There is, I think, a mutual understanding among friends that you sometimes tell slight lies, or withhold critical judgments to make each other feel better. Your friend may appreciate your kind words even though you both know that you are not entirely convinced by what you just said or that there are things that you are not telling your friend. That is why you sometimes have to tell your friends to be honest with you and ask them to tell you what they *really* think. None of this indicates that friendship places a special demand on you to engage in belief-forming processes that are likely to result in beliefs about your friends that are more positive than what is supported by your evidence.

Keller considers the hypothesis that the distinctive support of a good friend is about how we act and not about our beliefs and ways of forming them, but he insists that insofar as Eric and Rebecca's friendship is of a characteristic kind it requires more of Eric than to merely *act* supportive before, during and after Rebecca's poetry reading. The "pretend approval" of, e.g., saying nice things or looking

enthusiastic is not what you want from a good friend, according to Keller: "You want a friend who's on your side, not one who's good at faking it." (Keller 2004: 335)

In my view, this passage suggests an odd account of being on someone's side. When Keller suggests that there is something nice about having friends who "won't believe" that you are about to, or have done, something that doesn't reflect well on you, he appears to make friendship dependent on achievements or on beliefs that one's friend will perform well. This seems like a bad form of friendship. The support and encouragement of a good friend are, as I see it, not contingent on how talented they take you to be, or how well you accomplish your aims. A better way to understand friendly support is, I think, for friends to see the good in you and focus on inner qualities such as your good will or intentions, your ambition, passion or devotion – features that might not be as visible to, and not as easily noticed or cherished by, others. Such friendly support does not require you as a friend either to have less evidence-responsive beliefs about your friends than about non-friends, or to engage in belief-forming processes that are comparatively less truth conducive.

Furthermore, there is, as I see it, an element of condescendence or disrespect in Keller's characterization of good friends as being characteristically "strongly disinclined" to think that you "made a fool of yourself" or "were the weak link" in some certain performance, etc. (2004: 340) You want your friends to see you as you are, rather than through the rose-colored glasses that your sweet, old grandmother might see you (and through which you are the cutest thing ever, unable to ever behave badly or fail at anything). We have higher expectations on our friends to pay attention to *us*, what we are really like, with all our flaws, imperfections and limited capabilities, expectations we do not have on, e.g., our grandmother or parent. Thus, it may well be annoying to Rebecca if she suspects that Eric believes her poetry to be better than it is, just because she is his friend. She might complain that he is not taking her seriously, or that he is failing to regard her as an equal.

This is not to deny that you may, at least occasionally and short-term, benefit more or feel better if your friend has exaggeratedly high thoughts of you, or very few negative beliefs about you. My point is

just that it doesn't make the friendship better *qua* friendship - not every way in which you may promote your friend's interests would. Furthermore, you want your friend to think well of you because you *deserve* it, because you've given her reasons to do so throughout your friendship (and, perhaps, before it started). You would, as I see it, be a worse friend, or at least an unreasonable friend, if you expect your friend to see you through slightly rose-colored glasses.

So far I have accounted for some of the alterations made by a friend in situations like the poetry case which are unrelated to belief-formation. I agree with Keller, though, that the support and encouragement of a good friend may go beyond this: it may be a sign of good friendship to also alter in one's epistemic conduct, e.g., by manifesting an increased degree of effort, attention and sympathy when one's friends are concerned. But to say that Eric is more prone to making sympathetic interpretations of Rebecca's poetry just because she is his friend is, I hold, no clear indication of epistemic irresponsibility.

As argued by Troy Jollimore, the extra attention and sympathy with which Eric as a good friend listens to Rebecca's poetry may well be conducive to getting an accurate sense of the artistic quality of her poetry. Jollimore takes this point to apply to art in general: it is hard to appreciate poetry and other art forms. Seeing value in art requires an approach that is not skeptical or detached, as it may be if we do not make the extra effort we are prone to making when someone we care about is the artist. The relevant state of engagement and openness involves "approaching the work as if one already believed that there is something of value to be obtained – or, at the very least, as if one already believe it likely that this is so." (Jollimore 2011: 56) Thus, according to Jollimore, Eric's active involvement end engagement with Rebecca's poetry, his ambition to see it in its best possible light, and his way of actively seeking out its strengths, may well be seen as epistemic improvements rather than faults when it comes to assessments of the poetry qua poetry. It would be ideal, says Jollimore, to extend the interested epistemic effort to everyone, not just friends. But due to limited time and energy this cannot be done. (2011: 56-59) In addition to Jollimore's remarks about how friendly effort may facilitate a more accurate value experience of art, we

should add that the mere extra attention and sympathy Eric puts into his belief-forming process when he is listening to Rebecca will in no way guarantee that he will end up believing that her poetry is pretty good: Through being open to there being value in Rebecca's poetry, and by trying to see it in its best possible light, Eric may well might discover that there were in fact no such value in her poetry, or that only parts of it were valuable while many other parts were not.

Keller seems to think, though, that the epistemic alterations of a friend are too radically charitable to adequately be construed as epistemic improvements. We see this when we look at the beliefs that stem from these differential epistemic practices. The use of a particular technique might, according to Keller, strike Eric as "mindless repetition" when it appears in a stranger's poem, but as to "astute dramatic emphasis" when Rebecca employs it. (Keller 2004: 33) This means that a feature that in a stranger's poetry would be a bad-making property – something that would make the poetry worse – could, in Rebecca's poetry, be experienced by Eric as a good-making property, and thus be something that contributes to his forming the belief that her poetry is *not* awful. Keller's third remark about Eric's epistemic irresponsibility is that the beliefs we end up having are, due to the differential epistemic processes by which we form them, out of line with our evidence.

I must admit that I don't share Keller's intuition that this type of interpretive charity is something we expect of a good friend. The extent to which there seems to be a great discrepancy between the beliefs that Eric, as a good friend, would form about the exact same poetry performance depending on whether Rebecca is the performer, can, as I see it, better be accounted for in terms of shifts in focus and/or conceptualization.

2.5 Shift in Focus and Conceptualization

Jason Kawall argues, quite plausibly to my mind, that the ways in which friends seem to seek out positive interpretations and form more positive beliefs when it comes to a friend of theirs are often a matter of difference in focus. Eric will, as Rebecca's friend, pay attention to different features of her poetry than he otherwise would

have done. He will focus on potential strengths rather than on potential weaknesses. Rather than being distorted, his evaluative beliefs are, thus, at least in part about different things, than are, e.g., the literary agent's beliefs about Rebecca's poetry. Eric may form beliefs about features of Rebecca's poetry that reflect well on her, while he may focus on different, less well-reflecting parts of the poetry had she been a stranger to him.

Kawall compares this phenomenon to how a whiskey-drinker and a beer-drinker who enter the same bar will be caught up with and form beliefs about different things, due to their being interested in different things. The whiskey drinker is likely to notice the whiskey bottles and form justified true beliefs about them. The beer-drinker is likely to form roughly *as many* justified true beliefs, only they are about the beer selection, not the whiskey. Similarly, Eric and the literary agent may form roughly as many justified true beliefs about Rebecca's performance, but beliefs about different features of the performance due to the respective interests they take in it. While Eric might be likely to miss out on some possible weaknesses when listening to Rebecca's poetry, he might miss out on as many possible qualities when listening to a stranger's poetry. (Kawall 2012: 352)

Since Eric may well have as many true beliefs and as few false beliefs as he would have when listening to a stranger's poetry the mere difference in focus doesn't yet indicate any epistemic flaw, says Kawall. This is not to deny that Eric's sympathetic interpretation might be distorted if Eric almost exclusively notices qualities such as "a genuinely interesting and original running metaphor" when listening to Rebecca and hardly notices any of its obvious weaknesses such as her "use of terrible clichés, and awkward attempts at rhyming." (Kawall 2012: 352) As Kawall points out, though, Keller doesn't mean to say that Eric would be a better friend if his beliefs were *that* one-sided.

As I see it, the different foci that Kawall talks about can be taken a step further; they can be linked to differences in conceptualization. Keller writes that: "If Eric behaves as a good friend would…there will be situations under which Eric will believe that Rebecca's poetry was pretty good, and that there's a decent chance that the literary agent will show some interests in publishing it." (Keller 2004: 332)

This passage indicates that Keller ignores a distinction that I think is crucial to see what is going on in his example and within close relationships in general: it is one thing to believe that Rebecca's poetry was pretty good in some overall, or unspecified, sense and, quite another to believe that Rebecca's poetry was good in the sense that matters to the literary agent. There is, thus, an ambiguity in the goodness of Rebecca's poetry that Eric forms beliefs about. Insofar as Eric should, as a good friend, believe Rebecca's performance to be better or "less awful" than a close to identical performance of a stranger, the goodness (or lack of awfulness) Eric should experience is an instance of goodness more widely construed than narrow poetry virtues or publishability. In addition to the different focus on aesthetic qualities that Kawall talks about, Eric might as a good friend find additional value through conceiving differently of the mere poetry event. The likelihood that Rebecca's poetry strike Eric as better when he does so does not entail that her poetry is likely to strike him as having the virtues a literary agent would be looking for.

Before, when Eric has attended these poetry nights to hear the poetry of strangers, he has mainly been experiencing poetry that fares poorly with regards to the distinctive virtues he thinks apply to poetry. *That* has been his focus, and his beliefs have been primarily about aesthetic qualities or value. Now when his close friend is about to perform there is a friendship demand on him to widen his focus, to see other values in this type of event, than those pertinent to, say, a literary agent. He might do so by coming to think about how hard it is, after all, to write poetry, and what a good thing it is that there are places like this café where amateurs can live out their passion by exposing their work in an environment that feels comfortable and inspiring to them. Furthermore Eric might start to think about the awkwardness of amateur poetry as an endearing feature of it, and that its tendency to be naïve, unpolished, as well as pretentious has a certain charm and value that more high-quality poetry lacks. On such different and possibly wider conception of value not only Rebecca's performance but other participants' performances may strike Eric as better than they would have done on an earlier attendance to these poetry nights.

Furthermore, Eric is as a good friend especially interested in Rebecca and by extension in what she values and identifies herself with. It is of particular value to him to hear *her* perform because she is special to him. This kind of value-to-Eric will be reflected in how Eric as a good friend is likely to experience the value of Rebecca's poetry reading. Not only will he be excited about Rebecca's upcoming performance, in part since he is thereby invited to experience something that matters a great deal to her, by conceiving of the performance differently, it is likely to come off as being better than had she not been his friend, albeit *better as* something slightly different. Eric's belief that Rebecca's poetry reading was pretty good is consistent with his belief that her poetry *qua* poetry was pretty awful. Compare this with the different value experiences of a parent going to see their kid perform in a school play, versus a theater agent who goes to the same play to look for a suitable child actor for her next Broadway show. If the parent is also a theater agent, for the evening off duty, it would seem that there is a parental demand on her to conceive differently of the play, than she would do while in duty, and to form beliefs about how good the school play is/was accordingly. The parent/agent doesn't have to be epistemically biased to experience the kind of value in the school play that parents normally do, rather she simply shifts her focus and conception of the play.

I am here unable to specify further what precisely *is* the wider and in some sense more permissive standard that a good friend may employ when forming beliefs about the value(s) of a friend's performance or the like. It could be objected that the epistemically responsible agent assesses the value of every person's achievement, deed, performance or the like from a detached, disinterested point of view and that it therefore follows that Eric would be epistemically irresponsible insofar as his positive beliefs about Rebecca in part is explained by his using a different evaluative standard than he otherwise would. I am unable to determine whether mainstream epistemology actually does require of an agent to use one and the same evaluative standard when forming evaluative beliefs. For my purpose though it suffices to say that this is far from obvious from the rough description of epistemic norms that Keller uses as a reference.

In sum, I think Keller fails to give a plausible case for thinking that a distinctive friendship good is realized when friends form beliefs about each other in ways that lead away from the truth. The alterations in beliefs and belief-forming processes of a good friend that remain once we have looked at differences in evidence, and in attitudes (other than beliefs) and actions, may involve increased epistemic effort, but not decreased truth conduciveness or less evidence-responsive beliefs. I suggested that the extent to which friends nevertheless end up having more positive beliefs about friends than about strangers depends on differences in focus, conception and differences in evaluative standard that comes with differences in conception.

Next, I turn to Sarah Stroud who has argued, similarly to but independently of Keller, that, on an intuitive picture of friendship, we deal differently with information about friends than about strangers not out of concern for the truth but out of concern for our friends, and that we end up with beliefs that are slanted in our friends' favor. While Keller mostly talks about beliefs in your friend's performances, achievements, or projects in general, Stroud focuses on beliefs about actions and characters.

3. Stroud and Epistemic Partiality in Friendship

Stroud writes that there are two broad categories of differential epistemic responses in friendship. The first concerns "the cognitive activities we engage in when processing new data about our friend." Distinctive here, according to Stroud, is "that we tend to devote more energy to defeating or minimizing the impact of unfavorable data than we otherwise would." (Stroud 2006: 505). This corresponds roughly to Keller's claim that we engage in less truth-conducive processes when forming beliefs about a friend than about a non-friend. Secondly, "where our friends are concerned, we draw different conclusions and make different inferences than we otherwise would (or than a detached observer would)." (Stroud 2006: 506) What is distinctive here, says Stroud, is that we are "likely to give [alternative – and less damning – explanations of some reported conduct] greater credence than we would for a nonfriend." (Ibid.) This corresponds

roughly to Keller's claim that our beliefs about our friends are less responsive to evidence (understood as considerations bearing on the truth of the belief) than had the information we face been about a non-friend. Stroud characterizes "epistemic partiality", "irrationality" or "bias" manifested by a good friend toward her friends as follows:

> [First] the good friend's *reason* for adopting these differential epistemic practices seems to be simply that the person in question is her friend. But that someone is your friend is not itself a relevant epistemic reason (as we might put it) to form different beliefs about him than you would about anyone else. So we certainly have at least the appearance of bias, if bias is understood simply as differential epistemic treatment without epistemic justification. Furthermore… [r]ather than being truth conducive, they seem to lead her into a distorted conception of reality. (Stroud 2006: 512-3)

Just like Keller, Stroud stresses that the epistemic bias of a good friend is subtle; it is not part of good friendship to willingly put yourself in situations where you are likely to end up with thoroughly distorted beliefs about your friend.

3.1 Epistemic Partiality as Securing Friendly Esteem

As we may recall, Keller motivates epistemic irresponsibility by taking it to be a way of realizing the kind of support that is, at least in some form, an uncontroversial part of the good of friendship. Stroud instead emphasizes that friendship is intuitively "in some important sense based on your friend's character and on esteem for his merits." (Stroud, 2006: 511) You wouldn't be friends with someone unless you took him to be in some sense a good person. On Stroud's view, the differential epistemic practices that friends engage in when processing information about a friend are biased in that they result in comparably more positive beliefs. As such, these practices serve as a mechanism that helps friends maintain their high thoughts of their friends, without which the friendship would cease to exist. (ibid: 511-12)

I agree with Stroud's premise that some sort of esteem or thinking well of one another is a precondition for friendship. Our question is if this feature of friendship requires epistemic bias, understood as comparably less evidence-responsive beliefs and less truth-conducive belief-forming practices when one faces information about friends

rather than non-friends. It shall be useful to discuss the main example Stroud offers to illustrate such a case.

3.2 Sam the Womanizer

In Stroud's main example of epistemic partiality, a person you know just a little tells you with obvious disapproval about how your friend Sam recently slept with someone, after which he was reported to be cruel enough never to return a single call from that person, knowing that this would break her heart. The story is new to you and you don't know whether or not it is true. (Stroud 2006: 504)

If you in this situation respond as is characteristic of a good friend, your doxastic slant in favor of your friend will enter at one level or another. You might, says Stroud, "first try to discredit the evidence being presented to you and find a way not to believe your friend did this at all." (Stroud 2006: 509) You may scrutinize and question the story more than you would have done, had it concerned a non-friend. For instance, you may ask yourself if the person telling the story is really reliable, think about potential misunderstandings, or about various mitigating circumstances due to which you can dismiss the story as entirely or partly false.

If you find yourself unable to dismiss the bad-sounding information about Sam, Stroud suggests that you as a good friend "can accept those base facts and move to the interpretive level, where you try to put a different spin on what he did and file that action under some less damning label." (Ibid.) While others may conclude from the story that Sam is a "compulsive womanizer" who "*enjoys* breaking people's hearts", you may as Sam's friend instead take the story to reflect mainly his "irrepressible but fickle enthusiasm and appetite for female charm in all its many varieties." (Ibid.)

If you find it hard to convince yourself of a positive spin on Sam's action you can, says Stroud, "link the action to a different character trait than the obvious ones." (Stroud 2006: 509) While others call Sam's behavior cruel and insensitive you might instead find it refreshing.

If this strategy fails, Stroud judges it as likely that you might "seek to embed in a larger virtue the negative character trait you are forced

to attribute to your friend."(ibid.) You may admit that Sam is an insensitive heartbreaker, but stress that he is no hypocrite, that he is too genuine to be stringing people along.

Lastly, says Stroud, "you can relegate your attribution of a character flaw to an obscure corner of your portrait of him, rather than making it the dominant element, like a prominent nose." (2006: 509)

3.3 Required Divergence from Epistemic Norms

Stroud writes that "where our friends are concerned, we draw different conclusions and make different inferences than we otherwise would (or than a detached observer would)." (Stroud 2006: 506) Like Keller, Stroud switches between, on the one hand, the epistemic processes *we* – actual persons like you and I – engage in when responding to information about strangers, and, on the other hand, the epistemic processes a detached observer would engage in. Stroud seems to describe not only a detached person (which we are with regards to those with which we lack attachments), but an epistemically flawless person, and so the mentioned equivocation seems unwarranted. Real people have faulty perceptions, reason far from perfectly, and have other goals than having a large set of true beliefs and other epistemic aims, which compete for their time and energy. As noted initially in the discussion about Keller, it might seem odd to point to friendship as a particular locus of epistemic bias. Our confirmation bias and engagement in motivated reasoning appear in most spheres of our lives.

Stroud's underlying assumption may be, though, not that we have completely undistorted conceptions of reality when it comes to non-friends, but that we diverge considerably more from what an ideal epistemic agent is like when it comes to beliefs and belief-forming processes when our friends, as opposed to strangers, are concerned.

There is, as I see it, reason to question this assumption, in part because of the various kinds if negative biases we have against strangers. Among other things, we are prone to making sweeping generalizations and hasty judgments about them, and we often seem willing to accept fairly extensive, negative descriptions of them

without spending much, if any, energy on finding out whether such descriptions are at all correct. Stroud doesn't resist such a picture, yet she takes there to be a distinctive epistemic bias of a good friend which becomes obvious once we look closer at the *combination* between the good friend's differential and more energy-consuming epistemic practices on the one hand, and the more positive beliefs that are the outcome of such differential epistemic practices. The beliefs that stem from such processes are systematically more positive than they would otherwise have been, even though someone's friendship with us doesn't improve the likelihood that he is a better person in all the respects the beliefs are about. Even though mainstream epistemology is likely to imply that we are faulty epistemic agents to begin with, friendship overall adds to our epistemic bias.[40]

We should note, though, that it isn't crucial for Stroud's argument that people generally *are* in fact more epistemically responsible insofar as strangers are concerned. What is crucial is that "you owe your friends something other than an impartial and disinterested review of the evidence where they are concerned." (Stroud 2006: 504) You owe no such thing to strangers. As Stroud sees it, it is part of our intuitive picture of friendship to alternate our epistemic conduct when dealing with issues about our friends. Even if we are, as it happens, (at least as) bad believers in general there is a distinctive requirement of friendship to diverge from standard epistemic norms. It isn't optional for a good friend to not engage in the epistemic conduct Stroud describes as being common among and distinctive of friends. I will try to show, though, that the epistemic conduct that is part of our intuitive picture of a good friend is not in any obvious, distinctive tension with mainstream epistemic norms.

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[40] I must admit I am a bit puzzled by Stroud's reasoning with regards to our epistemic irresponsibility toward friends as compared to strangers. She writes in a footnote (fn. 31, 2006: 513) that if one only were to consider "the heightened scrutiny to which the good friend subjects new information about her friend, one might be tempted to say that this change is an improvement from an epistemic point of view. (I have no wish to commend the unseemly hastiness with which we form negative global judgments about people who are not our friends simply on the basis of gossip…) But it is much harder to maintain that the good friend displays enhanced epistemic virtue if one considers the total package of differential epistemic *practices and beliefs* which she will tend to manifest."

3.4 Friendship Value in Recognizing Negative Features

As a first comment to Stroud's case about Sam, it might seem that she, like Keller, overstates a good friend's reluctance to accept negative information about their friends as true. It might seem perfectly fine for you as a good friend of Sam's to just respond "Really? I wouldn't have expected Sam to act so badly, but I guess I don't know him as well as I thought I did," when hearing the story, and then disappointedly bring it up with Sam the next time the two of you meet. If you are good friends with Sam you are unlikely to be easily discouraged by his negative traits, and to think of him as a hopeless case, just because he occasionally does bad things and disappoints you in one way or another. Being reluctant to accepting negative features of a person may stand in the way for important friendship values such as being accepted and loved despite one's flaws, and to being encouraged to work against one's shortcomings. (Cf. Kawall 2013: 356-7) Furthermore, if you are blind to Sam's shortcomings or inclined to believe that his failures or shortcomings are less serious than they are, you may mistakenly think that he has things covered, which may in turn make you less prone to offer him the support or advice that he might need. (Kawall 2013: 360) Imagine, e.g., that Sam's behavior is part of a pattern that prevents him from engaging in the kind of meaningful relationships with women that he desires. In order for you, as a good friend, to offer good support and encouragement to break this pattern, it seems you shouldn't downplay, or look the other way, when being provided with information that indicates that the pattern is intact.

The above considerations suggest that you in order to be a good friend of Sam, need to have a clear vision of his negative traits, and thus be open to forming not only positive but also negative beliefs about him. [41] Still, I agree with Stroud that a good friend's response

[41] Kawall also mentions how the value of being extra forgiving of one another in friendship requires true beliefs about the bad things one is forgiving. Good friendship furthermore makes you better off and to think that your friend is, for instance, more honest, generous and loyal than she actually is may jeopardize such

to some information that, at first glance, reflects badly on the person it concerns would often differ depending on whether the other person is a friend or not.

Like in the poetry case, though, it is important to first discern what, in the differential response, are about beliefs and belief-forming process and what is about alterations in other attitudes and actions that we expect from a good friend. Some of the special concern is, as I see it, about how we deal with and communicate our negative beliefs about our friend, rather than being about what we believe about our friend. Perhaps you should as Sam's friend *act* as if you don't believe the story you are being presented with, or argue that Sam's action might not be as bad as it sounds, just to protect Sam's reputation, even if you have secretly started to doubt whether Sam is quite the person you think he is. And, as a friend, you will take the time to hear Sam out, let him give his side of the story, and not judge him prematurely, as it were.

What then remains when it comes to the good friend's alterations in the epistemic compartment? The case with Sam illustrates two kinds of epistemic alterations that Stroud suggests that you make insofar as you are a good friend. First, you make various efforts to defeat or not having to accept some negative-sounding information insofar as this information concerns a friend of yours, for the sole (non-epistemic) reason that this person is your friend. Second, while having accepted a particular piece of negative-sounding information, you interpret it more positively, or take it to reflect less badly insofar as it concerns a friend.

3.5 Increased Epistemic Efforts

Stroud writes that a good friend typically considers a higher number of alternative hypotheses and, perhaps, searches for more evidence before accepting as accurate information that makes a friend look bad. This is, I take it, not in any obvious way epistemically impermissible. We have a larger and different body of evidence about friends than about non-friends and so it might seem epistemically

prudential value. This, too indicates that having unwarranted positive beliefs about friends is not a friendship demand. (Kawall 2012: 356-7)

unproblematic that it generally takes us longer to form beliefs about friends and that our ways of doing so, as well as our conclusions, are different from when we deal with similar information about a non-friend. Also, as the epistemologist Richard Foley points out, "it is anything but rare for us to weigh the costs and benefits of spending additional time and resources investigating a topic." It is what we expect any reasonable person to do. (Foley 2005: 320) Foley argues that while pragmatic considerations of various kinds cannot influence our beliefs directly – we are psychologically unable to believe something out of consideration to the benefits of doing so – it seems almost unavoidable that pragmatic considerations influence our beliefs indirectly, not least when it comes to the time and energy we spend on investigating evidence.

To accept new, bad-sounding information about our friends as true may change our conception of them, which might well be unpleasant both for us and the friend in question, and, in some cases, even put the friendship at risk. Given these high stakes, we often find it worthwhile to spend considerable time and energy on processing evidence about friends to make sure that we do not on false grounds believe bad things about them.[42]

3.6 Favoring Positive Hypotheses

Stroud is ready to grant that mere alterations of epistemic practices do not by necessity distort our beliefs. She doesn't deny that friends do have more and different evidence concerning their friends, and she also admits that increased epistemic efforts do not necessarily violate epistemic norms. But, says Stroud, when we look at how friends are in part guided by things unrelated to the truth when forming beliefs about their friends, and at how the resulting beliefs seem to be systematically slanted in their friends' favor, the epistemic impairment is obvious. A good friend doesn't only take the time and effort to construct alternative and less bad-sounding hypotheses behind a person's seemingly bad behavior when this person is a friend

[42] This is not to say that we are morally (as opposed to epistemically) justified in making comparably more epistemic efforts when friends are concerned. More can in fact be a stake when we form hasty conclusions about strangers.

of hers, she also gives greater credence to alternative and more positive construals of her friend's conduct and character and "does so seemingly out of proportion to how compelling those hypotheses objectively are." (Stroud 2006: 514) Stroud further writes that the good friend's

> selection of conclusions and inferences seems…out of kilter with the objective weight of the considerations she considers. The good friend tends to seize on factors that would discredit negative evidence, to fasten on possible hypotheses that present her friend in a more favorable light. She withholds belief in propositions amply warranted by the evidence at hand and which would be natural inferences for a disinterested observer to make. So the present hypothesis does not fit the data very well. (Stroud 2006: 516)

According to Stroud, differences in evidence do not explain away the epistemic bias of a good friend. First, it is constitutive of friendship to more or less *assume*, regardless of one's evidence, that their friend is a good person and to be rather insensitive to how new evidence strengthens or weakens this assumption. She writes:

> [t]o be someone's friend is to have cast your lot in with him and, indeed, with his good character; and this properly affects how you respond to new situations and new data. Your friend need not prove each day, from scratch, that he is a good person: friendship is not contingent on being continually renewed by objective proofs of that proposition. (Stroud 2006: 512)

While I agree with the second part of this quote, I do not see it as a natural consequence of the first part. There is no epistemic reason for you to have your friend prove anything about her character from scratch each day. Friendship involves a lot of background knowledge and we rarely encounter information about a friend that we cannot evaluate in light of *some* character trait or other, or in light of other things that we know about our friend. Given our extensive evidence about friends, it would be epistemically irresponsible to change our minds about what kind of persons our friend is just because we learn something new and perhaps unflattering about her. This is very different from saying, as Stroud does, that "[i]t is almost as if the good friend decided once and for all some time ago that her friend was a

good person and then absolutely refused to pay heed to a possibly mounting pile of evidence to the contrary." (Stroud 2006: 514)

Stroud points out that most people have more or less serious flaws and that the good friend has no epistemic reason to be particularly reluctant to conclude that this is true (also) of their friends:

> The fact is that most people act very badly from time to time, and have some more or less serious character flaws. So from an objective point of view your friends are very likely to possess these features as well. Friendship, however, seems to involve a reluctance (although not…an absolute refusal) to come to such conclusions about your friends. (Stroud 2006: 513)

Now, applied to the case with Sam, I agree with Stroud that you may as his friend have no reason to think that he, unlike most people, would never act very badly or that he is unlikely to have more or less serious character flaws. However, being friends with someone normally involves having a good sense of what your friend's strengths as well as her weaknesses are and thus of the likelihood of your friend behaving badly in some ways rather than in others. As a good friend, you are likely to take Sam to have several positive qualities that others lack, but you do not take him to be better than others in every given respect. And while you may well be aware of many less flattering things about Sam, the mere fact that you are friends with him does indeed make it less likely that he has *certain* kinds of character flaws. For instance, you may know about yourself that you only become good friends with men whose treatment of and attitudes toward women meet certain specific standards. If so, your evidence may make it less likely that Sam acted in the reported way than that just any person did so (given that the average man is less feministic than those men you tend to befriend).

To sum up my remarks so far, I have questioned the idea that there is a friendship norm to diverge from the point of view of a detached or disinterested observer when it comes to descriptive beliefs, such as whether or not your friend Sam knowingly broke a girl's heart by not returning any of her calls. I agree with Stroud that being Sam's friend makes you more prone to conclude that a more favorable hypothesis – e.g., one that involves mitigating circumstances – is true than had

you not been Sam's friend. I think, though, that pointing to differences in behavior, in evidence and in efforts is enough to show that this alternative epistemic conduct is not necessarily epistemically flawed as in standing in the way for evidence-responsiveness or truth-tracking beliefs.

3.7 Favorable Character Interpretations

According to Stroud, though, a good friend is not only reluctant to accept hypotheses about a friend's misconduct in an epistemically biased way, once accepted she also makes more favorable interpretations of what character trait the misconduct manifests and of what it says about the person overall. The example with Sam is meant to illustrate, first, how a person's actions, and character in light of these actions, are not transparent but require interpretations; the same action can be construed and contextualized in various ways or "be seen in different lights, put in different perspectives, filed under different labels and concepts" (Stroud 2006: 507) The same data about a person can be used to attribute different and more or less bad-sounding actions to her, actions that in turn can be interpreted as to express different more or less flattering character traits, which furthermore can be interpreted as more or less determining of the overall character of this person. Secondly, the example is meant to illustrate how friends try to file their friends' bad-sounding actions under some less damning label, and link the actions "to a different character trait than the obvious ones." (2006: 509) Once you have accepted that Sam has in fact slept with a woman and never returned any of her calls even though he knew that would break her heart, you are likely to try to file it under some less damning label, than a stranger would. As a friend of Sam's you are more likely to reject negative interpretations such as "compulsive womanizing" and rather take his conduct to express his unwillingness to string women along, or his "irrepressible but fickle enthusiasm and appetite for female charm in all its many varieties," says Stroud. (2006: 508) Even if you were to agree that Sam's behavior does manifest a character flaw you would not let it define him entirely, whereas others would be prepared to write him off as being "an inconsiderate jerk". (ibid.)

3.8 Are Attached Interpretations Epistemically Distorted?

The example with Sam is thus meant to show how "[a] good friend is likely to interpret what she hears in a less damaging way than is a stranger" and that "she is more likely to look for alternative interpretations to the obvious, and damning, ones and – furthermore – to draw different inferences about her friend's character than would a stranger." (2006: 507) Without claiming that all interpretations are as adequate or well-supported, I would like to question Stroud's assumption that there are "obvious" interpretations of what character trait a course of conduct manifests, or how a person's overall character should be interpreted in light of it. People are complex beings, and as situationists have argued, our character traits are far from consistent. For instance, whether or not people are generous may depend largely on whether some small fortune or misfortune happened to them right before their opportunity to manifest their generosity. (See, e.g. Harman 1999 and Doris 2002.) Also, people modify their personality somewhat depending on their company and the situation at hand. Our relationships shape our personality, not only by contributing to personal development, but also in that different parts of our personality are triggered in our different roles as a friend, grand-daughter, as a lover, as a teacher or business partner, etc. The acts we perform in these roles, or in the contexts of these relationships, may been interpreted as to express slightly different character traits. It is not unheard of that a person is extremely kind and considerate when being among friends and family, while being rather rude and arrogant as a boss. It wouldn't be surprising if her intimates would be more prone to interpreting several of her acts, and what character traits they manifest, in more positive terms than her coworkers. Against this background, it isn't clear to me that there is a distinctive set of obvious interpretations of what character trait is manifested by, e.g., a person who acted like Sam did.

In any event, it is unclear to me why an interpretation made from the detached point of view would privileged, insofar as mainstream epistemology goes. Troy Jollimore argues that beliefs about what character trait that is manifested by a particular behavior is more likely

to be adequate when formed from an attached rather than detached. He considers Robert Wright's case of a parent who is likely to think "What a brat!" when seeing someone else's child misbehave while thinking "That's what happens when she skips a nap" when it's her own child. According to Jollimore, the parent is closer to the truth in the latter case. (Jollimore 2011: 61) You know Sam better than others do. This means that you not only have more extensive evidence about him, but also that you have better insight in what drives him and lies behind his actions. You may also know better than many others how different strokes of his personality are triggered in different interpersonal contexts. Your tendency to put more credence into hypotheses that put Sam in a better light, than had you not been friends with him, has likely to do in part with your intimately speaking lesser empathy with, interest in, and psychological insight when it comes to strangers. As Jollimore suggests, this may if anything, indicate that our epistemic behavior is epistemically improved when we form beliefs about friends.

It should be noted that the point of Stroud's article is not to state that it is impossible to be both a good friend and a responsible believer, only that that is the case on mainstream epistemic views. In fact, toward the end of the paper she suggests that the norm conflict she has been concerned with may be a reason to revise standard epistemic views. Friends have a reason to adopt differential epistemological practices, and this being so may be a reason to rethink or reformulate the norms of epistemic rationality.

My main disagreement with Stroud, though, is that I do not think that the different and often more positive interpretations we make of friends necessarily are in tension with mainstream epistemology. Stroud writes that when all other strategies of making a less damaging interpretation of one's friend's conduct or of seeking to embed the bad conduct into a larger virtue, or, if that proves impossible, marginalize the character flaw you attribute to your friend in your portrait of him. (2006: 509) I agree with Stroud that good friends have a tendency to let bad things that they learn about a person's conduct or character affect their overall portrait of the person less if it is a friend of theirs. This is not something that a detached or disinterested observer would do. As I see it, though, there is a difference between

the descriptive beliefs we form about someone's course of conduct, on the one hand, and the interpretations of what character trait is manifested by such conduct and how dominant this trait is in a person's character, on the other. I agree that mainstream epistemology would regard any divergence from the detached and disinterested point of view as involving an element of bias or epistemic impairment when it comes to the former, I am not as sure that this holds for the latter.

3.9 Character Assessments and the role of Beliefs

As I see it, how much you revise your conception of your friend in light of some new piece of information about him does not only have to do with how bad you believe that the isolated conduct in question is, but is also a reflection of much you *care* about this type of misconduct in the context of your friendship. You are prone to ascribing comparably less weight to some of Sam's admittedly bad conduct, and to the bad character trait that you take it to express, in your overall conception of him, insofar as you are his friend. This doesn't necessarily indicate that your *belief* about the particular bad conduct is distorted. Rather, your marginalization of some certain course of conduct or character trait in your overall picture of your friend may be appropriate given the character and norms of your friendship. Depending on the basis of your friendship, or what it is that ties you and your friend together, and what your pattern of interaction look like, what you mean to each other, and expect of one another etc., certain types of bad conduct will appropriately affect your overall picture of your friend less than it would with regards to a stranger.[43]

Admittedly, to believe that Sam's act of knowingly breaking someone's heart is less immoral than you would have thought, had Sam not been your friend, would be epistemically biased. There is,

[43] My account of character assessments in friendship builds in part on Macalester Bell's idea that the fittingness conditions of a globalist attitude (attitude that take a whole person as an object, such as shame and contempt) are modified or contoured by the character of the relationship between the agent and the object of the attitude. (Bell 2010)

however, no friendship demand to regard isolated misconduct as being less morally severe when being performed by a friend. You may well have the exact same beliefs about Sam and a stranger with regards to something they have done and which you think ought not to be done. Nevertheless, the beliefs in question have different significance to you because of the entirely different relationships you have to Sam and to a stranger. Just because you let certain beliefs affect you less (or, as we will see, more) in your overall attitude toward the person they concern insofar as he is your friend, it doesn't follow that your mere beliefs or ways of forming them are distorted. To put Sam's insensitivity toward women that he sleeps with "in an obscure corner of your portrait of him" is not necessarily to have a biased belief about (the badness of) his conduct. Rather, you may reasonably treat it as to be of marginal relevance to how you think of him overall insofar as this type of conduct isn't particularly important to how you relate to Sam, or to the relationship the two of you share. If we instead imagine that you are at a party for single people, looking for a male date, you might care significantly about whether or not a stranger at the party is a womanizer. It is not necessarily epistemically irresponsible to let a belief that a person is a womanizer be more dominant in your overall conception of a stranger at this singles party, than in your portrait of your friend Sam.

What is missing in Stroud's picture is how assessments of some isolated conduct or of virtues and vices play a different role in different types of personal relationships. As I see it, our overall picture of our friend is, largely, an attitude that stands in a somewhat complicated relation to our entire set of evaluative beliefs about her. There is no direct correlation between the affection friends feel for one another and how good a person they take the other person to be overall in the sense of summarizing some objective goodness or badness with regards to the entirety of this person's conduct and features. You may well like Sam a lot even though you find many things about him annoying and unattractive, and you disapprove of many things that he does. As Elizabeth Telfer points out, there is "no necessary incompatibility between fondness, liking, and a sense of a bond, on the one hand, and disapproval of some qualities in a person, on the other. (Indeed, we can even have a kind of admiration or liking

for the very qualities of which we at the same time disapprove.)" (Telfer 1971: 227) Perhaps you are even amused by some of the bad things he does, and intimacy is created in part by how you tend to make fun of him for them in a teasing but loving way. When you hear about his womanizing misconduct your overall conception of him doesn't really change. Instead, you are provided with yet another source of internal jokes, which nevertheless convey that you really think he needs to work on his attitudes toward women.

Good friends recognize various bad features of each other, but, depending on what role the feature in question has within your friendship, they may not be very weighty when it comes to how you view your friend overall. This is not because friends think that the mere conduct or character trait is less bad in isolation when linked to their friend but because of how it is embedded in the friendship.

None of my above remarks is meant to suggest that we always take new (accepted) negative information about our friend as to be of marginal importance for our overall portrait of them. The extent to which you let bad things that you learn about your friend affect your overall conception of him depends in part on the character of your friendship. Sometimes, a newfound belief that your friend has a certain bad trait will indeed have a larger negative effect on how you view him overall, than had he been a stranger. For instance, let's suppose that the friendship you share with Sam is partly grounded in a shared interest in feminism, and in trying to resist gender structures that you both find oppressive. Imagine further that you appreciate and admire each other much because of how you share psychological insights and put pride into being sensitive to other people's needs and vulnerabilities. Once it becomes clear to you that Sam actually did act as callously as reported (which the basis of the friendship with him gives you reason to doubt), you might well react more strongly than you would have if he had been just any person. Your overall portrait of him may be more affected than had he been just anyone. It is *not* of marginal importance that he acted like this since it violates a main basis for your friendship. Thus, it seems appropriate that this behavior has a more negative impact on how well you think of him overall than had he been just any person. This, however, does not

suggest that you believe that it is worse per se when he acts badly or that he manifests a negative character trait.

In sum, Stroud is, I think, right to suggest that certain pieces of information that would have us think significantly less well of a stranger may hardly affect what we overall think of our friend. My point is that this is not necessarily epistemically impaired, since our overall portraits of our friends are not functions of how good or virtuous we believe that they are in each and every respect. Rather, depending on the specific character of our friendship, certain traits are appropriately treated as being more significant than others when it comes to our overall conception of our friend.

4. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have discussed whether, on an intuitive picture of friendship, a person is a good friend partly in virtue of violating standards of mainstream epistemology. Is it characteristic and distinctive of someone we intuitively regard as a good friend to have less evidence-responsive beliefs, and to engage in less truth-conducive belief-forming processes, when the beliefs in question concerns a friend rather than a non-friend? I have been particularly interested in Simon Keller and Sarah Stroud's respective arguments to this effect.

Keller's main example is supposed to illustrate the epistemic irresponsibility involved when one, as a good friend forms beliefs about one's friend's accomplishments. I argued that the epistemic irresponsibility Keller points to appears to be merely apparent once we take into account the friend's different and more extensive evidence about her friend than about stranger, how her special concern for her friend bears on her non-epistemic actions and on what attitudes other than beliefs she has when her friend is concerned. To the extent that the friend sees more value in her friend's performance or the like, this has to do with increased epistemic efforts, differences in focus, and how a good friend may look for value in a wider sense when it comes to her friend's performances and the like. I argued that such alterations are not necessarily less truth-conducive.

Stroud's main example is instead meant to illustrate the epistemic irresponsibility involved when one, as a good friend, forms beliefs about a friend's conduct and how badly such a conduct reflects on the friend's character. I argued that the extent to which one is, as a good friend, reluctant to accepting a negative-sounding description when it concerns a friend rather than a non-friend this has to do with differences in evidence, and with extra epistemic efforts that may be pragmatically motivated. Nevertheless, I agreed with Stroud that we often construe the same accepted information more positively when it is about a friend. Stroud is right to suggest that our acts are open to interpretation, and that there is a friendship norm to generally make comparably more positive interpretations of one than a detached and disinterested person would do. I tried to argue, though, that this is not enough to violate mainstream epistemic norms. I sketched an account of the character assessments made within the context of friendship and of the role of beliefs within those assessments. Friends' tendency to let some negative piece of information be far less dominant in their overall conception of their friends is largely a consequence of how important the misconduct in question is to the friend given the character of the friendship. This doesn't require any distorted beliefs about the badness of some isolated conduct and does not, at least in that sense, involve any obvious violation of mainstream epistemic norms.

To sum up: While Keller and, even more so, Stroud make various fairly adequate observations about the epistemic conduct of what we would intuitively regard as a good friend, they fail to provide a plausible case for there being any interesting conflict between friendship norms and the standards of mainstream epistemology.

Chapter 4: Love Me Unconditionally Because I'm Worth It

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on a tension between two components of a romantic love ideal that is, at least according to several philosophers, widely embraced among contemporary Westerners.[44] The first idea is roughly that ideal love is discerning. Our lover doesn't just happen to love us, nor could she have loved just any person. She loves us partly because of various good things about us. Love is property-dependent: it is not felt unless the lover finds the beloved – i.e., her particular way of being, or, at least, sufficiently many of her properties – loveable in a way that distinguishes her from most other people. The second idea is that ideal romantic love is unconditional: it is given to us no matter what, come what may, or for better or worse. Ideally, love does not only survive outer challenges such as money shortage, sickness and miscarriages, it also lasts throughout changes in the lovers' looks and character. Insofar as our lover's love for us is ideal it is not dependent or conditional on us keeping sufficiently many of our attractive features, or refraining from gaining certain unattractive ones. There is a tension between these ideas: It cannot be that ideal love both is and is not dependent or conditional on certain loveable properties in the beloved. Or, as Neil Delaney puts it:

> [W]hile you seem to want it to be true that, were you to become a schmuck, your lover would continue to love you, as would be the case if the love really was unconditional, you also want it to be the case that your lover would never love a schmuck. (Delaney 1996: 347)

My aim for this chapter is to get clearer on the senses (if any) in which property-dependence and unconditionality are indeed features of

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[44] See, e.g., Rorty (1986), Soble (1990), Delaney (1996), Keller (2000), Edyvane (2003), and Jollimore (2011).

what we at closer inspection would (or reasonably should) regard as ideal romantic love. I will not be interested in ideas about romantic love *as such* (i.e., about what it takes for something to qualify as love, rather than not-love), but only in our ideas about *ideal* romantic love or romantic love at its best. Unless otherwise stated, 'love' will henceforth be short for 'romantic love in a Western context'. I will be discussing what we (i.e., reasonable, generic, contemporary Westerners) would *take* ideal love to be like, while leaving it open whether the best love there is *in fact* is ultimately something else than what we take it to be. I shall grant the empirical premise that we, at least at first glance, really see both property-dependence and unconditionality as features of ideal love, and my aim is to make the best sense I can of these two presumed intuitions. How can we characterize ideal love in a way that accommodates our presumed attraction to both property-dependence and unconditionality as necessary features of such love?

In focusing on these allegedly necessary, but not sufficient, features or components of ideal love, I will leave other possibly necessary features of ideal love – such as fidelity and monogamy or exclusivity – to the side. It is however part of the ideal I discuss that the love is reciprocated and felt within the context of a relationship in which the two lovers are in certain respects each other's number one, and most intimate partner, regardless of what other relationships of similar or different kinds that they participate in.[45] I take a certain kind of equality to characterize ideal romantic love: The lovers are roughly on equal footing, there is no permanent asymmetry in respect, dependency, power or status. Nor is there a hierarchy between them; no one is under the authority of the other, or is permanently disadvantaged by some superiority of the other.[46]

[45] This is not to say that unrequited love, or reciprocated love felt outside the context of a romantic relationship, cannot be valuable (see Protasi 2014), but merely to hold that such love is necessarily non-ideal.

[46] See Magdalena Hoffmann's (2014) defense of an equality restraint on friendship and romantic love and on how this is in part what distinguishes romantic relationships and friendship from relationships between parents and children.

1.1 Outline

In section 2, I spell out in a bit more detail the ideas that ideal love is on the one hand property-dependent and on the other hand unconditional, and how these two components are incompatible. Thereafter I quickly set aside some unpromising ways of responding to the relevant inconsistency.

In section 3, I discuss an influential argument in the literature that is meant to show that ideal love is indeed property-dependent and therefore not unconditional. While I grant that this argument does indicate that we, upon reflection at least, really do regard property-dependence as a feature of ideal love, I argue that, by specifying the points in time at which love ought to be property-dependent and unconditional, the inconsistency between them can be removed. Still, mere consistency with property-dependence does not make unconditionality plausible as a component of ideal romantic love; this has to be argued for on its own terms.

In section 4, I discuss and reject a recent argument for ideal love being unconditional, and in section 5, I suggest that the intuitive appeal behind unconditional love is best understood with reference to a desire for love to be stable.

In section 6, I discuss and reject the suggestion that an unconditional commitment may provide the desired stability and capture the intuitive appeal behind unconditional love. In section 7, I argue that Simon Keller's properties account is better equipped to do so. According to Keller, we ought to specify the properties that ideal love ought to depend on in order to accommodate how it ideally remains in place throughout changes in the lovers. Since Keller's account is somewhat vague or unspecific, I propose some specifications and/or improvements of his view.

Section 8 offers a short summary of the chapter.

2. A Contemporary Western Ideal of Romantic Love

2.1 Property-Dependent Love

The property-dependence of ideal love concerns how being loved by the person you love is ideally a sign that she sees you as a good or worthy love object. Something about you ideally grounds the love in the sense that your being in a certain way in part explains why you are loved. After all, your lover could choose to distance herself or otherwise withdraw her love from you, and the fact that she chooses not to do so indicates ideally that you have certain positive or attractive qualities that make her see you as being worthwhile or somehow worthy of her time, energy and concern.

Romantic love, both as an attitude and as a relationship, has a more voluntary character than other forms of love such as, e.g., parents' and children's love for each other. The fact that you can choose not to cultivate or nourish romantic love, gives (welcome) romantic love the character of a gift or a reward. As Simon Keller puts it, "to give someone your romantic love is to offer to make her one of the most important people in your life." (2000: 167) Ideally, romantic love is given to you non-arbitrarily; you are loved because "the person you love sees in you the qualities of a desirable romantic partner." (ibid.) "You want your lover to be discerning" as Neil Delaney puts it, i.e., "to have some taste"; you "desire that she be such as to love only the sort of person who exemplifies various properties you hold in some estimation", or else the love you receive is devalued. (1996: 347) We don't want it to be the case that what we are like more specifically is entirely unrelated to why our lover loves us. Ideally, we want to love and to be loved, not by accident or by habit, but because we and our romantic partner each have something that sensibly appeals to the other. Our love is precious and we want to give it to someone good, someone who is a suitable receiver of our love.

This is not to say that some people deserve to have romantic love in their lives whereas others don't, but is instead to say that different people have properties that to a different extent make them a good or suitable romantic partner intimate some particular person, and that

these properties ideally have some causal impact on love. (Keller 2000: 171)

2.2 Unconditional Love

Our tendency to think of ideal love as being unconditional is instead a matter of thinking that ideal love should be felt no matter what, come what may, or for better or for worse. Your lover would never question her love for you, or take seriously the possibility that she would ever stop loving you. This idea is often hinted at in popular culture, for instance in songs like Lionel Richie's "My Endless Love," Richard Marx's "Now and Forever (I will be your man)," and George Benson's "Nothing's Gonna Change My Love for You". To love unconditionally is to love without any reservations, it is a love that requires nothing, a love that is constant and not jeopardized by the passing of time, a love that is, perhaps, experienced by the couples in the movies or fairy tales that lived happily ever after. Unconditional love is a love that "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things," as it is often stated in marriage ceremonies (1 Corinthians 13:7).

We do not know what will happen to us in the future, and being loved unconditionally may seem to offer a safe harbor in the light of this uncertainty; it involves the ultimate trust and acceptance by one's lover, and a maximally stable and robust ground for love to remain constant when everything else changes.

There are at least two groups of conditions that we may have in mind when we talk about unconditional love. The first group concerns *external* changes and misfortunes that may make loving hard. E.g., lovers may encounter circumstances in which someone's heartbroken ex is trying to destroy their love, or the lovers' families cannot stand each other, or they have no money and no place to live, or they have to spend long periods of time apart, without being able to be in touch, and so on. Their love is thus unconditional as in not being conditional on the absence of these or other unfortunate outer factors. A second group of conditions concerns changes *internal* to the lovers, such as changes in character, values, preferences and appearance. Two people might be said to love each other

unconditionally in this second sense when they would love each other regardless of any change in what they now find attractive in each other, and regardless of any possible future failure, fault and flaw of the other person. I will focus on unconditional love in this latter sense, the kind of unconditionality we are craving when we ask our lover if she will love us when we are 64 and supposedly very different from now. I will do so since the mentioned tension in the love ideal only arises between unconditionality and this latter sense of property-dependence.

2.3 Dilemma: Commitment to an Inconsistent Love Ideal

In sum, the idea that ideal love is property-dependent, henceforth P, means that certain (good or suitable) features of the beloved bear on whether love is felt, insofar as the love is ideal.

The idea that love is unconditional, henceforth U, on the other hand, means that no particular feature of the beloved is required for love to be felt.

Consider now P and U in tandem:

> **P**: In order for X's love for Y to be ideal there has to be **some** (good or suitable) property, F, of Y such that X's love depends (at least in part) causally on F.

> **U**: In order for X's love for Y to be ideal there has to be **no** property, F, of Y such that X's love for Y depends causally on F.

While P and U, considered separately, both have some intuitive appeal, taken together they entail a contradiction: they entail that ideal love both depends and doesn't depend causally on the beloved possessing some set of (suitable) properties.[47] We are thus faced with

[47] This contradiction has been put forward in slightly different ways by various philosophers, e.g., Delaney (1996: 347ff); Keller (2000: 172ff); Soble (1990: 148-9).

the dilemma of desiring a love that is simply metaphysically impossible.[48]

2.4 Some Unsatisfying Ways of Handling the Dilemma

2.4.1 Last Resort: Inconsistent Ideal

It could of course be the case that the dilemma is genuine: perhaps our contemporary romantic love ideal is in fact inconsistent in the sense that not only P and U but also the ideas behind them, i.e. two tendencies in our thinking when it comes to ideal love, are incompatible.[49] To accept that our love ideal is inconsistent should, however, be regarded as a last resort. Given that at least one of the tasks of philosophy is to resolve tensions and inconsistencies in our thoughts and commitments, such acceptance is what remains when we have tried all other ways to deal with the dilemma. I suggest that, if you are at first glance attracted to both P and U, and later realize that they entail a contradiction, you would probably, or at least reasonably, want to see if, perhaps, you have misunderstood your own evaluative commitments, or, if there is a way to reformulate them

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[48] Perhaps the correct analysis of our seemingly inconsistent attitude is that we want to be loved by our romantic lover in two different ways at the same time. We want to receive a love that is unconditional and we also want to receive a love that is property-dependent. It is not clear to me how this would work, and I will put this possibility to the side.

[49] Alan Soble touches upon this possibility, but ultimately rejects it. Soble writes that our desire to be loved and accepted by our romantic partner as we are, and as whatever we may become, can be understood as a desire for romantic love to have the feature of unconditionality. Our desire here seems to be for love as conceived in what is sometimes referred to as the *agapic* tradition, of which God's love for every person, and Christian love for one's every neighbor are important examples. In contrast, the desire to be loved by our romantic partner in virtue of our attractive properties can, according to Soble, be interpreted instead as a desire for romantic love to be reason-based. This is a feature that the kinds of love that belong in the so called *eros* tradition share, among which are sexual love, courtly love, and what has historically been seen as romantic love. As it happens, though, no instance of love can be both unconditional (agapic) and reason-based (erosic); we cannot both be loved unconditionally and for good reasons. So insofar as both these features are part of our contemporary romantic love ideal, our ideal is indeed inherently inconsistent. (Soble 1990: 2-3; 148-149)

such that the contradiction could be removed without any major substantive revisions of your intuitions. This is the route I will take in this chapter. First, I will put to the side some other unsatisfying responses to the dilemma.

2.4.2 Falling In Love vs. Staying In Love

Someone might hold that we do not face a genuine dilemma when we take ideal love to depend both on the beloved having certain relevant properties, and on being held independently of any properties of the beloved, since P is about the *initiation* of love whereas U is about love *once it is in place*. We want our good qualities to cause someone to fall in love with us, whereas we want love to be unconditional when love has taken root. But is this so? It seems we aren't in fact all that concerned about why our lover was drawn to us in the first place; our concern is with what sustains our lover's attachment to us. (Delaney 1996: 345) We wouldn't really mind if someone fell in love with us for no apparent reason or because of fairly shallow features such as our appearance, our laughter, or our great hand with kids. But we *would* mind if there were nothing in particular that had our lover see us as a suitable partner once she loves us. Furthermore, we don't want to live on old merits; it isn't good enough to be "tenured" as a beloved; ideal love needs to "reflect the *continuing* endorsement of [oneself] as a worthy object of another's affection that most people need to keep romantic love vital," as Delaney puts it. (1996: 348, emphasis in original.)

2.4.3 Historical Properties

For similar reasons, we cannot respond to the dilemma by saying that the only good thing about us that love ought to depend on is our historical property of once having had certain suitable properties. The idea would be that ideal love should be conditional only on historical, or historical-relational properties, such as our 'being the person with whom our lover has shared some significant experience E.' If you are loved because you are the person who offered humorous support and encouragement when your lover lost his job, or for being the person with whom he has experienced the most overwhelming passion in his life, etc., this would mean that you will be loved come what may, or

no matter what you become. This, since you cannot (metaphysically) lose your historical properties which the love you receive is dependent on.

Such a response doesn't quite capture the intuition behind P, though. You don't only want to be loved because of old merits, at least not if they are largely irrelevant for what you are like now - or else the love you receive wouldn't seem to have much to do with you. If you are loved now because of what you were like in the past this is desirable only insofar as these long lost properties matter significantly *now* within the relationship that you share. It seems non-ideal that an abused girlfriend now loves her abusive boyfriend because of how he was once sweet and caring to her, given that he is now quite the opposite. Two people may well be good or suitable beloveds for each other in the intuitive sense I am after in virtue of some properties that they no longer possess or by having shared good times and bad. Each lover may see the other as a suitable beloved (to him or her) in part due to, e.g., how previous nice deeds have made them trust one another, or how a shared history enables them to easily read one another, and joke about and otherwise refer to old times. However, in ideal love, the lovers do so only on the condition that these earlier properties and shared history have a clear bearing on how they now look upon themselves and each other and/or interact. Old merits or historical properties render us a good or suitable beloved (intimate to our lover) only insofar and as long as these properties or their traces can *now* be reasonably appreciated by our lover.

2.4.4 "Being Loved for Being Me"

Another way to reject the dilemma could perhaps be to argue that it rests on an equivocation in the use of 'properties': the properties referred to in P are in fact *necessary* properties, whereas the properties referred to in U are *contingent* properties. P may, on this understanding, express our desire to be loved "just for being me": I want my lover's love for me to be property-dependent in the sense that he loves me because I am me; this should be enough. For love to depend on my necessary property of being myself is consistent with its being unconditional, as in not conditional for its sustenance on any of my

contingent properties – properties that I may have or lose – such as my beauty, youth or sense of humor.

However, when we say things such as that I want to be loved "just for being me" we are hardly referring to our property of being identical with ourselves, our haecceity. Rather, we are referring to the unique set of properties that being me consists in, i.e. all my contingent properties, or, more plausibly, some important subset of them: those that make me into who I am in some fundamental sense, or some sense that I identify with, or those properties that I otherwise appreciate being loved for.

It seems then that our tendency to state a desire to be loved for being who we are does *not* support a reading of P as expressing that ideal love depend on the necessary property of haecceity. We want to be loved because of what "being me" means more precisely in our own particular case, i.e., because of some contingent rather than essential properties. Ideally, it is because I am who I am in certain relevant respects that my lover loves me. Such dependence on contingent properties in ideal romantic love is incompatible with U, the idea that none of my contingent properties ought to be required in order for me to be loved, that I should instead be loved no matter what or come what may. Thus, the dilemma remains in place even when we specify the nature of the properties ideal love ought or ought not to depend on. There is no equivocation: all properties referred to are contingent properties.

3. The Self-Respect Argument

The dominant tendency in the philosophical literature is to regard the dilemma as genuine while taking the solution to be to give up U in favor of P. Versions of what I will call the self-respect argument are often put forward to show that we are indeed committed to P and that we, upon realizing the ground for that commitment, should let go of U.[50]

[50] This argument is offered in slightly different forms by Alan Soble (1990: 145-146), Neil Delaney (1996:343ff), Simon Keller (2000), Derek Edyvane (2003), and Troy Jollimore (2011).

The self-respect argument states roughly that (1) one of the main things we find distinctively valuable about romantic love is its provision of self-respect or self-confirmation. While parental love and divine love are characteristically rewarding in, e.g., how they tend to make us feel safe, important and appreciated, romantic love offers a ground for the further reward of being happy about, or strengthened in, our particular way of being. Premise (2) is that romantic love is rewarding in this way only insofar as our good properties partly explain why we are continuously loved. Love that in part depends on our good qualities indicates that we aren't so bad after all. Therefore, (3), ideal love is property-dependent (and thus not unconditional).

One proponent of this argument, Neil Delaney, states that "[p]art of what people are looking for in romantic relations is reason to feel good about themselves," and that "[t]o the extent that you take yourself to be the object of a love springing from a person of discernment, you are provided with just such reason." (1996: 347-8) According to Delaney, you "want to think that your lover's love for you is merited by your instantiating various attractive properties." And you want this to not be a coincidence, but instead depend on your lover being discerning in a way that you approve of and respect. Being loved by a person who is not able to love just any person, but who discerns in accordance with some standard that we as a beloved approve of, strengthens or at least reinforces your self-esteem in a way that has us desire romantic love in particular. (Delaney 1996: 348)

Simon Keller agrees with Delaney that love is distinctively and ideally rewarding because of the self-affirmation we get from being loved because of properties that are "of such a nature as to give us a reason to feel good about ourselves, to think that we are attractive, admirable, valuable people." (Keller 2000: 163; 166) Keller furthermore stresses that the distinctive reward of romantic love stems from how your lover's appreciation *reliably* provides self-respect by reaffirming you as the specific person you are: In an ideal romantic relationship, your lover shouldn't merely tell you over and over "how wonderful you are"; rather "you should [also] have reason to believe him". (Keller 2000: 167) Your parents may very well love a wide array of specific things about you, but their love offers less reason to feel good about yourself since it is not likely to depend on your having

any particular merits. Chances are they loved you from the start and will continue to do so no matter what you turn out to be like, more precisely. They are not free to withdraw their love from you in the sense, or to the extent, that a romantic lover is, and the fact that they keep loving you is therefore no reliable indication that you have any particular merits. The fact that your lover could have loved someone else, or no one, yet she in fact loves you (rather than chooses to distance herself from such a love), does, in contrast, indicate that you cannot be so bad after all. Her love offers a reliable ground for self-respect in the shape of self-affirmation, or strengthened self-esteem, insofar as it is based on, or is held because of, certain positive things that she sees in you. (Keller 2000: 165-7)

Delaney and Keller disagree on which contingent properties that love needs to be based on in order to provide the ground for self-respect of ideal romantic love. According to Delaney, our self-respect is relevantly reinforced only if we are loved because of, or for, properties that are central to our self-perception. If, e.g., I highly value my analytical skills and do not see my baking skills as being central to who I am, I want to be loved for being analytical rather than for being good at making cakes. Drawing on Cocking and Kennett's mutual drawing account of friendship (presented in my Chapter 1), Keller instead holds that our self-perception is modified in a rewarding way by how our lover sees us in ways that often diverge somewhat from our own interpretation of ourselves. Our self-respect is often relevantly strengthened when we are loved for properties that we weren't really aware of before our lover found the trait in question adorable. You may be surprised to learn that your lover cites your subversive sense of humor as a reason for her love, but find it quite exciting and pleasant to be able to think of yourself in positive terms because of properties you didn't particularly value yourself before your lover did. (Keller 2000: 169)

3.1 Unconditional Love as Failing to Provide Self-Respect

Both Delaney and Keller regard the alternative, property-independent or unconditional love, as non-ideal. If you are loved unconditionally,

you being the particular person that you are has no real bearing on whether you continue to be loved. You are loved simply for being you, no matter what being you consists in, i.e., no matter what properties you more specifically possess. Instead of being loved for what you are, you are loved regardless of what you are. The fact that you are loved doesn't indicate anything good about your character, about the specific person you are, since you could have been in any way possible, and you would still have been loved. So, being loved unconditionally does not seem to give you reason to feel good about yourself. Only if you take your lover to love you in part because (or on the condition that) she takes you to possess certain good qualities does her love provide you with reasons for self-respect. So, ideal romantic love requires that you trust your lover to be discerning when it comes to whom she loves, and that she has what you'd consider good taste.

Troy Jollimore makes the related claim that unconditional love does not reliably provide a ground for self-respect since it is consistent with a lack of interest in what the beloved is like, more specifically, or even with a crucial disregard for the beloved: Insisting to respond with love to one's beloved whatever properties she possesses involves a failure to see her with the lover's characteristically intense and attentive vision, says Jollimore. To love someone no matter what she is like and what she will become, is not to see and validate the beloved as she is as a person, but either to expresses indifference to the beloved, or to force some predetermined interpretation on her. Such love – if indeed it is love – would strike us as arbitrary, or perhaps neurotic, on Jollimore's view, and, in any event far from ideal. (Jollimore 2011: 138; 142)

Derek Edyvane is another philosopher who argues that unconditional love is devoid of value since it says "nothing definitive about *us* [or] about our qualities" (Edyvane 2003: 71). Edyvane seems to agree with Jollimore that, rather than to confirm the beloved as a person, or provide a ground for self-respect, unconditional love indicates a lack of interest for the person you love; you don't seem to care much about what, more precisely, you are devoted to if you simply love your beloved come what may or no matter what. (Edyvane 2003: 59-60)

To illustrate his argument, Edyvane offers a case with a jazz singer – let's call her Billie – who declares her love for you. You have previously heard her say about another man that she loves him no matter what he is like, at the same time as she admitted that she didn't know why she *should* love him, mentioning his long-term affairs with other women, and how he abuses her. (Edyvane 2003: 60) You thus know that Billie does not discriminate when it comes to whom she loves: her declaration of love does not come with an implicit positive evaluation of the beloved; it is not held on the condition that she takes the beloved to have certain good qualities. Edyvane judges it likely that you, like many of us, would be tempted to think that this fact "serves, in some way, to belittle [her] declaration of love." (Edyvane 2003: 72)

Delaney, Keller and Jollimore mainly focus on the self-respect you ideally get from *being* loved, while Edyvane is just as much concerned with how your self-respect is distinctively reinforced from the perspective of *providing* ideal romantic love. Alan Soble also emphasizes both the perspective of the beloved and the lover in his defense of the self-respect argument. Soble writes:

> We are not satisfied if, as beloveds, we cannot believe that we have admirable qualities that elicit love or if, as lovers, we cannot think that something valuable about our beloveds makes them especially worthy of love and makes our selection of them comprehensible. The reason for this concerns self-respect. Lovers are not able to think well of themselves if a strong need to be loved or to avoid solitude leads them to settle for anyone. Beloveds cannot respect themselves if they believe that they have no properties capable of eliciting love, that they are loved as a charity case or from a sense of duty, or that they are loved simply because the lover's self-respect is so low that he can envision a relationship only with a person whom he regards unattractive. (Soble 1990: 145)

Depending on what your beloved is like, you can feel better or worse about yourself for loving her. Ideally, you feel good about loving the person you love; your love reflects well on you, and therefore strengthens your self-esteem. Other kinds of love lack such connections between love and self-respect. For instance, you are not confirmed or undermined as a person (only, perhaps, as a parent)

depending on what your beloved child is like. According to Edyvane, we need to have an informed belief that our lover is worthy of our love since we do not want to waste our lives and look back with regret on how we misjudged the value of our beloved in various respects. (Edyvane 2003:69) The idea is, I take it, that your time and devotion is valuable, and you therefore should want to give it to someone who is worthy of it, someone whose features are good enough to make sense of, or make it reasonable for you to appreciate her in the ways you do as part of loving her. Someone like Billie, in Edyvane's example, who loves unconditionally seems to be lacking in self-respect since she is ready to put up with just about anything; no matter how terrible her beloved becomes, her love remains in place. There is something undignifying about her love. Billie is not showing herself the concern she deserves by loving someone without reasonably believing that it is, at least in principle, possible to account for the beloved as being a good or suitable object for Billie's love.

In sum, the argument from self-respect states that only if love is property-dependent can it provide the reward of self-respect that we take to be distinctively valuable about romantic love, and that ideal love is therefore not unconditional. If we need to choose between rejecting P and rejecting U, we can reasonably be expected to reject U.

3.2 Resolving the Inconsistency between P and U

However, we might not in fact have to choose between P and U; maybe we merely have to spell out the intuitive ideas behind them more clearly.

Consider, again, P and U, as they were stated earlier:

> **P**: In order for X's love for Y to be ideal there has to be **some** (good or suitable) property, F, of Y such that X's love depends (at least in part) causally on F.

> **U**: In order for X's love for Y to be ideal there has to be **no** property, F, of Y such that X's love for Y depends causally on F.

Now, P and U are indeed incompatible if they are supposed to be realized at the same time. But consider instead the following specifications of P and U:

> **Pt**: In order for X's love for Y to be ideal **at time t1** there has to be **some** (good or suitable) property, F, of Y such that X's love **at time t1** depends (at least in part) causally on F.
>
> **Ut**: In order for X's love for Y to be ideal **at time t1** there has to be **no** property, F, of Y such that X's love for Y **at time t2…n** depends causally on F.

Pt and Ut are compatible since the causal dependence occurs at different times: it is consistent that X *at time t1*, wouldn't have loved Y without Y's property F, and that there is no property F such that X's *continued* love for Y (X's love *after* t) casually depends on Y's being F.[51]

If Pt and Ut are the natural or "closest at hand" readings of P and U considered separately – which I shall suggest they are – P and U do not strictly speaking contradict each other. The idea behind P is, plausibly, that, ideally, two people love each other in part because of certain suitable properties of the other person. The two lovers wouldn't have loved each other unless they had had some of the properties they now have and that make them in some relevant sense good for each other. This is not to say that love necessarily needs to stay ideal or indeed at all stay in place in order to be ideal at some point; it is only to say that when love *is* ideal it is property-dependent. If such ideal love earlier wasn't, or will later cease to be, property-dependent – if it was or will be felt independently of some relevant properties – it was not, or will not be, ideal at that time. But this doesn't mean that the love isn't ideal (insofar as property-dependence goes) at the time at which it is in fact dependent on some relevant properties.

In sum, Pt plausibly captures the idea behind P, namely that a love that is ideal at a particular time wouldn't have been felt at that time

[51] Thanks to Jens Johansson for helping me state this point.

had some relevant features been missing. This requirement may be met now, and love can thus be ideal now, even though it was earlier or is later non-ideal in virtue of being felt without such features being in place.

Pt is thus importantly different from the idea mentioned in 2.4.2 that ideal love is property-dependent at its initiation and then becomes unconditional. Unlike that other idea, Pt allows for X's love for Y to be ideal (at a particular point of time) even if no (suitable) properties of Y had any causal impact on love's instantiation. Perhaps X fell in love with Y due to hypnosis or a love pill. According to Pt, X's love for Y can still be ideal at some later time insofar as X's love at that point in time wouldn't have been felt in absence of some relevant property of Y.

Ut, in turn, plausibly captures the idea behind U, namely that if you and I are sharing ideal love, then it is necessarily the case that the love will stay in place, no matter what becomes out of us. Love should sustain come what may, or continue to be felt no matter what; it shouldn't be the case that the love *to come* will depend on the beloved's possession of some certain property. This is consistent with that love is *now* property-dependent. Insofar as we crave for unconditional love, we are hardly craving a love that was at no point in the past property-dependent. Insofar as U appears desirable, it is rather because of what I promises for the time to come: that we will be loved no matter what. While P concerns the present property-dependence, U, thus, concerns a later scenario, namely what will happen to the love at some later time than the present. U is, plausibly, the idea that X's love for Y is ideal at some given point in time only if the love *after that time* will be felt regardless of what properties Y then possesses.

It seems to me, then, that interpreting P and U as Pt and Ut brings us closer to what we may desire insofar as we are attracted to P and U in combination. And even if Pt and Ut might seem to pick out a strange attitude – one that is dependent on certain features at t1, but not dependent on these features at any later time – such attitude is nevertheless less strange than an inconsistent attitude. Given the consistency between these to my mind improved ways of formulating P and U the dilemma might then seem to be resolved. Also, even if one doubts whether this specification of P and U really captures our

intuitions – e.g., the time during which Pt and Ut are consistent might seem too short for them be combined in a love ideal – my point is just that *if* we want to keep both P and U (which, I shall argue, we do not), this is the best way to avoid inconsistency.

Now, the mere fact that P and U, specified as Pt and Ut, are strictly speaking compatible doesn't by itself make U (Ut) plausible. We need some independent argument as to why U ought to be accepted. The idea that ideal love is unconditional is not very popular among contemporary philosophers, and I shall ultimately agree with the view that we upon reflection are not in fact committed to it. I believe, though, that the rejection of U (understood or specified as Ut) requires a little more careful philosophical attention than it has been given so far in the literature. This, partly because of how influential U is in popular culture, and partly because we will thereby get a better sense of why we, at least initially, might think that ideal romantic love is unconditional.

4. Saintly Unconditional Love

One recent philosophical argument in favor of U can be found in Kamila Pacovská's essay "Loving Villains: Virtue in Response to Wrongdoing". (2014) Pacovská argues that if your love survives the revelation that your beloved is guilty of some terrible moral crime(s) and that he is not at all the man you thought he was, this may reveal your ability to love in an unconditional, saintly way, which thereby improves the quality of your love. (Pacovská 2014: 137) She mostly discusses cases of romantic love, and argues that the difficulties involved in loving unconditionally make such love particularly valuable: an ability to love unconditionally may reveal a saintly character in the sense that the lover is able to selflessly but without masochism attend with affection to the beloved in a nonjudgmental manner. The lover manages to see the beloved as ultimately equal in value, despite whatever terrible things about his character and deeds that have come to her attention, and so the lover doesn't let her perception of the beloved be affected by considerations about moral desert or inequality between herself and the beloved in this regard: "It is this nonjudgmental attitude, this ultimate refusal to think [him]

worse, that makes [your] love saintly. It is an attitude in which [you] manage to conceive of the other as ultimately equal in worth to [yourself]." (Pacovská 2014: 132)

4.1 Saintly Love vs. Romantic Love

Pacovská's argument is far from convincing. To start with, it is not clear why we should agree with her claim that the nonjudgmental attitude of a person who loves unconditionally, and the ability to "perceive value even in human beings with a minimal degree of qualities to be appreciated and even in those who don't appear to be human at all" (Pacovská 2014: 138) does in fact make someone a more "saintly", as in morally better, person. But even if this claim were granted, we should question the underlying assumption that the narrowly moral value she sees in unconditional love would make the love better qua romantic love.[52] It is perhaps plausible to assume that ideal love is morally valuable, but it is far less plausible that the more moral value there is to romantic love, the better it is qua romantic love. At least we need an argument to accept such a correlation.

Let's say that reading Pacovská makes us convinced that had Anders Behring Breivik had a fiancée before his terrorist attacks, and had she kept loving him after the attacks, this would – or at least *could* – be an expression of her being saintly (and not of an utter unwillingness to realize what kind of person she is engaged to, or of her suffering from some psychological disorder, which might seem more likely). But, rather than to conclude that the fiancée's saintly character makes her romantic love a better form of romantic love, we should doubt that she now loves him romantically. Doing so requires far more than to see and attend to someone's inherent value, a value that many people after the 2011 Norwegian attacks probably had great difficulties to detect. True, such an ability is likely to require a lot of effort, an effort that would be proof of a great devotion or commitment, but the fiancée's success in that respect hardly shows

[52] As I wrote in my Chapter 1 (4.7), I generally understand 'moral' in a wider sense than to cover only the reasons that a saint would respond to (namely as to cover all considerations that are relevant for what we ought to do all things considered). Here, however, I follow Pacovská in her more narrow use of 'morality'.

that she loves Breivik romantically. In fact, to put too much emphasis on your beloved's inherent value rather than on his contingent features seems to depersonalize him. Breivik's deeds reflect much of who he is as a person, and if her attitude toward him is not sensitive to what he is like more specifically (such as being a mass murderer driven by a terrible ideology) she seems to fail to see and appreciate him as the particular person he is. Even if such concern for a person is compatible with certain kinds of love, such as God's love for all persons, and the love at least some parents feel for their children, it is not compatible with romantic love. It seems as though the fiancée would have to love Breivik unconditionally in some different manner than that which Pacovská describes in order for her love to be romantic in kind.

4.2 The Normative Objection

Aside from Pacovská, I am not really aware of any other attempt to defend U, and it is not hard to come up with objections to it. Why should we *want* to strive for our love to be unconditional in the first place? Why would, e.g., Breivik's fiancée do so? What is so good about unconditional, or even close to unconditional, love? Even if we put aside the worry about that the attitudes of someone who loves unconditionally would disqualify the love from being romantic in kind, one reason to reject U is that any possibility of doing so (or coming close to doing so) lacks any normative appeal. This may be the most clear when we consider how U requires of us to love a moral monster. If your love really is unconditional then it ought to remain in place even if your beloved commits acts like those of Breivik's, or starts torturing you regularly, or willingly transfers HIV to you, kills your sister etc. To think of this as ideal romantic love seems absurd; it is hardly love at all, but rather some form of obsession.[53] It seems that a love that is conditional on your lover not becoming a moral monster would be healthier and better than a love that is not so conditional.

This is not to say that it couldn't be in some sense *good for you* to be loved unconditionally. There is a Swedish proverb that says "Love me

[53] Cf. (Edyvane 2003: 59) and (Jollimore 2011: 142).

when I least deserve it, because that is when I need it the most." We might well want to be *given* love unconditionally, we might want our lover to love us even if we, e.g., were to become moral monsters. After all, that might be the time at which we need her love the most. We might want the comfort and security of unconditional love so much that we would be ready to sacrifice the value of self-respect discussed in section 3. No matter what becomes of us, and regardless of what our lover comes to think of us, we just want to be loved.

The normative appeal of U might then seem to depend on the position we put ourselves in when we imagine ourselves *experiencing* unconditional love. Since ideal romantic love is reciprocated, though, lovers occupy at the same time both the position of a giver and the position of a receiver of love. And it is important to keep in mind that insofar as we take ideal love to be unconditional we need to find unconditionality appealing from both these points of view, not only from that of the receiver. However, someone might hold that the reward of being given unconditional love could reasonably make you see it as worthwhile also from the giver's point of view even given the potential hardship it involves.

I believe, though, that any appeal of U couldn't reasonably appear even from the receiving end of love. It is highly questionable that you would have the concern for your beloved that love conceptually requires if you would be prepared to let her suffer the pain and hardship of loving a moral monster, which unconditional love requires in theory (even if not, or only rarely, in practice). To idealize unconditionality is in part to idealize being provided love no matter what the cost might be for your beloved. This is an unreasonable desire; it seems purely egoistic and as such incompatible with love. If you love someone, you care deeply about your beloved for her sake and you shouldn't, then, want her to provide love no matter the cost to her own wellbeing. We can say this without assuming that self-interest plays *no* role in ideal love. In ideal love you shouldn't want your beloved to allow herself to be treated in this way, even if, or especially when, you are the one who is treating her as such. Furthermore, you might lose respect, esteem, and perhaps love for her, if you realize that your becoming a moral monster like Breivik

would not put an end to her love. If so, your love might be conditional on that her love for you is conditional.[54]

In sum, it seems obvious that U doesn't survive closer scrutiny. If we were to accept that ideal love must be unconditional, we need to accept, e.g., that one's romantic love of another person would be non-ideal just because it wouldn't survive the event in which one's beloved becomes a moral monster in the most horrendous ways. But that is clearly *not* acceptable.

However, to say that U should be rejected is not to say that everything about unconditional love ought to be rejected. I think there is *something* appealing about it. Even if unconditionality is far too strong to be a component of ideal romantic love, there might be something about unconditional love that we indeed want to keep, even upon closer inspection, and even on the assumption that we take ideal love to also be property-dependent. I will in the rest of this chapter try to pin down what this feature of ideal love might be.

5. The Appeal of Unconditional Love

One way to get clearer on what lies behind the appeal of unconditional love is to look at the ways in which a love that is conditional on properties seems to put us in a vulnerable position. Property-dependence may seem to jeopardize the trust and sense of security romantic partners ideally feel for one another. If we are, at present, loved on the condition that we are taken to have some relevant (positive) qualities, we seem to have reason to worry that changes in the properties on which the love depends would make the love disappear. We want ideal love to be consistent with that we continuously change throughout our lives, even in respects that our lover doesn't spontaneously welcome. If your lover's love for you depends on some of your properties (e.g., being a vegan, being spiritual, and/or having great looks), you may well fear that she will stop loving you as soon as you change in these respects, or, perhaps, when she discovers that she was wrong about some properties she

[54] Delaney (1996: 350-354) argues that the prospects of actually loving and being loved unconditionally should have us realize that we do not really want unconditional love.

attributed to you (e.g., she may come to see you as being less intellectual than she previously took you to be).

You may furthermore worry that your lover will change and no longer find your qualities as valuable as she used to do, and is now instead wanting and needing completely different things in her romantic partner. You may also feel unease at the thought that while neither one of you really changes, your lover will come to think that some of your traits are less dominant in your character than what she previously took to be the case and that, as a result, her love for you will weaken.

Ideal love, one may think, should offer some remedy to these kinds of worries and we may reinterpret our prima facie attraction to unconditional love as being about such a remedy. Even though ideal love is not unconditional and therefore offers no guarantee that it will stay in place throughout every conceivable future scenario, there is something about ideal love that indicates or gives the lovers reason to think that it will be stable enough to survive many changes and overcome various challenges to it, including changes in the lovers' properties and taste. So, if ideal love depends on the lovers finding each other suitable as receivers of love in virtue of some properties, how can it remain stable in the way it ideally should, given that both our properties and taste may change? One idea is that the stability of ideal love is secured by an element of *commitment*.

6. Unconditionally Committed Love

It might be thought that the stronger the commitment to one another the better the love, and it has been suggested by Susan Mendus (1984) and Alan Soble (1990) that romantic lovers ideally *commit* to loving each other unconditionally. Perhaps such commitment might provide the stability that I above suggested to underlie the appeal of unconditional love.

6.1 Mendus's Idea

Susan Mendus argues that we want romantic love to be *declared* without any reservations or conditions; we want our lover to intend sincerely to love us regardless of what changes we might undergo,

even if she in the end fails to do so. Such committed love is consistent with there actually being properties that the beloved needs to possess in order for the love to sustain (for instance, the property of not being a moral monster).

Mendus takes there to be a significant difference between

> **a)** X loving Y now in a way that involves an intention to love Y only on the condition that Y will continue to merit X's love (in virtue of Y's properties x, y, z…), and
> **b)** X loving Y now in a way that involves an intention to love Y regardless of any change in Y - an intention that X will, as it happens, fail to realize.

Instead of declaring somewhat cynically our conditional love, as in: "I love you (but only as long as you are x, y, z…)" we declare "I intend now to love you despite any changes that you may undergo" (or as in wedding ceremonies: "I promise to love you until death do us apart."). The idea is that X should at time t1 sincerely intend to love Y at times t1….tn, no matter what. This is consistent with X discovering at time tn that her love was in fact conditional on some property that Y has now lost, and that X is therefore now failing to do what she originally intended to do. (Mendus 1984: 247-48)

We might summarize Mendus's idea as follows:

> **UC**: (Unconditionally committed ideal love): In order for X's love for Y to be ideal X has to **intend** to love Y no matter what or come what may.

There is something appealing about Mendus's suggestion: it would no doubt be nice to have your beloved looking into your eyes saying: "This is it for me; I will love you forever." That he is determined to do so may provide us with some sense of security that the love will last, even if it turns out that he somewhere along the road fails in his intention. However, on a closer look we find that UC is not actually very plausible.

6.1.2 The Psychological Objection

Just as it is psychologically hard, maybe even impossible, to love a moral monster it is presumably psychologically hard, and maybe even

impossible, to *intend* to love a moral monster, or, rather, to intend to love a person *whatever* she may become, as Mendus suggests that ideal lovers do. That would be far more demanding than to intend to love a person despite a wide array of changes that one can reasonably predict about the beloved, such as perhaps that her looks will fade, that she will become less charming, or less sociable, that she will take up ridiculous hobbies, or that she will become attracted to dubious political ideas. According to Mendus, what matters is that the lover who declares her unconditional love "cannot now envisage anything happening such as would make [her] give up that commitment." (1984: 247) But as Alan Soble has pointed out, such inability is surely incredible: Of course you can *imagine* that your beloved would, however unlikely, change into such a horrible person that it would be impossible for you to continue to love her. You might not want to think about such scenarios, but that doesn't mean that you do not know at some level that your love *is* conditional on this not happening. And as long as this is so, you do not have the intention required to be able to commit to loving your beloved unconditionally. (Soble 1990: 167)

6.1.3 Discrepancy between Ideal Intention and Ideal Action

Soble raises a second objection to Mendus's idea, namely that even if we were in fact able to form the intention to love no matter what, such an intention can hardly be required of an ideal lover, given that no person can be required to actually love no matter what. Soble writes that

> if we deny…that… unconditionality is a necessary feature of love (that is, if we deny that X loves Y only if X in fact continues to love Y no matter how Y has changed), then we must also deny that [X loves y only if x has a present intention to continue to love y no matter how y has changed] because it cannot be required to intend to do what no one is required to do. (1990: 164-5)[55]

Soble doesn't offer any argument for why no one can be required to intend to do what no one is required to do, and we may well question this claim. Given the phenomenon of akrasia, or weakness of will, a

[55] For reasons of consistency, I am changing Soble's 'x' and 'y' to 'X' and 'Y'.

person with, e.g., high blood pressure, may well be prudentially required to intend to exercise every day to fight his medical condition, even though he isn't prudentially required to actually exercise each and every day. The intention to do so may nevertheless be required since only if he intends to exercise everyday will he actually get around to exercising at least twice a week, which is necessary if he is to avoid becoming seriously ill.[56]

The phenomenon of akrasia may thus be used to question Soble's claim that no one can be required to intend to do something that no one is required to do. UC can thus not be refuted on that ground. I believe the discrepancy between how we should intend to love and how we should in fact love is still troublesome, however, but rather because of considerations having to do with insincerity, self-deception or esotericism. Perhaps you can solemnly declare unconditional love, even though you deep down know that your love is not really, and shouldn't be, unconditional. That would be insincere, however. Or perhaps you can deceive yourself into thinking that your love will be unconditional while in fact it won't be. Or we can try to shape a society in which the norm is to commit unconditionally to one's beloved and in which it is kept a secret that ideal love is in fact not unconditional. In such a society most people would believe that U is in fact ideal and might thereby succeed in sincerely declaring their unconditional love. None of these options seem very appealing, to say the least, so the discrepancy between ideal intention and ideal action is still problematic.

In sum, while Mendus's idea that love ought to be unconditionally declared may take care of some of the intuitions behind U's appeal it is implausible for psychological and normative reasons.

6.2 Soble's Idea

Like Mendus, Soble argues that the desire for unconditional love is better understood as a desire that our lover is unconditionally committed to us. Soble differs from Mendus, however, in emphasizing that this is still a *conditional* unconditionality: X is conditionally unconditionally committed to Y, according to Soble, if

[56] Thanks to Frej Klem Thomsen for suggesting this example.

X fully hopes and expects, given X's knowledge of what Y is presently like, that Y's "good properties will likely outweigh whatever defects X eventually find[s]" and that X intends to love Y as long as this is so. (Soble 1990: 167) On the one hand, X's commitment is conditional in the sense that X knows that "X will likely be able to love Y as long as Y does not become a monster, as long as Y's valuable properties continue to provide reasons for love more powerful than any possible future reasons not to love." (ibid: 167) I.e., the intention or preparedness to love has an escape clause: Y will be loved but only so long as Y doesn't become what X takes to be a "monster", for instance a crazy, alcoholic wife-beater, to use Mendus's example. On the other hand, X's commitment is "(weakly) unconditional" in the sense that X is convinced that the escape clause will not be used. (ibid.) We love someone with conditional unconditionality when we think "I intend to love you as long as you do not become D – as I fully expect and hope you won't." (ibid.)

We may put Soble's idea as follows:

> **CUC** (Conditionally unconditional commitment): It's a necessary condition on X's love for Y to be ideal that X fully hopes and expects that Y will not become non-deserving of X's love.

6.2.1 The Passivity Objection

While CUC escapes the psychological and discrepancy objections raised against UC earlier, it is unclear how the satisfaction of CUC would even qualify as a commitment. On Soble's account, our lover is (conditionally unconditionally) committed to us only in the sense that she hopes and is convinced that we will not undergo the kind of changes that will make it psychologically impossible for her to love us. I fail to see how a prediction that the love will remain in place together with a pro-attitude toward such a scenario is to *commit* to the beloved in any sense that is not entailed already by love's property-dependence. I may fully expect and hope that I will continue to be a decent human being but this is hardly enough to say that I am committed to being such. Commitment requires some sort of (potential) effort. CUC seems to leave the lovers too passive when it comes to whether they will continue to be loveable relative one

another in the relevant sense. We are attracted to unconditional love since we want some indication that love will remain stable even though we ourselves might change, and it is unclear how the fact that we hope and are convinced that our love will last serves to prevent the actualization of the escape clause Soble mentions.

In sum, I think that Mendus and Soble are onto something when suggesting that the desire for love's unconditionality is really a desire for commitment, even though I disagree with their respective characterization of such commitment. It is unclear how a commitment to loving unconditionally, either in Mendus's or Soble's version of it, would actually serve to satisfy the underlying desire for stability. More needs to be said about how a commitment to love indicates that the love will be more likely to remain in place throughout various changes, than a love that is not so committed.

7. Properties as Providing Stability

Another idea that can be found in the debate is that the properties on which ideal love depends can be specified in a way that accounts for love's desirable stability. Neil Delaney (1996) and Simon Keller (2000) stress that a mere change in properties is not necessarily a threat to the stability of love, since love doesn't have to depend on the *same* properties over time. What matters is rather that the lovers continuously take each other to be worthy of each other's love, and they may well do so because of different properties over time. How, then, does ideal love survive changes in properties? On Delaney's view, we are, ideally, loved for properties that are central to our self-conception, and when we change as persons and come to identify with different properties than before, our lover's love tracks those properties and comes to love us for the properties that we now see as central for who we are. This, however, is to allow for stability, not to account for the mechanism behind it. As Keller notes, "Delaney's view offers no reason to presume that changes in the properties of one lover will be such as can be objectively loved by the other." (Keller 2000: 170).

7.1 Keller's Account

Keller's reasoning is more promising in this respect. He argues that ideal love makes us confident that our love will remain in place since we are ideally loved for properties that make us desirable for our lover to continuously change together with. Ideally, your love is based on properties that ultimately make your beloved "someone who you would like to influence your life over time, someone who you would like to have lead your life in unforeseeable directions." (Keller 2000: 170) Keller stresses that in ideal love you do not stand in the way for your beloved's growth as a person, instead you are part of it; we are worthy of each other's love largely because we help each other change in desirable directions. If your lover lacks the properties that make her someone with whom you want to change and by whom you want your life to be led in unforeseeable directions, then this person is not an appropriate love object for you (anymore). (Keller 2000: 168-170) The love is likely to remain in place "since the process of shared change is such that your beloved will come to have the properties that you value, and you will come to value the properties that she has." (Keller 2000: 171)

Since Keller's reasoning about the shared change of ideal love is not very specific, nor put in terms of a commitment, I will end this chapter by making a few suggestions for how it could be developed to provide us with the kind of commitment that accommodates the concerns about stability that I take to lie behind the initial appeal of unconditional love.

7.2. The Efforts of Ideally Committed Lovers

Keller argues that in ideal romantic relationships, no transformative change in either one of the lovers comes about in isolation from the other lover's opinions and needs. Instead the lovers involve each other in what they are thinking and experiencing, and seek out each other's opinion and support. This requires, among other things, that both lovers discuss with the other any newfound interest in ideas or activities that may change either one of them as persons, such as religious and political reorientations as well as how any predictable change may affect their relationship. The lovers' values and goals are

highly determined by their shared experiences, how their self-conception is influenced by the other's way of seeing them, and through finding out together ways to maintain their romantic relationship. Therefore, they are likely to "come to share a systekm of values and a way of looking at the world." (Keller 2000: 171) The love is likely to remain, says Keller, since the lovers change together in ways that make it likely that the new properties will also be appealing in the relevant way to the other lover. (Keller 2000: 168-171)

Imagine, e.g., that Ellen's atheism has been causally efficient in Allan's continuous love for Ellen. Presently, though, Ellen is turning into a devoted Christian. Keller writes that (ideally) "changes to Ellen cannot come about in isolation from Allan's needs and opinions" if the love is to survive such changes. (2000: 170) Ellen should invite Alan to attend church with her to experience at least part of what she is experiencing, and she ought to explain to Allan what her religious awakening means to her, and seek out Alan's opinion and support.

As I see it, though, it is not enough that changes in a property like this come about through shared experiences, and seeking out each other's opinion and support. More needs to be said about the efforts involved in doing so and about the sacrifices an ideal lover is prepared to make to avoid potentially love threatening changes.

The efforts and sacrifices ideal lovers are prepared to make could perhaps be thought of as properties, but are, I think, better thought of as constituting a commitment. I suggest that a commitment that takes care of the intuitions behind U does *not* amount to mere hope, together with a prediction, that the conditions on which our love will remain in place will in fact be met, as e.g. Soble seems to suggest. Even if, at present, we have sufficiently many positive properties, and sufficiently few negative ones, in the eyes of our lover, for her to be able to love us, and she has no reason to think that we will become radically worse overall, she shouldn't simply assume that this will continue to be the case despite changes in our properties and in her taste. The commitment needs to be more active in character. Our lover ought instead to be committed to us in the sense that she puts her will or agency behind the aim of making considerable efforts for love to be stable: she should have an openly declared and manifested

preparedness to act so as to prevent changes in properties from jeopardizing the love.

Ideal love thus requires effort or at least a preparedness to make various efforts. To a significant extent, the efforts consist in trying to find value or appeal in various things about your beloved and in the world as she sees it. Even if you are much influenced by how your lover sees you and the world in general, and even if you come to adopt her viewpoint in part, it is far from given that various changes of your beloved initially appeal to you, and you may actively have to search for whatever appeal you can find in her properties as she changes. The larger the change, the larger the effort required to continue to love the beloved despite changes in her. For instance, it may take more effort for your lover to love you if you go from being a closet transsexual to openly declaring your gender identity, than if you go from being a moderate drinker to giving up drinking entirely. If you undergo hormone treatment and perhaps also gender correction surgery, your lover might (among many other things) have to try to focus on the immense benefit of you becoming more of yourself, and focus less on how she misses your old body type or differently pitched voice. Perhaps the sparking physical attraction that your lover's love once depended quite heavily on will be lost, at least temporarily, and she will have to try to appreciate other things about you, properties that may then serve to causally ground the love. It seems to me though, that a love that would, due to various efforts, actually survive certain large changes, such as the above described would be closer to ideal love, than a love that does not (all else being equal).

In Keller's example, Ellen is making an effort to not have her personal changes put an end to Alan's love. She is trying to make it easier for Alan to find value in, or at least accept her change from being an atheist to being a devoted Christian by including him in this process. Since ideal love is reciprocal the efforts have to be undertaken both as a giver and a receiver of love, as I see it. Keller should be clearer on that Alan, too, ought to make an effort with regards to Ellen's change: namely the effort to see value in Ellen's changed properties, or, perhaps more importantly, less of a threat in them.

My point is that in ideal love, the confidence that the love will remain stable is given by the ways in which the lovers make efforts both to not acquire properties that may make it hard for the other lover to love them, and to not be discouraged by changes in the other lover's properties.

If you share a love that is ideal, both you and your lover are attentive to, and wary of, the ways in which both you of you change and how this affects your love, and you try to make it the case that there will be enough good properties and sufficiently few ones, from both of your perspectives, for the property-dependent love to remain in place.

While I take it that love may remain stable throughout changes in the lovers in roughly the ways Keller suggests, I don't think that every experience of personal transformation is possible even in principle to share in a way that doesn't threaten love. Infidelity, romantic relationships with other people, as well as singlehood may well be sources of enriching personal transformation. The commitment of an ideal lover does not only, as I see it, involve wariness and attentiveness to changes in herself which may jeopardize the love, but also some active resistance to undergoing those kinds of changes. As an ideal lover, you will not expose yourself to certain things that are likely to make it hard for your lover to love you. Not only do you involve your beloved in your newfound interest in, e.g., New Age, you may rethink further involvement if you see that it is likely to change you in a way that creates alienation between you and your lover. Being committed to your beloved requires you to choose to refrain from some such sources of personal transformation. Thus, the willingness to make sacrifices, even such that may involve personal growth, is part of the commitment of ideal love. To specify any criterion that decides which changes in personal properties that ideal love does and does not survive will, however, have to wait for another occasion.

On my development of Keller's view, we can see how properties matter for whether the love is continuously felt, while a commitment at the same time provides the stability of ideal love. In ideal love, the lovers are aware that their love can end, and that they will not be able to love each other in every conceivable scenario, or through every conceivable change that either of them might undergo. In virtue of

being committed to each other, though, they have some reliable indication that their love will be stable. This is so since the relevant commitment is not only about a preference for, and a prediction that, love will remain in place, but also about the efforts and sacrifices lovers ideally make in order to realize the conditions for such sustenance.

8. Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to see if there is a way to characterize a Western, contemporary romantic love ideal in a way that accounts for the intuitive appeal of both property-dependence and unconditionality as being necessary (but not sufficient) features of it.

First, I discussed and ultimately agreed with the popular idea among philosophers that considerations of self-respect make it plausible that property-dependence is indeed a feature of ideal romantic love. Secondly, I argued that unconditionality is not a component of such ideal. Thirdly, I suggested that what we indeed want to keep about unconditional love, even upon closer inspection, has to do with stability in light of changes in personal properties. I agreed with Mendus and Soble that this stability can be provided by the lovers being committed to one another but disagreed with their ways of characterizing the relevant commitment.

Finally, I suggested that Simon Keller's way of specifying the properties of property-dependent love is more promising. Keller argues that the properties that ideal love ought to depend on can be specified so as to account for how it ideally remains in place throughout changes in the lovers. I argued that not enough emphasis is put in Keller's account on the efforts that lovers are ideally prepared to make in order to sustain their love by having enough properties of the relevant kind. The lovers ought to be committed to making efforts in order to decrease the likelihood that either of one the lover acquires properties that will stand in the way for the love. In addition to how Keller takes ideal lovers to make sure to change through shared experiences, the efforts are, first, about being wary of, and possibly refrain from, changes of the kind that might make it hard for the other lover to see enough positive and sufficiently few negative properties

in them. Secondly, the lover should try hard to see value in, and to not be easily discouraged by, changes in the other lover. This involves a greater deal of efforts and sacrifices than what is normally recognized in the debate.[57] Further details of this commitment, however, have to be worked out elsewhere.

[57] As Maren Behrensen suggested to me, one possible conclusion to draw from my discussion is that even ideal romantic love in a contemporary, Western context isn't so ideal or desirable after all.

Chapter 5. Rationalizing Love: In Defense of the No-Reasons View

1. Introduction

Love often seems to make sense, both to the people in love, and to those in their surroundings. We react to cases when this is not the case, when love seems inappropriate, random, crazy or unintelligible, as being deviant. Relatedly, we subject others (and ourselves) to what seems like rational criticism of love by saying things like "Why do you love him?" or "What do you see in her?". We do so either out of curiosity, expecting to get a good sense of why this particular person is found to be so special, or as a way of questioning the love, perhaps with the (tacit or outspoken) addition "…after all he has put you through!" or "Everyone else finds her simply unbearable." These observations may suggest that we expect love to be rational as in felt in response to good (or justifying) reasons. We seem to appeal to the lover's rational sense, hoping that he will come to his senses when we exclaim: "Come on, you need to let go of him! It's like you're living in a dream world. He's just beyond all hope, and you know it." The question 'Why do you love her?' is furthermore sensible in a way that questions like 'why are you allergic to shellfish?' or 'why is your right leg longer than your left one?' are not. We are not asking for an explanation in terms of a story of how your biological and psychological constitution made it unavoidable that you love your beloved given certain contextual facts, rather we seem to expect some kind of justification, some attempt at showing why your love is appropriate by providing reasons for it.

The question for this chapter is how to best account for common intuitions about rational restrictions on love. What could it plausibly mean, more specifically, for love and rationality to be related to one another in the ways that common intuitions suggest that they are? I will, like many philosophers in this debate, focus mainly on romantic

love. Nevertheless, my interest is in whether there are rational restraints on the attitude or mental state of love as such. Therefore, romantic love is largely used a case in point, and my discussion has bearing on friendship and family love as well.

1.1 Outline

In section 2, I account for the so called reasons view of love which holds that love for a particular person can be what is interchangeably referred to as rational, appropriate or justified. On this view, love is rational (appropriate or justified), when it is felt in response to considerations that speak in favor of it, making the love apt, as it were, and irrational when this is not so.

In section 3, I account for the so called no-reasons view, according to which there are instead no considerations that would, if present, make love for a particular person rational, and, if absent, irrational. On this latter view, love is not a reason-responsive attitude so it cannot sensibly be assessed as more or less rational. Love can be better or worse, fortunate or unfortunate, but not more or less rational. All instances of love are equally (rationally) permissible, according to the no-reasons view.[58]

While the reasons view may seem to have certain implausible implications, such as that one can be rationally *required* to start loving a person and irrational for falling out of love, the no-reasons view may instead seem too revisionary since it entails that there are no rational restrictions on love whatsoever – as mentioned, all instances of love are equally rationally permissible. This doesn't fit well with our practice of offering and asking for reasons for love and how we seem to criticize love felt for the "wrong" person.

In section 4, I note an intuitive asymmetry when it comes to how we seem to look at love's justification, and in section 5, I account for a second version of the reasons view of love which builds on that asymmetry. This reasons view 2 claims that love is either rationally permissible or rationally prohibited, but never rationally required, as

[58] As stated in Chapter 1, I regard love as a disposition to have a set of attitudes rather than as a single attitude. For reasons of exposition I will here use 'attitude' for short.

the first reasons view (reasons view 1) claims. While reasons view 2 is on the face of it more plausible than both the reasons view 1 and the no-reasons view, its explanatory value is limited: it states rather than accounts for the intuitive asymmetry when it comes to our reasons for love.

In section 6, I present what I call the rationalizing view of love, drawing on Katrien Schaubroeck (2014). On this view, reasons for love are not justifying, nor mere explanatory, reasons, but rather *rationalizing* reasons, i.e., considerations that serve to render one's love intelligible. By looking at a kind of coherence that is required for rationalizing love (and, thus, ways in which the rationalization can fail), I argue that we can derive conditions or constraints on appropriate, as in rationally permissible, love. These rational constraints are different in kind than those suggested by the reasons views 1 and 2. However, I argue that the rationalizing view can be integrated into the no-reasons view, and thereby provide a route for the no-reasons view to account for at least some of the intuitive link between love and rationality. Thereby we have been given one reason to prefer the no-reasons view to the reasons view 1 and 2. As I note in my concluding remarks in section 7, though, further inquiry is required to settle the debate between the no-reasons view and (various version of) the reasons view.

2. The Reasons View of Love

The reasons view of love holds that love can be more or less appropriate, as in rationally justified or apt, depending on to whom it is directed. On this view, love is, at least in part, an evaluative response to the beloved, and this response is pro tanto justified insofar as the beloved is valuable in the way that the lover takes her to be, and the value she responds to calls for love, or makes love fitting. To say that love is rationally justified is simply a way to signal that that which makes the love appropriate has causal influence on whether the love is felt. Rationally justified love is felt in response to considerations that warrant or call for it; it is in that sense rational.

Different versions of the reasons view offer different accounts of which features, qualities or properties of the beloved that constitute

reasons for love. Common ground is, however, that we normally have such reasons to love the one we love and that when reasons for love are absent (and all else is equal), we are rationally prohibited from loving.

Niko Kolodny is one prominent defender of the reasons view of love. He takes love to be "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," namely the relationship, or history of interaction shared with the beloved. (Kolodny 2003a: 135) It is certainly possible, according to Kolodny, for you to be mistaken about there actually being any reasons for you to love your beloved. But Kolodny does hold that you must nevertheless *take yourself* to have good reasons for loving your beloved: you have to believe that you share a relationship with the beloved which justifies the love. This is, he argues, analogous to how you do not actually have to have good reasons to fear something in order to fear that thing, but you have to *take yourself* to have such reasons, at least in the sense that the object of fear must appear fearful to you. Love is, thus, on Kolodny's view, in ordinary cases a rational or appropriate response to the relationship one shares with the beloved, and irrational, inappropriate or unfitting, if the lover doesn't in fact share a relationship with the beloved (such as a stalker's love for a pop star), or if the relationship doesn't warrant a loving response (such as when it is throughout abusive).[59] So, just like e.g. lethality justifies or calls for fear does the relationship with the beloved justify or call for love.

Furthermore, not only the presence of love, but also its absence can be criticized "in the context of that which makes it appropriate". (Kolodny 2003a: 163) Such criticism is of the same kind as the criticism of "the absence of fear in the presence of something patently fearsome," says Kolodny. (ibid: 163-4)

According to Simon Keller (2000), a defender of a different version of the reasons view, love is instead justified insofar as it is felt

[59] Relationships can be understood as properties on a broad construal of properties, namely the (relational) property of being the person with whom one shares a certain relationship. Cf. Keller (2000) and Protasi (2014).

in response to some positive properties of the beloved that make her an appropriate person for the lover to change together with. These properties can be both relational (e.g., 'knowing exactly how to crack me up when I'm cranky') and intrinsic ('being witty' or 'being adventurous').

2.1 Objections to the Reasons View

While the reasons view captures some of the common intuitions about love as a rationally assessable attitude, it seems a bit too strong. On Kolodny's view, you might not be rationally justified to fall out of love if your relationship has gone sour or is now simply on a neutral level of value (neither good nor bad), given that the two of you have shared a really valuable past. Keller's view instead seems to imply that were you to encounter another person who has the same justifying properties as your current beloved but to an even higher degree, you would be irrational to not "trade up," that is, to switch your love to this new person, given that you cannot love them both. Another implausible implication is that you are rationally *required* to fall in love with someone whose properties render your love appropriate.

Kolodny and Keller might try to avoid these worries by claiming that, normally, there are considerations other than the beloved's properties that explain why we are not all things considered rationally required to fall in love, continue to love or to trade up. To stress the pro tanto character of their preferred justifications of love is not a satisfying response, though, since it would still be the case that in the absence of any sufficiently strong additional reasons, we are in fact rationally required to love, and this seems simply too strong.

3. The No-Reasons View of Love

3.1 No Considerations of the Right Kind

Considerations like those mentioned in 2.1 above are part of why some philosophers instead hold that while love can be better or worse depending on for whom it is felt, it cannot be more or less appropriate, rational or justified. Love is in part to care for the beloved for her sake, and any reason we may have to do so will be a

reason of the wrong kind - not aptness, or fittingness reasons. We have pragmatic reasons to embrace or resist the love we may feel for a person depending on the benefits of such an attitude, such as whether this person makes us happy, or is the other parent of our child, etc. But this is similar to how we may have reasons to embrace or resist fear depending on how well fear serves our various purposes. If you are an actor who is preparing for a role as a pathologically fearful person you may have reason to embrace or try to cause fear for whatever harmless thing you encounter as a way of preparing for your part. Such reasons are of the wrong kind: they do not make your fear apt. Similarly, the benefits for yourself or your children that your love for a person would have (e.g., someone rich who is in love with you), do not make love for this person apt.

According to the no-reasons view, there are simply no justifying reasons for love; no relational or non-relational properties of a person that speak in favor of the mere attitude, no considerations that call for love or make it fitting (or unfitting if love is felt without such considerations being in place). There are no personal properties of a person Y, in the light of which another person, X, would (in the absence any countervailing considerations) be irrational for not loving Y. (Smuts 2012b; Unpublished manuscript: 12 ff., Thomas 1991)

3.2 No Reasons-Responsiveness

Some defenders of the no-reasons view of love argue that, even if there *were* considerations of the kind that would make love apt, our loving attitude isn't sufficiently responsive to them for either of the terms appropriateness or justification to be motivated. Aaron Smuts writes that, of course, you could call a love that is felt for someone whose properties make love for her a good thing 'justified', but it wouldn't be a justification worthy of its name - only rational justifications are. Rather the presence of such reasons for love would be a "happy accident" and happy accidents are just fortunate - not appropriate, rational or justified. (Smuts 2014a: 512; unpublished manuscript: 21-22) It is useful, says Smuts, to think here of justification in relation to actions. In order for normative or justifying reasons to make someone (rationally) justified in acting in a certain

way, the content of these reasons need to figure in this persons deliberation and, furthermore, to a significant extent motivate the person to perform the action in question. Smuts gives the example of a man who suddenly smashes a brick into the skull of the person standing in front of him in a big crowd of people. If what moves the agent to do so is the conviction that this person is wearing an ugly shirt the cracking of his head is not justified. This is so, says Smuts, even if, in fact, there are good normative reasons for the action, e.g., that the person in front of him is a terrorist who is about to set off a bomb that will kill the entire crowd. Unless this piece of information were to feature prominently in what moves the agent to perform the head-cracking action, the agent is not justified in performing it. The act would be good or desirable, but it would only be a mere happy accident that there were justifying reasons to do what agent did. (Smuts 2014a: 502)

In contrast to how the reasons view of love takes love to be a response to value, defenders of the no-reasons view, e.g., Laurence Thomas (1991), Nick Zangwill (2013), and Smuts (unpublished manuscript; 2014a), hold that there is no necessary connection between love and valuing or believing the beloved to be valuable. And since the love an agent feels does not come with any particular evaluative beliefs about the beloved, no actual value of the beloved can render appropriate the agent's love. Love is simply felt, without being a response to (any beliefs about) the beloved, and so it cannot be a more or less rational response. Thus, we can imagine or believe anything or nothing about our beloved, or about any given person for that matter, and this would have no implication for how rational we are in loving her. Love is more like hunger - it can be good or bad, but it is not felt as a response to any considerations that speak in favor of it. Smuts puts it thus: [L]ove, like hunger, is arational. Love is not responsive to reasons. And you cannot meaningfully normatively asses the appropriateness of an attitude that is not responsive to reasons" (Unpublished manuscript: 12)

In support of the claim that love is not reason-responsive, Smuts points out that while we can talk someone into fearing something by making her form certain beliefs about the object, we cannot talk someone into loving a person by merely convincing her that he is

worthy of love. It is one thing to be convinced that it would be a great idea to love a certain person, but quite another thing to respond to the considerations you recognize as speaking in favor of love by actually starting to feel love. There doesn't seem to be much to do in order to successfully cultivate a love that you don't have. All we can do is to remove various obstacles that may stand in the way for love and simply hope for love to arrive. Smuts gives the example of two acquaintances who both admit that they would make a great couple but who just don't hit it off in that way. This is perhaps sad, but hardly any indication of irrationality. If beliefs about a person's various properties have little or no bearing on whether we love her, then our love (assuming that we love her) is not in any interesting sense justified in virtue of her possession of such properties, even if they in some sense speak in favor of the love. (Smuts unpublished manuscript: 10-12)

In sum, according to the no-reasons view of love, there are no justifying reasons for love. Indeed, even if there were considerations that would recommend or speak in favor of loving someone, the attitude of love is not sufficiently responsive to such reasons for us to be irrational if love is not felt when these considerations are present. Since love isn't responsive to reasons, all instances of love are at the same level of rationality: never rationally required, never rationally prohibited, but always rationally permissible. Love may well be at its best or ideal when it is felt for a person who has a certain set of properties; the point is just that even if you love such a person you are not in any interesting sense justified in doing so. You are indeed fortunate, but the properties of your beloved are no normative reasons that your love is an apt response to.

3.3 Objections to the No-Reasons View

Against the no-reasons view it can be objected that we are in fact able to feel love as we see fit, at least to some degree, and that the extent to which love somewhat indirectly responds to reasons is enough for it to be more or less justified depending on to whom it is directed. S. Matthew Liao, who is a prominent defender of duties of love, argues that there are various ways in which we can make it the case that we

love some given person. First, we can use "internal control", i.e., we can think of the reasons we have to love someone and thereby motivate ourselves to do so. For instance, says Liao, when we have been introduced to a potential romantic partner, "we might give ourselves reasons such as the person seems very kind or the person seems interested in us as a way of getting ourselves to feel warmth and affection for the person." (Liao 2006: 7)

A second method of internal control is, says Liao, to reflect on why we tend to feel a certain way toward a particular person after which we decide to either continue or discontinue to have our present attitude depending on whether we take it to be supported by good reasons. For instance, we may on reflection become aware that we compare every potential romantic partner with a checklist whose criteria are unreasonable (e.g. pretty toes are required) or immoral (e.g. certain races are unthinkable) which might in turn help us to instead start seeing a particular person with a different, and loving gaze. (ibid: 4-5; 15-16)

Thirdly, we could use "external control" to bring about love by putting ourselves in situations that are conducive to our bringing about warmth and affection (or other things that we take love to involve). We might also in various ways cultivate our capacity to feel love, e.g., by practicing our capacity to be warm and affectionate to people in general, and to try to act in this manner even if it initially doesn't come naturally to us. If we manage to develop our capacity to feel love in general – similarly to how we may develop our capacity for generosity or kindness by initially acting like a generous or kind person – it might be easier for us to love a particular person whom we take ourselves to have reasons to love. (ibid: 8) [60]

Now, the extent to which we can cause ourselves to feel love for a person we think we in some sense ought to love is an empirical question. The weaker the link between how we may think that a person is an appropriate love object and actually loving this person, the less point in calling someone irrational for not being able to love someone who she takes to be perfect on paper. (We don't call

[60] See also Scherman (1999) and Smith (2005) for other nuanced accounts on the long-term control we may be taken to exercise over attitudes such as love.

someone irrational for failing to be hungry when it makes perfect sense for her to be hungry, such as when she has been out walking for an entire day without eating.)[61] Furthermore, Liao is himself undecided whether there are in fact reasons of the kind that that obligate adults to love each other. While a parental duty to love one's children is grounded, he thinks, in how children need to be loved (or otherwise they will not thrive), adults can get by fine without romantic love. (Liao 2015; personal correspondence)

The control we may have over whether or not we love a particular person is, I think, not a good reason to reject the no-reasons view. Like Smuts points out (unpublished manuscript), this control is similar to the control we exercise over hunger which is manifestly an *a*rational attitude: We may judge that it would be good or bad for us to love a particular person, or be hungry in a particular situation, and we may on that ground try to cause ourselves to (not) feel love or hunger. But the no-reasons view seems to be right in stating that you cannot be rationally *required* to be hungry, nor can you be rationally required to love. To love someone who would intuitively make an appropriate or suitable romantic partner would be good or, as suggested in the previous chapter, ideal, and you may have reason to try to cause or cherish love for such a person. But while a failure to actually love her would be unfortunate, it would not be irrational in the way it would be irrational of you not to fear something you on good grounds take to pose an immediate and overwhelming threat to your security.

However, to conclude that that there are no rational restrictions on love whatsoever and that all instances of love are equally rationally permissible seems revisionary: It seems to me we want to say that there are at least *some* rational restrictions on love. Defenders of the no-reasons view recognize it as a problem for their view that we do talk about love as though it were justifiable: we ask for and provide reasons for love and find certain instances of love inappropriate. Some examples might be an abused housewife's love for her husband, a longtime mistress's love for a married family man who calls her only

[61] See Smuts (unpublished manuscript) for similar remarks and for an extended comparison between love and hunger.

every other month, a stalker's love for Britney Spears, or a young, bright woman's love for a convicted, imprisoned murderer she watched a documentary about.

Part of this can, according to the no-reasons view, be accounted for by saying that it is not the mere love that is rational or irrational, but rather people's unwillingness to take measures in order to distance themselves from a love that will never be reciprocated or that has a high risk of causing them a lot of misery or the like.

To say that there are no normative reasons for love whatsoever and that all instances of love are equally rationally permissible (never required, never prohibited) may however still seem to be in stark contrast with how we talk and think about love's reasons.

4. An Intuitive Asymmetry in the Rationality of Love

Even if we can never be rationally *required* to love a person that we currently do not love, nor rationally required to continue to love someone we love, it may seem we are sometimes rationally *prohibited* from loving a particular person. There seems to be an asymmetry in how we ascribe rationality and irrationality to people when it comes to who they love: We seem to be more prone to accusing a person of being irrational if she in fact loves someone whom she shouldn't love – for instance, someone who beats her up on a regular basis – than if she fails to love someone who strikes us as a very fitting object for her love. Furthermore, our attitude seems to be more responsive to considerations that intuitively speak against love, such as that a person treats us terribly or will never return our love than we are to considerations that intuitively speak in favor of it.

4.1 Two Types of Rational Justification

Rational justification of love is ambiguous between love's being appropriate as in *required* and its being appropriate as in *permissibl*e. The asymmetry suggested above has us, on the one hand, agreeing with the no-reasons view's claim that we are never rationally required to fall in love with any particular persons, nor rationally required to

keep loving a person that we at present love, while, on the other hand, disagreeing with its claim that love is also never rationally prohibited (but, rather, always rationally permissible). Instead we might want to say that love is justified or appropriate as in being rationally *permissible* as long as there is a *sufficient* fit between the nature of the object and the love, i.e., as long as love is not directed to a clearly *in*appropriate love object. In the latter case we would thus agree with the reasons view that love is indeed irrational.

This stance constitutes a *second reasons view of love*, since it allows for love to be justified by reasons that speak in favor of it and unjustified when no such reasons are present. The difference from the first reasons view is that a person can be rationally permitted to not love someone whom it would be appropriate for her to love. On the first reasons view such absence of love would be irrational: it would be a failure to respond to one's reasons for love.

Consider, then, the first reasons view and the second reasons view and how they contrast with the no-reasons view:

The Reasons View 1: X's love for Y is either rationally required or rationally prohibited depending on the reasons available to X.

The Reasons View 2: X's love for Y is never rationally required but instead either rationally permissible or rationally prohibited depending on the reasons available to X.

The No-Reasons View: X's love for Y is never rationally required, and never rationally prohibited, but always rationally permissible.

5. The Reasons View 2

According to Berit Brogaard, a lot of the resistance against rational constraints on love depends on a failure to distinguish between what I have called the reasons view 1 and 2. The claim that love can be rationally justified seems considerably more plausible once we take it to mean that love can be rationally permissible, as in not rationally prohibited, than if we take it to mean that love can be rationally required:

> [T]he constraints on rational love don't tell us anything about when it is irrational not to love someone we don't love. They only tell us when it is irrational to love someone we already love. The argument against assessing love in terms of rationality is confusing the conditions under which people ought to cease to love someone and the conditions under which people ought to continue to love someone. Good reasons for loving your sweetheart only renders it *permissible* for you to love her; it does not require that you begin or continue to love her. Love is irrational, and hence impermissible, if there is not a proper fit between the loving response and the beloved or the love misrepresents. But when there is a proper fit and no misrepresentation, then continuing the love is in all likelihood optional, just as you have the choice whether you want to perform actions that are not wrong. It's optional whether you want to raise your arm right now. It's perfectly fine to do it. It's a permissible act. Punching someone, on the other hand, is (usually) irrational and morally prohibited. (Brogaard 2015: 78)

The reasons view 2 doesn't require love to be sensitive to beliefs about the beloved in its initiation and continuation; all that is required is that we are sensitive to considerations that make our love unfit. According to Brogaard, the latter considerations have to do with prudential and moral concerns: "Your love for a person does not fit the beloved properly (that is, the person is not lovable) if your continued love of the person would be likely to decrease your overall happiness or well-being. Just as it is irrational to fear an innocent teddy bear, so it is irrational to be in love with someone who beat you with a stick every day or to lust for a bloke who moonlights as a serial killer." (Brogaard 2015: 74)

Like Kolodny (2003a), Brogaard takes love, like fear, to involve an appraisal of its object – more specifically a way of seeing it as dangerous and lovable respectively – that can be more or less fitting depending on its nature. And like Kolodny, Brogaard also takes love to be rationally impermissible both if it responds to a misrepresentative picture of the beloved's qualities (for instance, our love is sustained by our pure idealization of our beloved), and if the love clearly doesn't fit its object (for instance, the beloved is manifestly bad in relevant respects). Unlike Kolodny, though, Brogaard rejects the idea that we are ever rationally required to fall in love or keep loving a person: "[I]t's permissible not to love a wonderful person, whereas it is impermissible to fail to fear a

dangerous thing," says Brogaard (Brogaard 2015: 78), who thus takes the rationality of love to be importantly different from that of fear and other emotions.

Julia Driver defends another version of the reasons view 2, according to which "there is no duty to love as a fitting response to someone's very good qualities, but there is a duty to not love as a fitting response to someone's very bad qualities" (Driver 2014: 1). Driver takes it that, e.g., being abused "constitutes a compelling reason not to love." (ibid: 7) Furthermore, she holds that X can be blameworthy for loving Y insofar as Y is bad in relevant respects (if, e.g., Y is a murderer) and X's love for Y would be bad in relevant respects (e.g., it involves the dispositions to seek the well-being of Y even when it conflicts with justice). This since the love reveals X's defective evaluative commitments and thereby also X's defective dispositions and character. (ibid: 8)

In sum, the reasons view 2 agrees with the reasons view 1 that there can be reasons to not love a person who is unfit as a love object; i.e., love can be rationally prohibited. It disagrees with the reasons view 1 in denying that there are reasons for love that make us rationally required to love another person. Instead, rational love means (merely) permissible love. Thus, the reasons view 2 avoids the problematic implications of the reasons view 1 regarding how it may be irrational to stop loving our current beloved, or to fail to fall in love, or to not switch one's love from one's beloved to a better version of her. It does so without (as does the no-reasons view) giving up the idea that love can be to a different degree rationally justified.

5.1 Limited Explanatory Value

The asymmetry that the reasons view 2 exploits seems intuitive. Failing to love a seemingly perfect match, or to suddenly fall out of love, strikes us as unfortunate and, perhaps, sad, but not as an indication of a person's irrationality. The label irrationality seems far less farfetched or awkward, however, when it comes to, e.g., people who fall in love with convicted murderers, or people who keep loving their alcoholic spouses despite repeated physical and psychological abuse, sometimes also of their children. There is also an apparent

asymmetry in our responsiveness to considerations that may seem to speak in favor of or against love for a particular person. While we do not start to love just because we learn about how fantastic a person is, love at its formation and preservation is often undermined by certain negative revelations about a beloved. Imagine, e.g., that you learn that your beloved, or someone you are about to fall in love with, is a pedophile and has been trying to abuse your child. Such beliefs may indeed weaken your (aspiring) love, and if it doesn't at all affect your (aspiring) love this would seem to indicate a rational defect.

Nevertheless, the asymmetry is theoretically puzzling. What, we might ask, is the principled explanation for why love can be an inapt, as in a rationally prohibited response to an object, whereas it cannot be an apt, as in rationally required response to an object? Why is it that reasons for love are such that they can prohibit but not demand a loving response in a rational person? If there are certain things that ought to prevent us from loving a person, why shouldn't we be rationally required to love the person who has the most of the merits required for love to be permissible?[62] Reasons are normally understood as coming in degrees and so how can it be *as* appropriate for us to love a person Y, and another person Z, when Y's properties only barely render our love for her permissible, whereas the considerations that speak in favor of loving, Y, are quite extensive?[63] The idea that an agent can have reasons against loving, but no reasons in favor of it, is something that we would want a theory to account for rather than to merely state.

Lucy Allais makes an analogous point when discussing how it can be rational to forgive someone given that it means to give up warranted resentment (or else there is nothing to forgive in the first place). In her (2008) she proposes a solution structurally similar to the

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[62] Driver doesn't talk of any properties that may render appropriate love; only properties that make love clearly unfit.

[63] Cf how Smuts finds the reasons view 2 (or "the meek position" as he calls it) unsatisfying because it "has trouble accounting for two common assumptions about reasons: (A1) reasons vary in strength, and (A2) when faced with competing reasons, the stronger should win." (Smuts 2014a: 513). He makes similar remarks about what he in his unpublished manuscript (2013: 22-24) calls the "merely warranted account".

reasons view 2: just like you are rationally permitted to have different affective attitudes toward the same piece of evidence (e.g., depending on whether you are an optimist or a pessimist), you are rationally permitted to change your affective view of the wrongdoer without judging her to be less culpable than before. The parallel is, more specifically, the following: Just because resentment and love are made appropriate by facts about the wrongdoing and the beloved respectively it doesn't follow that it would be a rational mistake not to resent or love respectively: wrongdoing and love-worthy properties entitle us to resent or love, but this does not mean that they oblige us to do so.

However, in (2014), Allais argues that this solution is not adequate: "Simply stating that emotions have content that can be warranted without being epistemically mandated appeals to what we need for the solution without explaining it. We need to say more about the way of seeing someone that reactive attitudes contain in order to explain how this content can be warranted yet not mandatory." (2014: 43-44) Similarly, I hold that we need to say more about the ways in which the (candidate) beloved's properties can make us rationally justified in loving her while at the same time it is not a rational mistake to not love her when we take her to possess the relevant properties.[64]

Perhaps this asymmetry can be satisfiably addressed, for instance by pointing to how it may be relevantly similar to other asymmetries that we accept.[65] Or perhaps it is simply a psychological fact that love is responsive to properties when it comes to whether or not a person X's love for a person Y ceases or continues to be felt, but not when it comes to whether or not X starts to love Y.[66] Still, as long as the asymmetry is recognized but not accounted for we may find it hard to accept that the reasons view 2 could serve as a satisfying view of

[64] Thanks to Per-Erik Milam for noticing the resemblance between my criticism of the reasons view 2 and Allais's criticism of her own proposed solution to the forgiveness paradox.

[65] Driver makes an attempt at defending this asymmetry by pointing to how we accept it when it comes to hate: There can be a duty not to hate but never a duty to hate. (Driver 2014) Even if this were correct (which is perhaps not entirely obvious), we should like to know why this is so.

[66] Smuts discusses and dismisses this suggestion in (unpublished manuscript).

the connection between love and rationality, rather than merely a pointer to what plausible accounts need to say, namely that love can be rationally permissible, but not rationally required.

In the rest of this chapter, I will present a view on which love cannot be rationally permissible or impermissible as in sufficiently fitting or unfitting to its object but, rather, in the sense of being intelligible or unintelligible given the lover's values and preferences. The idea is that while love cannot be rationally called for, it can be rationalized in the sense of being rendered intelligible or comprehensible in virtue of some minimal coherence between the love and the lover's other attitudes.

The rationalizing view, as I call it, is inconsistent with the reasons view 1 and 2, but consistent with the no-reasons view. I suggest that the rational constraints on love that I take the rationalizing view to provide may satisfy our desire for love to be somehow connected to reasons and rationality which is a main challenge for the no-reasons view. Once we clearly grasp that this kind of rationalization of love, and the kind of rational constraints on love it provides, is available, we might take it to be less implausible of the no-reasons view to say that love cannot be in a stronger (normative) way irrational.

6. The Rationalizing View

In "Loving the Lovable" (2014), Katrien Schaubroeck argues that love necessarily involves an evaluative belief about its object, namely that the beloved is lovable. Love is, however, not a *response* to any such belief. This means that love cannot be a rationally required response, as claimed by the reasons view 1. Nor can it be a rationally permissible response to the beloved, as claimed by the reasons view 2. Nevertheless, Schaubroeck takes there to be reasons *for* love *once it is felt* by an agent. These reasons are not justifying reasons but, instead, reasons that serve to rationalize love, to render it intelligible. I therefore call her view (which Schaubroeck herself calls the loving-for-reason-theory) *the rationalizing view of love*.[67]

[67] Note that what I have in mind is not 'rationalization' in Robert Solomon's sense of "manufacturing persuasive reasons in order to convince oneself or others [that one's love is rational or justified]." (Solomon 2002:8) I am interested in the kind of

Standard views of love distinguish between being loveable and to be loved by someone. We love someone because we find her lovable. Or, perhaps, we love someone and therefore we find her lovable. According to Schaubroeck, though, this is a mistaken distinction: being lovable is simply to be found lovable by another person. She rejects the assumption that there is a temporal order between love and its reasons (loveable qualities) and claims instead that a person is loveable only at the same time, and for as long, as she is loved. The lovability of the beloved is not something that *precedes* the lover's love; it is not as though we love a person *because* we discover that she possesses certain pre-existing lovable features. Nor does the beloved become lovable as a *consequence* of being loved; it is not the case that we first start to love a person and then attributes to her a certain lovability. Instead there is a *co-originality* of love's reasons and the mere attitude. The attitude and the lovability come together and are dependent on one another, according to Schaubroeck: there is a conceptual connection between loving someone – in finding her lovable – and in seeing reasons for one's love. Part of what it is for a rational agent to love another person is to be capable of pointing to reasons for love, i.e., to properties that make the beloved appear lovable to the lover. (Schaubroeck 2014: 115) There are, in this sense, reasons only *for* the love one is feeling, but no reasons *to* feel a love that one is not currently feeling. The lovable properties exist insofar and only as long as the object is loved. For instance, someone's wittiness, looks, empathy or crooked finger can be recognized as such by anyone, but if you love a person who has these properties, they may be lovable qualities of your beloved, i.e., ways in which he

rationalization that the lover might sincerely take to actually make sense of the love, and that others could see as intelligible given what the lover is like. It is, however unclear to me how exactly Solomon understands 'justifying reasons' and 'justification' and how much our disagreement is merely terminological. Solomon writes "Reasons that justify love are both true and persuasive. (Minimally, they make other people appreciate the point of one's love.) Rationalizations tend to be hollow and unpersuasive." (2002: 8) Earlier in the same article, Solomon has stated: "I would still maintain that a demand for justification may be perverse or cynical, but I no longer doubt the relevance of reasons in and for love, including a modest notion of justification (minimally, as 'making intelligible')". (Solomon 2002: 2)

appears lovable to you. If so, these properties constitute reasons for your love.

Reasons for love have a particularity that is ill-fit with the "perspective-independent force of justificatory reasons," says Schaubroeck. (2014: 115) The fact that you cannot have reasons *to* love a person, but only reasons *for* your love insofar as you indeed do love, makes reasons for love attitude-dependent in a way that disqualifies them from the universality required for them to be justifying reasons: "the reasons for loving someone are internal to the concrete activity of one particular person loving another particular person, and therefore it is *in principle* not possible that they be repeated outside of that context." (Schaubroeck 2014: 120, emphasis in original.) Reasons for love are not transposable to other objects of love, but tied to an actual, particular love relation. To ask Romeo why he loves Juliet is not to ask why anyone should love Juliet; rather it is to ask him to account for the love that he de facto feels.

Schaubroeck uses Elizabeth Anscombe's notion of 'desirability characterization' to illustrate how loving a person is to conceive of her as lovable and, in that, being capable to account for how, under what aspects, or in what ways, she appears lovable to the lover. To desire something is, on Anscombe's view, to conceive of it as desirable, and, thus, to see it under the guise of the good. This doesn't mean that the agent can only desire what is in fact good, or desire only that which she believes she is justified in desiring, but, insofar as she desires it she is at least able to account for its guise of goodness, or how it appears to her as being desirable. (Anscombe 1957).

On Schaubroeck's interpretation of Anscombe, providing such an account is to offer reasons for our desire: it is to answer in a non-causal way the question *why* we desire the thing we desire. Likewise, to love a person is to conceive of her as lovable, and, in that, to see her under the guise of lovability. This conceptual restriction of love is no restriction on what an object needs to be like in order to be loved. Nor does it entail that the lover takes herself to be justified in loving the beloved. Rather, it is a restriction on an agent to have the sort of self-knowledge with which she can make sense of her love by articulating how or in what ways he is lovable. Again, these are not reasons *to* love the beloved in the first place but, instead, reasons *for*

the love she feels. It is part of love's intelligibility conditions that we, in this sense, love for reasons. (Schaubroeck 2014: 113ff)

To get clearer about Schaubroeck's view, it might be helpful to contrast it with a view such as that defended by Troy Jollimore (2011). According to Jollimore, love is indeed a response to something external, to actual traits of the beloved. (Jollimore 2011: 26) Central to his view is, however, that the lover's loving attention is required to be able to value these traits (or, in Schaubroeck's terminology, find these traits lovable). Unlike Jollimore, though, Schaubroeck denies that the value of the beloved's traits – their lovability – can be acknowledged from a neutral perspective, or by someone who is not lovingly engaged with the beloved. In a key quote Schaubroeck states that

> [I]n my view, if someone is de facto loved, he must be lovable, for the lover must conceive her beloved as lovable if she loves him. Being lovable is nothing else but being considered lovable by a lover, as there is no disengaged, neutral standpoint from where to determine what counts as a lovable feature. (Schaubroeck 2014: 116)

According to Jollimore, anyone can in principle acknowledge the lovable features of the beloved in the sense that their value is out there for everyone to see, even though only the lover through her loving vision is *de facto* able to see or appreciate their value. As Schaubroeck points out, though, and plausibly to my mind, there is a principled difficulty in settling (or acknowledging) whether a feature *actually is* lovable, as it appears to the lover, or not lovable, as it appears to people who are not in love with the person in question.

We may understand this disagreement by considering Schaubroeck's and Jollimore's different discussions of Iris Murdoch's famous example about the mother-in-law who initially finds her daughter-in-law to be silly, vulgar, and juvenile, but who, after questioning her own prejudices and making sure to pay close and unbiased attention to the daughter-in-law, finds her to be "not vulgar but refreshingly simple, not undignified but spontaneous, not noisy but gay, not tiresomely juvenile but delightfully youthful." (Murdoch 1970: 18, quoted in Schaubroeck 2014: 119)

Jollimore's take on this example is that the mother-in-law, through her newfound loving vision is able to see or detect certain valuable properties in the beloved that were previously hidden to her, and that are still hidden to others. The lovable qualities are out there, in principle open for anyone to detect, but only the lover is able to see them. But, Schaubroeck, asks, "which quality is already there in the case of the daughter-in-law: youthfulness or immaturity?" There seems to be "no way to decide this matter objectively," and, therefore, it is "problematic to separate *the existence* of the valuable feature from its *rationalizing* force or, in Jollimore's terms, the *acknowledgment* of a valuable feature from its *appreciation*. It often seems to go like this: only when we love someone do we perceive his lovable qualities, and only through perception can we establish the existence of these qualities." (Schaubroeck 2014: 120, emphases in original.) The emphasis here is on the principled difficulty to possess as well as to lack properties that are lovable in some perspective-neutral sense - not on the difficulties in giving a plausible account of what the properties which render appropriate love might be, more specifically.

Schaubroeck takes there to be nothing more to being lovable than to be considered as such by a lover since there is no neutral, disengaged perspective from which it can be determined whether the things about a beloved that are found lovable by the lover, e.g., the manners of the daughter-in-law, do in fact count as lovable. The lover will by definition see the beloved, and, in that, certain things about her, as lovable, while people who do not love this particular person will by definition not see her, or (these) things about her, as lovable. To claim that the beloved doesn't *really* have the lovability that the lover sees in her would be to privilege the non-lover's standpoint on whether she is lovable or not, and it is unclear why such a standpoint would be more actual than the lover's. And, it is also unclear why we should privilege the lover's perspective on what properties the beloved possesses, as Jollimore's account seems to suggest.

It could perhaps be thought that we try to justify love in an "objective" way, as e.g. Kolodny thinks, even though no such justification can be given if, as Schaubroeck argues, love and lovability cannot be separated. I think Schaubroeck is right, though, to suggest that what we offer are rationalizations of our love rather than

justifications of it. We do not aim to account for some sort of neutrally recognizable value in our beloved; rather we account for what we take to be appealing with our beloved, why it makes sense for *us* to love her.

Below I shall suggest that a "Schaubroeckian" rationalizing view of love is able to account for a number of intuitively plausible rational restrictions of love, even though it denies the existence of justifying reasons for love, and is thus inconsistent with the two reasons views. My idea is that we, by spelling out in greater detail what it is to rationalize love, can derive conditions on rationally permissible love that largely accounts for the initially stated intuitions. Even though (and because) these restrictions have to do with a different kind of rationality than what the reasons view 1 and 2 try to account for, they can be embraced by the no-reasons view in order to make it appear less revisionary of our intuitive ideas about love's reasons.

There are, however, a few ambiguities in Schaubroeck's account, and I will therefore first try to develop it in certain respects.

6.1 Some Ambiguities

First, Schaubroeck talks about conceptual requirements of love and conditions of intelligibility of attitudes, but it is unclear whether she takes it to be a conceptual requirement of love that the lover himself is capable of rationalizing his love, or whether she only takes it to be a conceptual requirement that the lover, *insofar as he is rational*, is capable of rationalizing his love. Only the latter interpretation allows for the possibility of rational restrictions: if love is *per definition* rationalizable, love cannot be more or less appropriately felt. Now, Schaubroeck writes on the one hand that it is a "conceptual necessity" that a "*rational* agent…has the power to make sense of his desires [and that a similar] connection between mental attitudes and reason…also manifests itself in the case of love". (2014: 115, my emphasis) This seems to suggest the possibility of loving someone without being able to rationalize one's love. If we can love without loving rationally we can derive rational conditions on love from what is required of rational love, i.e., from the kind of love that a rational agent feels. On the other hand, though, Schaubroeck declares that she will be talking

about some consequences of "love's rational nature" (2014: 08) which may be taken to suggest that it is not love that you feel unless you are capable of rationalizing your love-like attitude. I will simply go with the former interpretation of her view, however, since I find it most fruitful. Intuitively not every instance of love is rationally permissible, and the present chapter aims to account for what this might mean, more precisely.

Schaubroeck furthermore writes that when we ask 'why do you love him/her' we ask not for a justification but for a rationalization of the love, i.e., "[w]e ask the lover to make sense of his love, to put it into context, to give it meaning, to make it intelligible. People are not always capable of answering this question without blinking. They may find it difficult or impossible to answer in some cases". (2014: 112) This actualizes a second ambiguity in Schaubroeck's account: It is unclear whether she regards the rationalization of love as a success term, i.e., whether a rational lover is capable of rationalizing, as in rendering intelligible, his love, or if rationality only demands of an agent to rationalize, in the sense of *trying* to render intelligible, his love. Schaubroeck writes that her "view makes sense of daily life conversations by understanding the reasons cited by lovers as ways to make their love intelligible from an engaged point of view rather than to objectively justify their love. That they try to make their loves intelligible is entailed by the fact that they are rational, self-conscious agents." (2014: 118) The word 'try' seems to suggest that Schaubroeck does not consider the rationalization of one's love to require success, and that what is required of a rational, loving agent is merely that he regards the 'why do you love him/her' question as sensible, and is prepared to try to answer it, whatever the prospects he may see for him to answer it satisfiably, and his ideas of what a satisfying answer would consist in.

It is, however, hard to see why a lover who sincerely tries to rationalize his love but is destined to fail terribly to render it intelligible would nevertheless love in the manner of a rational agent. Generally, the term rationalization is used as a success term, i.e., to rationalize is to succeed in rendering the object of the rationalization intelligible, or else the attempted rationalization does not qualify as a rationalization. To allow for unsuccessful rationalizations of love

would lead to absurd consequences, such as a total detachment between rationalization and intelligibility. It would be to allow for a rational lover to rationalize her love – which, on Schaubroeck's view, is an attitude that involves (positive) valuing – by pointing to lovable features of her beloved that she deep down takes her beloved to not possess, or features that she deep down knows that she detests.

On what I take to be the most plausible version of Schaubroeck's account, rationalization is a success term: Love is rationalized when the lover is at least in principle able to rationalize his love, as in rendering it intelligible. What is crucial for rationalized love is that if the lover were to have perfect self-knowledge and reasoning skills he would be able to rationalize, as in rendering intelligible, his love. Saying this is to allow for cases of rationalizable in which the agent does not actually rationalize his love, or in fact finds it impossible to do so.

In sum, my development of Schaubroeck's view holds that love cannot be rationally required, but it can be rationalized in the sense of rendered intelligible. Such rationalization has to be in principle possible in order for love to be rationally permissible. (This is a necessary but perhaps not sufficient criterion on rationally permissible love.) Rationalization is, furthermore, a success term and we may try but fail to rationalize our love. Next I will try to show how rational constraints on love, i.e., conditions on which love is rationally permissible, can be established once we establish what is required of love's rationalization.

6.2 Derived Rational Constraints on Love

Let's first return to the quote in which Schaubroeck states that "if someone is de facto loved, he must be lovable, for the lover must [conceptually speaking] conceive her beloved as lovable if she loves him. Being lovable is nothing else but being considered lovable by a lover, as there is no disengaged, neutral standpoint from where to determine what counts as a lovable feature." (Schaubroeck 2014: 116) On Schaubroeck's characterization of love's positively evaluative character, love cannot be separated from seeing the beloved under a guise of a kind of value, namely lovability. If – and only if – you love

a person, you see her as, or take her to be, lovable. If you do not love her, she doesn't appear lovable to you; her features are simply features – not lovable features.

Contrasting love with fear is useful in order to bring out the difference between love as a rationally justified attitudinal response and love as a rationalizable attitude. How fearful something appears to you can be compared with how fearful it actually is. If you suffer from elevator phobia, you are aware of the discrepancy between how fearsome the object of your phobia strikes you as being (very: almost lethal) and how fearful it actually is (insignificantly so: almost entirely safe), yet you fear elevators nevertheless. In contrast, love for a particular person cannot be separated from finding her lovable in the general sense that there is a certain light, or air, around her. Her lovability is actual, it is out there, in that you love her. But, unlike an object's attitude-independent fearsomeness to which your experience of the object's fearsomeness can be compared, there is no further lovability independent of the lover's love for the beloved. Through your loving attitude she has this special significance. When you no longer love her (or if you never loved her), she loses (or never had) this lovability.

While a lover necessarily considers the beloved as lovable, any rationalization of love would have to do with specific qualities of the beloved, and, while you may find that every little thing she does is magic, this needn't be so in order for you to rationalize your love. Normally, not everything about a person strikes us as lovable just because we love her. The quotation earlier exemplifies how Schaubroeck doesn't separate between being lovable and possessing lovable features (or being lovable in particular respects). On my construal of her view, such lack of separation indicates that there is some *coherence* or *lack of discrepancy* between how you, on the one hand, see a person as overall lovable, and how, on the other hand, various features of hers strike you as lovable insofar as you are a rational agent in love. The rationalization of love can then be understood as a way to demonstrate the coherence between the overall lovability of the beloved and the specific ways in which she is lovable, thereby rendering the love intelligible. By trying to spell out what such

coherence consists in and minimally requires, we can derive rational constraints on love.

6.3 Intelligibility as Coherence

Similar to how Anscombe takes the good to be multiform, Schaubroeck takes the lovable to be multiform and allows for endless ways in which a person may be characterized as lovable, the only condition being that what is referred to as lovable is "intelligibly valuable". Thereby her view excludes that "a lover would think that her beloved is horrible." (Schaubroeck 2014: 115-116) Does the intelligibility Schaubroeck refers to entail that there are certain evaluative restrictions on what specific features an agent can point to in a rationalization of her love? Are there features (e.g., horribleness) that cannot qualify as lovable by an agent, insofar as the love is rationalizable?

Schaubroeck does not offer any definition of intelligibility, merely some suggestions as to what such a definition should contain: It should be generous enough to include not only broadly moral features, at the same time as not every way in which an agent may find her beloved lovable can be part of a rationalization of love. Unlike what a truly anscombian (perfectionist) account would suggest, Schaubroeck does not demand that what is intelligibly seen as lovable about a beloved must belong to a list of *actually* lovable qualities. This since she doesn't take lovability to be metaphysically prior to love or out there for us to discover and respond to; rather, there is no lovability without love (and vice versa). (Schaubroeck 2014: 123) Yet, Schubroeck says that "reasons for loving cannot be entirely private either" since intelligibility would then not be guaranteed. (Schaubroeck 2014: 116) The thought seems to be that there has to be some intersubjective standard from which we can settle what is intelligibly valuable or not.

Now, given that we cannot from a neutral perspective assess whether someone is lovable, it strikes me as arbitrary to say that certain feature are not valuable enough to qualify as lovable features. This would entail an asymmetry problem similar to the one we faced when considering the reasons view 2. Why should we accept an

evaluative standard for what cannot rationally be seen as a lovable feature but no evaluative standard of what rationally ought to be seen as lovable? It is, I hold, intelligible that a person with very odd, or unusual, general values finds something very odd or unusual lovable. We would need some motivation as to why a person's love would fail to make sense just because *others* are puzzled by the features which the agent takes to make his beloved lovable. We may be immoral for finding our beloved's cruelness toward children or animals lovable, and imprudent in finding our beloved's deeply controlling tendencies toward us adorable, but the rational constraints on love are, I believe, better understood as being about coherence and intelligibility in a way that is independent of moral or prudential justification.

6.4 By the Lover's Own Lights

I suggest that the most plausible way of developing the rationalization in Schaubroeck's view is for it to be about rendering the love intelligible, as in coherent, by the lover's own lights. The fact that love is a positive attitude, a way of valuing the beloved, entails certain restrictions on what may rationally appear lovable to the lover; it is irrational, as in incoherent, that something about a person that would have struck you as highly repelling had you not loved the person appears to you as lovable in your beloved. Rational constraints on love, I think, are largely about coherence between how the beloved is valuable in the manner of lovable to the lover and how other things are valuable to this lover.[68] Rationally permissible love should thus be understood as a love that it is possible to make sense of, put it into context, and render intelligible, *not* in relation to any independent moral or prudential standards, but instead given what the lover is like, in particular her evaluative framework or entirety of evaluative beliefs.

[68] Again, rational constraints are about rendering intelligible love that is already in place; it doesn't require you to value things about your beloved that normally appeal to you in other people. (Nor are you rationally required to appreciate other people because of how they may remind you of your beloved in various respect in which you find your beloved lovable.) The rational requirements merely demand the respects in which you in fact find your beloved lovable can be made to fit more or less with your overall evaluative framework.

My understanding of intelligibility is not too far from what Schaubroeck's hints at since there is *some* intersubjectivity in that I assume that any person with full information of the lover's mental states and evaluative framework would find her love intelligible insofar as the lover in question is rational. This leads to rather weak rational constraints on love, a result I take to be in order in part because Schaubroeck is skeptic of intellectualism in the realm of love's reasons, but also – and more importantly – because the main intuition that we are trying to account for is that love is not *entirely* detached from rationality. (Modifications can, however, be made in accordance with a stronger notion of intersubjectivity, if desired.)

As I see it, there are derived restrictions on the role that beliefs about horribility and other subjectively negative things can play in order for love to be rationalizable. Love is an overall positive attitude toward a person and so how you find someone lovable cannot be in clear tension with how she is horrible intimate your evaluative framework, insofar as your attitude is rationalizable. Part of meeting this criterion is for there to be some proportionality between the ways you find your lover lovable and the ways you find her horrible.

6.5 Loving the Horrible - Not Their Horribility

On my version of the rationalizing view, there is no rational restriction against loving people you take to be horrible or disgusting, but instead a requirement not to love someone whom you perceive as overall horrible and a requirement to not find the horrible things about them lovable. You are rationally prohibited from loving someone whom you perceive as overall horrible since that would be to see this person in an overall positive light at the same time as you see him in an overall negative light. This is consistent with the possibility that you can love someone, and thus find her lovable, without taking her to be lovable in each and every respect; you can even consider her horrible, even morally repugnant, in *some* respect(s) without necessarily being irrational. For instance, an abused wife is unlikely to find her husband's abuse of her lovable, just like a hostage is unlikely to find the fact that her beloved kidnapper is forcing her to stay with him lovable. While being aware of their respective

beloved's darker sides, these women may well consider their beloveds as lovable in various other respects, which they would mention if asked why they love the one they love. Insofar as these women nevertheless love irrationally, it is because what they find lovable is too insignificant as compared to their beliefs about the extensive horribility of their beloveds, given their evaluative framework, and given that love is an overall positively evaluative attitude. I'll return to this in the next section about proportionality.

While it is coherent to love someone whom you find horrible in certain respects, it is incoherent that you love someone *for* her horrible features, i.e., to consider her lovable because of her, as you see it, horrible features. It is one thing to accept that your beloved is not perfect and sometimes behaves in ways you find highly upsetting. If you still find him lovable in certain other respects your love may well be rationally permissible. It is quite another to consider your beloved lovable partly in the very respects that clearly cut against your values. The latter should strike us as somewhat irrational.

The standard for rationally permitted love is, as mentioned, what is intelligibly valuable to a lover, given what this lover's evaluative framework. It is not unintelligible to consider the beloved's tendency to instill fear in people, or her proneness to deliver nasty and slightly hurtful comments to most everyone, as part of her charm if you admire or are generally attracted to such a character traits. Perhaps you generally take strokes of evil in a person as to make her more interesting. Given that you do not care all that much about being respectful, considerate or decent, it is, similarly, not irrational if your beloved appears lovable to you for joking around in a way that make others feel uncertain about themselves, or for never letting a child win a board game, or for all the work she puts into cheating with her taxes. What *is* incoherent is when the features that strike you as lovable are features that would truly repel or disgust you if found in other people. If you, e.g., are deeply committed to your work as a volunteer with the National Coalition for the Homeless, yet you point to your beloved's adorable habit of kicking homeless people in the face whenever he passes them by in the street as a reason for your love,

this would be incoherent and thus fail to be part of a rationalization of your love.[69]

We should, I think, specify this rational requirement on love in such a way that it does not demand that things that you would *mildly* disapprove of in others cannot strike you as lovable about your beloved. The rationally prohibited incoherence has to be a drastic discrepancy between the features that strike you as lovable and how such features normally strikes you. This since our evaluative framework (and thus, what is intelligibly valuable to us) is likely to be in constant change, not least due to our relationships with other people, and how we continuously, to some extent, reevaluate various things, including character traits, manners and acts. Perhaps this can be describes as a sort of reflective equilibrium: your evaluative framework is likely to have a considerable causal impact on whom you are able to love, at the same time as the people you love or even merely interact with, are likely to induce certain modifications in your evaluative framework. If this picture is roughly true of a lover, there is never perfect coherence between someone's lovability and the lover's evaluative framework.

6.6 Proportionality

Above we have seen that, while coherence between lovability and your evaluative framework rationally prohibits you from loving your beloved for her horrible ways, at least if they are seriously (subjectively) horrible, it is not necessarily incoherent to love a person whom you take to be horrible in certain respects. A second restriction on how a rational person can take her beloved to be horrible has to do with the extent to which she takes him to be horrible in proportion to the extent to which she finds him lovable. As noted briefly in the discussion about the housewife and hostage in the previous section, the lovability cannot be too subjectively insignificant as compared

[69] This example is borrowed from Edyvane (2003: 69). Edyvane doesn't take a stand on whether love is actually grounded on reasons but seems to agree that people in general tend to rationalize their love in the sense I have sketched. Cf. e.g.: "We can perfectly consistently hold that, while our love is not dependent upon the existence of reasons, our love is dependent upon our willingness to search for reasons that may serve to render the love intelligible." (ibid.)

with the horribility if an overall (positive) loving attitude is to be coherent and in that rationally permissible.

It is incoherent to consider someone overall lovable, and thereby, in a way, overall valuable, while at the same time finding her horrible in all respects besides one which is a feature that is not something that you normally care much about, say, someone's impeccable taste in shoes (on the assumption that you are not a shoe fetishist).

To give a somewhat more realistic case that illustrates my proportionality point, think of Tom in Jonathan Franzen's novel *Purity* who has finally divorced Anabel after having been stuck in a highly dysfunctional and destructive marriage for a decade. Tom cannot help but love Anabel even though he can't stand being around her, and even though the repeated contact and interaction he for some mysterious reason cannot resist having is making him miserable and torn to the extent that he is thinking about killing both of them. He is now disgusted with mostly everything about Anabel. Every feature that he can think of as having struck him as lovable, at one time or another, now gives him somewhat of a bad taste. Or, more precisely, he is still compulsively physically attracted to her, at least at times when her looks don't repulse him. Tom's love for Anabel is irrational because of its lack of proportions. Even though the specific lovability Tom sees in Anabel is her sexual appeal which is something intelligibly valuable given his evaluative framework, such lovability is too minimal as compared to how all other beliefs Tom has about Anabel paint her in such an extremely negative light, as to make an overall loving and thereby positive attitude coherent.

In sum, I have argued that the best development of Schaubroeck's theory states that rationally permissible love is a love that is rationalizable, and that the intelligibility of rationalized love should be understood in terms of coherence between the overall lovability of the person and the specific ways in which she is seen as lovable by the lover. I have suggested two general ways in which rationalizations of love may fail, each of which thus indicates that the love is rationally prohibited. The first is when the characterization of the specific ways in which the beloved is lovable, are in stark tension with how the evaluative framework of the lover would characterize them as vastly negative. The second is when the lovability is too insignificant as

compared to the immense negative beliefs about the beloved as to render intelligible an overall loving attitude.

6.7 Changing the Topic?

At this point, someone might perhaps object in something like the following manner: The intuitions we started out from in 1.2 concerned a connection between love and rationality as in appropriateness, not a connection between love and rationality as in intelligibility. The rational restrictions we initially were after had to do with a fittingness between love and its object, not with coherence between love and (a subset) of the rest of the lover's attitudes. So have I not simply changed the topic? The fact that "why do you love him" is often treated as meaning the same as "what do you see in him", doesn't mean that someone who posed these questions would be satisfied if the respondent is able to render his love intelligible. The continued conversation may then be: "OK, I can see why you love him, it makes complete sense to me given what you are like as a person and what you have been through. But you should really see a therapist. These are really terrible reasons for you to love a person. It is madness to find such a person lovable; he clearly isn't and your love is entirely irrational."

Admittedly, our daily discourse does seem to suggest that we are committed to some sort of reasons view of love. The rationalizing view can nevertheless, I believe, be understood as to complement the no-reasons view in a way that renders its rejection of rational constraints on love more plausible. Given the problems that the reasons view 1 and 2 face it is worth considering if rationalizations of love can be at least part of what we are actually after when we ask for love's reasons. By reinterpreting at least part of our practice of trying to justify love as a matter of instead trying to rationalize it, we are provided with at least some weak rational restrictions on love. To meet the rational restrictions on love suggested by the rationalizing view is to be rationally permitted to love a person, but not in the same sense as the reasons view 2 tries to account for. My idea is that a no-reasons view can in this way be provided with *some* rational restrictions of love, albeit not of the fittingness kind. This is an improvement as

compared to merely pointing to reasons to initiate/end a relationship, and reasons to nourish or fight the love one feels.

6.8 Objections to the Rationalizing View

6.8.1. Vagueness

Someone might object to my version of the rationalizing view that it offers no real guidance to when love is and is not rationally permissible, it only states that coherence is required for rationally permissible love.

If the objection is that my theory does not offer *any* guidance, it is simply mistaken. There are clear cases in which the agent's attitudes are coherent enough to be rationally permissible as well as clear cases in which the agent's attitudes are incoherent to the extent that render impossible any rationalization of the love.

The objection may then instead be that the theory doesn't provide any tools with which we can decide on each particular instance of love whether or not it is rationally permissible. We are presented with ways in which rationalizations may fail but it is unclear at what exact level of coherence they succeed in rendering the love intelligible and thus rationally permissive. This is true, but it is not a problem for my view since there is in fact no clear line between rationally permitted or rationally prohibited love; there is no non-arbitrary point at which the incoherence within, or discrepancy between, the lovability of the beloved and the lover's evaluative framework is large enough for the love to be rationally prohibited. And so no theory can be expected to tell whether certain unclear instances of love are rationally permissible or not. Being able to account for why, or in virtue of what, we can make a rough distinction between rational (rationally permissible) and irrational (rationally prohibited) love is enough to make my theory interesting.

6.8.2 Evaluative Worry

As I have developed Schaubroeck's view, the only prudential or moral restrictions when it comes to who we love are given by our own, individual evaluative framework. Insofar as you care about morality, you cannot love Hitler for the ways in which you find him immoral,

and it is highly unclear that the ways in which you find him lovable would be sufficient to make an overall loving attitude coherent. Nevertheless, it may be rational as in coherent for someone with terrible moral values to love Hitler, even in part for, say, his "fascinating and impressive" cruelty. Likewise, it may also be rational for a housewife to love her alcoholic, abusive spouse, even in part for the very ways in which he mistreats her, such as his violent "adorably passionate" jealousy when she has been on the phone with her mom. But, an objector might ask, isn't the obvious irrationality of cases like these exactly what motivates our intuition that there are rational constraints on love?

In response, I want to stress that even though it is in principle possible that love for a moral monster like Hitler and love for an abusive spouse are rationally permissible on my view, it is highly unlikely that actual people have evaluative frameworks with which love for such persons would be coherent enough for love to be rationalizable. Most people *do* care to some significant extent about morality and about themselves and so it will be a sign of irrationality to love someone who has the extent of immorality as does Hitler, or whom it would be as imprudent to love as an alcoholic, abusive spouse.

A person can furthermore put more or less comparative weight on prudence and morality, and it is in any event not an unwelcome implication that an immoralist is rationally permitted to love a moral monster for her moral monstrousness, nor that a masochist is rationally permitted to love a person for the ways in which he makes her feel bad. Of course, we may well rationally criticize the evaluative frameworks of a masochist, the abusive spouse lover, or the (rare but conceivable) rational Hitler lovers. These people have good reasons to rethink their values, they are being unreasonable, but they are not necessarily being irrational in the sense of being incoherent.

Critics might then worry that my view implies that we ought rationally to "trade up" in the sense that if X loves Y, X is rationally required to love Z rather than Y if X's finding Z lovable would be more coherent than X's finding Y lovable. Now, in the context of rationalizing love, the question of coherence only arises once X loves a person. Only love that is in place is rationalizable. So the question

of trading one's old, less rationalizable love for a new, more rationalizable love doesn't arise. And if X loves both Y and Z at the same time, we can ask whether X's love for either Y or Z is the most coherent, but any answer to this question has no direct bearing on whether X rationally ought to love Y rather than Z (if X at present loved both and had to let one go). For one thing, it is far from obvious that coherence in itself is a value that any individual ought to promote. Whether or not X ought to (try to) love only Y rather than both Y and Z has, rather has to do with pragmatic considerations such as how good X's love for Y would be as compared to X's love for Z.

6.8.3 Metaphysical Worry

An objection of a different kind is that Schaubroeck's account (and my Schaubroeckian rationalizing view) rests on a metaphysically untenable picture. The account states that lovability, as well as reasons for love, are co-original and that they are tied to the perspective of the lover. But, one might ask, why should we accept a view that seems to posit the existence of reasons that are only reasons for the one person they are reasons for, and in virtue of being reasons for her? Why not just say that what happens is simply that the properties in question are valued by a person in a certain way? Such valuing doesn't make the properties reasons for love, instead the fact that the properties are valued in the ways typical of a lover generates reasons for the lover (or for any person who would value these properties in the way the lover does) to act in certain loving ways toward the beloved. Harry Frankfurt (2004) seems to suggest a theory of this kind.

Schaubroeck's metaphysics are, however, only mysterious if we understand her as to be talking about justifying reasons, which she is not. There is nothing metaphysically strange about tying lovability to a perspective provided that lovability is the property of appearing to another person in a certain light, namely the light in which we find her insofar as we love her.[70] Also, given that we understand reasons

[70] It might be thought that I am in this chapter implicitly rejecting a premise for Chapter 4, namely that love is, ideally, dependent on certain positive properties. However, the rationalizing view does indeed allow for property-dependence in the

for love as to mean roughly the same as that pointed to in answers to the question "What do you see in your beloved?", there is nothing mysterious about such reasons only being had by the lover: these reasons are only specifications of how a person you love is loveable to you. A Schaubroeckian view is superior to the Frankfurtian one in that first, it gets the temporal order right: it is not that we first fall in love and then, as a consequence, find our beloved adorable in all sorts of ways. These two things happen at the same time, albeit often gradually. Secondly, while Frankfurt's view doesn't allow for any rational restrictions on whom we love, Schaubroeckian views do. This, too, is a comparative advantage of the latter.

6.8.4. Love - Liking Asymmetry

On my version of the rationalizing view, reasons for love are attitude-dependent: you have them only insofar as you in fact love a person. This since the reasons are part of the concrete activity that takes place when you as a particular person love another particular person. An objection that can be directed to this view is that it makes love seem very different from mere liking which is, according to this objection, a mistake. We wouldn't say that you can only have reasons to like a person if you in fact like her, or that the reasons cannot in principle be repeated outside the context in which you de facto like another person. If you like a person because of the brilliant analyses she offers on mostly any topic that the two of you come to talk about, such a feature is a (pro tanto) reason for you to like all other people who possesses such brilliance.

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sense that a person X is unable to love any person Y unless Y has certain features, such as, for instance, benevolence, and lacked certain other features, such as, for instance severe homophobia. Love may also be indirectly property-dependent, on my view, insofar as it depends on that the lover embraces her love in virtue of certain features (most likely, those that she finds lovable). What my view denies is just that love can be more or less rational, fitting or appropriate response to the properties it depends on. The rationalizing view is furthermore consistent with that love is ideal in the sense of being better or more desirable if it depends on certain properties rather than others. It may, e.g., be part of ideal love that the properties that are found lovable by the lover, and/or in virtue of which she cherishes her love, can reasonably be seen as valuable also for people who are not in love with the beloved in question. Edyvane (2003) seems to suggest something along these lines.

While it has proved difficult to account for what distinguishes love from mere liking, in particular the depth involved in the former, the difference is ordinarily thought of as a difference in degree, rather than a difference in kind. Furthermore, even though love and liking are closely related and we tend to very much like the person that we love, there is a difference between the two attitudes, and it seems to me that Schraubroeckian views may well be useful in accounting for it. Something does happen when you go from liking to loving that person. When we point to what we like about our romantic partner we may be expected to like the same things in any other person (or have an explanation for why this is not so). But when we point to what we love about them, such as their dimples, or how they go from being unbearable to being most pleasant when they have their morning coffee, people are unlikely to respond to this by saying things, such as: "Oh, then I suspect you love this about Professor Jones as well! She has very similar dimples and remember at that conference, her mood shifted just like that when all of us had breakfast together." Our daily discourse suggests that we expect reasons for liking and reasons for love to behave differently.

7. Concluding Remarks

In the philosophical debate about love there is an ongoing debate between defenders of the reasons view(s) of love and defenders of the no-reasons view of love with regards to whether love can be appropriate, justified or rational as in being a fitting or apt response to its object. In this chapter I have discussed the question of how to best understand some common intuitions about rational constraints on love. I separated between three different positions on whether love can be rationally permissible, prohibited and/or required. According to the reasons view 1, love can be rationally required and rationally prohibited; according to the reason view 2, love can be rationally permissible and rationally prohibited (but not rationally required); according to the no-reasons view love can (merely) be (equally) rationally permissible. While the first reasons view was found to have implausible implications, the second one faced a theoretically puzzling asymmetry which reduced its explanatory value.

I then discussed at some length how a different kind of rational permissibility and prohibition of love – one that concerns coherence within the lover's own attitudes rather than fittingness between the love and its object – may take care of some of our intuitions about rational constraints on love.

On my Schraubroeckian rationalizing view, there are reasons for love but not reasons to love. Love can be rationalized in the sense that the attitude can be coherent with the lover's overall evaluative framework in ways that I have specified, but love cannot be justified as in demanded by reasons. Such rationalizing view of love is compatible with, and may serve as a complement to, the no-reasons view which I initially took to be too permissive and revisionary to be plausible. A no-reasons view that adds my rationalizing view as a complement is more plausible than a no-reasons view which simply states that all love is equally rationally permissible.

Whether this is the only kind of rational constraints on love that we ought to accept and whether a version of the no-reasons view that includes them is overall a better option than the reasons views of love 1 and 2 given the difficulties the latter ones face need to be further investigated.

Sammanfattning

Kärlek och vänskap spelar roll. Stor roll. Få saker betyder mer för oss än våra nära och kära. Det är med dessa vi delar vår glädje och vår sorg och ett liv utan närstående ter sig oerhört fattigt för de flesta av oss. Generellt sett verkar vi på goda grunder ge kärlek och nära relationer en central roll i våra liv. Men vilka är dessa goda grunder? Hur, närmare bestämt, ska vi som (i någon utsträckning) rationella och etiska varelser förhålla oss till kärlek, vänskap och nära relationer? Denna avhandling gör fyra nedslag i den samtida filosofiska diskussionen om den typ av kärlek vi känner för närstående och om de relationer vi delar med dem. Syftet är att bidra till mer precisa, systematiska och rimliga sätt att förstå den betydelse som kärlek och vänskap har och bör ha i våra liv.

Introduktionskapitlet består av en översikt över en rad delfrågor, centrala begrepp och distinktioner inom den vidsträckta, filosofiska debatt som avhandlingen rör sig inom. Attityden eller det mentala tillståndet vi har i det att vi älskar en person ska, menar jag, förstås, som något mer än en enkel känsla (t.ex. känslan av pirr, ömhet eller värme). Snarare bör kärlek förstås som en disposition att ha en rad olika känslor och attityder gentemot den älskade, exempelvis känslor av uppskattning, välvilja och sårbarhet gentemot personen ifråga. Jag går igenom vad som förenar och särskiljer den kärlek som återfinns i familjerelationer, romantiska relationer och vänskap. Bland annat tar jag upp den värdefulla intimiteten som kan anses kännetecknа nära vänskap, och som rimligen utgör en del av intimiteten även i välfungerande romantiska relationer. I nära vänskap värderar vi och är särskilt mottagliga för att ta till oss hur den andre ser eller tolkar oss, och vad den andre värderar och är intresserad av. Vi ser oss själva i ett nytt, uppfriskande ljus och kan komma att styras i en riktning som vi inte hade gjort annars. Likaså styrs vi av vår väns intressen på ett mer oförmedlat vis än vad vi annars hade gjort. Det faktum att min vän är intresserad av något gör mig öppen för föremålet för intresset på ett sätt jag annars inte hade varit. Därmed underlättar

vänskapen för mig att se värde i saker jag annars inte hade sett värde i. Genom att vi på dessa vis kontinuerligt formar varandra och vår syn på vad som är värdefullt ligger vänskapen till grund för vilka vi är som personer.

Introduktionskapitlet innehåller också en relativt utförlig presentation av ett drag som förenar familjekärlek, romantisk kärlek och vänskap, nämligen den partiskhet vi uppvisar gentemot våra nära och kära. Det är inte bara så att vi *är* disponerade att bry oss mer om våra nära och kära än om andra och att vi känner för att göra saker för dem som vi inte skulle göra för vem som helst, vi *bör* också i viss utsträckning favorisera dem. Att behandla våra barn, vänner eller partners så som vi behandlar främlingar framstår i många situationer som klandervärt och innebär i förlängningen att de nära relationerna inte kan upprätthållas. Nära relationer kräver partiskhet och våra närstående har vidare rätt att förvänta sig att bli bättre behandlade än andra. Vi har särskilda moraliska förpliktelser gentemot dem.

Även om filosofer inte ifrågasätter att vi bör behandla våra nära och kära bättre än andra så råder oenighet om vad grunden till dessa särskilda förpliktelser är. Denna oenighet är temat för kapitel 2. Traditionella moraliska teorier gör gällande att moralen i grund och botten är opartisk. Varje person räknas, och ingen räknas mer än någon annan. Ingen person förtjänar som person mer eller mindre omsorg eller respekt än någon annan, varken Moder Teresa eller Vladimir Putin. Om vi ska behandla Moder Teresa eller Putin bättre eller sämre än andra så är det för att något de har gjort eller positionerna de innehar motiverar det, och inte för att de skulle vara mer eller mindre värda som personer. Exakt hur kan då en nära relation berättiga partiskhet?

Så kallade opartiskhetsteoretiker menar att nära relationer aktualiserar och intensifierar plikter vi har gentemot alla människor och att detta förklarar våra särskilda förpliktelser. All rättfärdig favorisering av närstående går att härleda till våra opartiska skäl att t.ex. göra gott och att undvika att skapa onödigt lidande, vilket vi har många chanser att på ett initierat och effektivt vis göra inom relationer, eller till våra skäl att respektera varje person genom att t.ex. hålla löften och leva upp till legitimt ställda förväntningar på oss. Dess skäl eller plikter är opartiska i det att vi har dem gentemot alla

personer, oavsett eventuell relation till dem. Att en person är din närstående påverkar alltså inte i sig vad du har skäl att göra, utan har enbart en indirekt betydelse för vad du bör göra i det att de plikter vi har gentemot alla personer förekommer oftare och blir starkare i den kontext som en nära relation utgör.

Partiskhetsteoretiker å sin sida menar i stället att det faktum att någon är din närstående visst kan ha en direkt, icke-härledd påverkan på hur du bör behandla personen ifråga. Även om särbehandling av närstående skulle gå att motivera utifrån att vi då agerar på så vis att opartiska principer uppfylls så ligger inte detta till grund för samtliga våra särskilda förpliktelser, menar partiskhetsteoretiker. Det är ofta av direkt och grundläggande, snarare än av indirekt moralisk betydelse att någon är ditt barn, din vän eller romantiska partner. Och vi kan ibland vara berättigade att favorisera våra närstående även om en sådan partiskhet inte går att motivera från ett opartiskt moraliskt perspektiv.

Enligt partiskhetsteoretiker är deras teori mest förenlig med hur vi vanligtvis tänker kring moral och partiskhet (med vårt ”common sense”-tänkande). Vi upplever att vi bör gynna vår närstående för att hon är vår närstående, och inte för att vi därmed efterlever opartiska moraliska principer. Kapitel 2 tar upp ett traditionellt och ett nytt sätt att på ett mer specifikt vis kritisera opartiskhetsteoretikernas indirekta berättigande av våra särskilda förpliktelser gentemot närstående. Traditionellt har det hävdats att indirekta berättiganden av partiskhet är orimliga eftersom en person som drivs av att uppfylla opartiska plikter inte kan uppträda genuint kärleksfullt eller vara en genuin vän. För detta krävs nämligen att du drivs av tanken på själva dina närstående när du gör saker för dem som du inte hade gjort för andra. Därför behöver opartiska teorier föreskriva att vi tränger undan våra verkliga (och opartiska) grunder för partiskhet när vi gör saker för våra nära och kära. Partiskhetsteoretiker menar att detta är orimlig karaktärisering av ett etiskt riktigt liv. Om vi drivs av våra opartiska värden så kommer vi inte kunna ha nära relationer eftersom de kärleksfulla handlingar som krävs för att upprätta sådana relationer är oförenliga med opartiska motiv. Om vi, när vi gör saker för våra nära och kära, i stället tränger undan vår övertygelse att opartiska hänsynstaganden är vad som i grunden berättigar vår särbehandling

så är vi dömda till en tillvaro där vi är avtrubbade inför våra egna moraliska övertygelser.

Jag argumenterar för att den här kritiken på sin höjd drabbar vissa opartiskhetsteorier, men inte alla. Det är inte oförenligt med genuin vänskap att drivas av opartiska principer när man exempelvis ställer upp för en vän. Snarare spelar vår pliktkänsla rörande att göra det som vi tror att (den opartiska) moralen kräver av oss en viktig roll i vår motivation: pliktkänslan fungerar som en extra motivation i fall där t.ex. vår lathet eller vårt dåliga tålamod gentemot vår närstående inte räcker till för få oss att göra det vi anser att vi bör göra.

Den nya kritiken av den indirekta karaktären på opartiskteoretiska berättigande och särskilda förpliktelser handlar i stället om att dessa teorier gör gällande att vi begår systematiska misstag när vi gör saker för närstående som vi inte skulle göra för andra. Idén är att vi när vi agerar utifrån kärlek och vänskap tydligt upplever att det som driver oss, nämligen vår specifika närstående, också är det som i grunden berättigar vår handling. Om opartiskhetsteoretikerna har rätt så tar vi miste eftersom all berättigad partiskhet, enligt dem, är berättigad i kraft av opartiska överväganden. Vem någon är, och således att vår närstående är just vår närstående, har nämligen ingen grundläggande betydelse ur ett opartiskt moraliskt perspektiv. Jag argumenterar för att denna kritik brister: Vi upplever att vår specifika närstående gör vår handling berättigad, men innehållet i vår upplevelse är inte så finkornig att det säger något om huruvida att det spelar indirekt eller direkt roll att hon är den hon är.

I kapitel 3 diskuterar jag huruvida vi inte bara bör vara partiska gentemot våra vänner med avseende på våra handlingar och hur vi känner för dem, utan även när det gäller vad vi tror om dem. Filosofer har på senare tid föreslagit att en del av att vara en god vän är att vara epistemiskt – det vill säga ”kunskapsmässigt” – partisk genom att för det första tro bättre om sina vänner än vad ens evidens ger en skäl att tro, och för det andra bearbeta ny information av dem på ett epistemiskt oansvarigt sätt. Den typiska goda vännen är betydligt mindre benägen att acceptera ny information som ställer en person i ett dåligt ljus om personen ifråga är hennes vän. För det andra tenderar en god vän att tro på de bästa möjliga hypoteserna kring en synbart dålig handling som hennes vän har begått, och hon väljer att

tolka handlingen och det karaktärsdrag handlingen kan anses uttrycka i ett mer positivt ljus än om samma handling hade utförts av en främling. Till skillnad från någon som saknar band till hennes vän, så låter hon heller inte handlingen påverka den övergripande bild hon har av sin vän i någon större utsträckning. Poängen är inte att vi är epistemiskt ofelbara när det gäller våra trosföreställningar och formandet av dessa rörande främlingar, utan att vårt alternativa beteende när vi möter ny information om våra vänner för oss längre ifrån det som väletablerade, epistemologiska teorier anser kännetecknа ett ansvarsfullt sätt att forma trosföreställningar.

Jag argumenterar för att det som i debatten ses som tecken på epistemisk oansvarighet antingen inte är något vi intuitivt kopplar samman med en god vän, eller att det i själva verket inte strider mot de epistemiska normer som debatten refererar till. Visserligen anser jag att vänner ofta gör mer positiva tolkningar av samma information om en vän än vad en främling eller opartisk betraktare skulle göra. Men mot bakgrund av min redogörelse för hur vi tolkar människor i ljuset av våra relationer med dem och den roll som våra trosföreställningar spelar i detta så bör, menar jag, inte mer positiva tolkningar av vänner nödvändigtvis ses som avsteg från väletablerade epistemiska normer.

I kapitel 4 diskuterar jag något som av filosofer har betraktats som en intern motsättning i vårt västerländska, romantiska kärleksideal. Å ena sidan vill vi att vår älskade ska ha viss urskiljning när det gäller vem hon älskar, att hon ska älska oss för att det är något visst med oss, något som gör oss till lämpliga, eller i någon mening värdiga, mottagare av hennes kärlek. Å andra sidan vill vi erhålla ovillkorlig kärlek. Vi vill kunna lita på av vi skulle vara älskade även om vi skulle begå en rad misstag eller förlora egenskaper som i nuläget gör att vår älskade älskar oss. Kärlek kan dock inte både bero på och vara oberoende av att vi har vissa goda egenskaper (och saknar vissa dåliga egenskaper). I kapitlet argumenterar jag för att vi vid närmare anblick rimligen inte anser att den bästa kärlek som finns är ovillkorlig. Snarare eftersträvar vi ett slags stabilitet i kärleken, en stabilitet som följer av vår ”committment”, hur vi och vår romantiska partner är förbundna till varandra. Även om denna idé tidigare har förts fram i debatten så menar jag att dess förespråkare har underskattat de

ansträngningar och uppoffringar som ideala romantiska partners behöver vara beredda att göra för att upprätthålla den önskvärda, stabiliserande förbundenheten. Personliga förändringar kan ta död på en romantisk kärlek som vi i bästa fall känner för en person delvis i kraft av hennes positiva egenskaper. Men om vi känner kärlek för varandra delvis i kraft av egenskaper som gör oss till bra eller lämpliga personer att gemensamt förändras ihop med genom livet så kan kärleken förbli stabil. För att kärleken ska bestå tack vare att vi förändras på ett för båda bra och givande vis ihop så behöver vi emellertid vara vaksamma på och kämpa emot de förändringar som kan komma att ligga i vägen för kärleken. I detta krävs inte bara att vi involverar varandra i saker i vårt liv som kan förändra oss på sätt som gör det svårare för den andre att älska oss, utan också att vi är beredda att avstå från vissa saker som kan driva oss i en för partnern svårsmält riktning, och att vi anstränger oss för att se värde i de sätt på vilka vår partner förändras, även om vi spontant sett hade velat ha kvar henne som hon tidigare var i det aktuella avseendet.

I det femte och avslutande kapitlet diskuterar jag frågan om huruvida kärleksattityden är underställd rationella krav och hur vi i så fall bäst förstår rationellt berättigad kärlek. Jag koncentrerar mig på romantisk kärlek, även om det jag säger sannolikt till stor del kan tillämpas på andra typer av kärlek.

Spontant sett verkar vi anse att kärlek inte är helt slumpartad utan att vi snarare, åtminstone i många fall, älskar den vi älskar på goda grunder. För att ta ett litterärt fall så verkar Romeos kärlek för Julia vara på sin plats, både sett ur Romeos perspektiv och för en utomstående betraktare. Detta även om vi (och Romeo) kanske har svårt att sätta fingret på vad exakt det är som gör kärleken berättigad. Ibland tycks emellertid människor älska någon som verkar vara ett synnerligen dåligt föremål för deras kärlek. Exempel på det skulle kunna vara ett fans kärlek till en idol han aldrig har träffat, eller en makas kärlek till sin misshandlande make. I sådana fall ligger det nära till hands att fråga personen ifråga varför hen älskar den hon älskar. Vi tycks utsätta andra och oss själva för vad som verkar vara rationell kritik av kärlek i det att vi efterfrågar något mer än orsaker till en persons kärlek. Vi efterfrågar skäl eller motiveringar för varför någon älskar en viss annan person. Detta både om kärleken tycks obegriplig

och/eller oberättigad och om vi bara är nyfikna på varför någon är så himla förtjust i just *den* personen.

Jag ställer mig frågan om vi gör bäst reda för ovan observationer genom att hävda att vi kan vara berättigade i att älska t.ex. Bill men inte Bull på liknande vis som vi kan vara berättigade i vår rädsla för att bli stuckna av en geting om vi är allergiska, men inte i vår rädsla för glaset med kranvatten som vår vän sträcker fram. Den så kallade reasons view of love svarar ja på denna fråga. Kärlek är att värdera en person på ett visst sätt, menar denna teori, och det finns vissa egenskaper hos en person som påkallar denna typ av värdering och som därmed utgör skäl för kärlek. Getingen är farlig för en allergiker vilket rationellt påkallar rädsla, medan det är irrationellt att vara rädd för ett glas kranvatten eftersom det saknar egenskaper som påkallar rädsla, eller gör rädsla passande. Men vilka egenskaper är det som rationellt påkallar kärlek? Och vad händer om du älskar någon som har dessa egenskaper men så dyker det upp någon som har dessa egenskaper i lika hög grad som den du för närvarande älskar, t.ex. hennes klon? Bör du då älska båda? Och om du möter en person med en högre grad av de egenskaper som gör din kärlek till din nuvarande älskade berättigad, bör du då rationellt sett flytta över din kärlek till denna nya person givet att du inte kan älska dem båda? Det intuitiva svaret på dessa frågor är nej, vilket talar emot the reasons view från vilken ja-svar följer.

Delvis på grund av ovan nämnda implikationer så menar den så kallade no-reasons view of love att kärlek visserligen kan vara bättre och sämre, men aldrig mer eller mindre berättigad. Det är bra om vi råkar älska någon som har de egenskaper som gör henne till ett lyckosamt kärleksobjekt, men vi är inte irrationella om vi misslyckas med det. Inte heller är vi irrationella om vi älskar någon som det på alla tänkbara vis är en dålig idé att älska. Vi kan försöka främja eller stävja kärlekskänslor men kärleken i sig är inte ett svar på egenskaper vi finner hos en person. Däri skiljer sig kärlek från hur rädsla normalt sett i någon mening svarar på vår upplevelse av ett objekt som farligt eller hotande. Därför kan kärleken inte heller vara berättigad även om kärleksobjektet verkligen har de egenskaper som kan anses önskvärda eller på annat vis lämpliga eller passande, till skillnad från hur rädsla är berättigad om det vi är rädda för och upplever som farligt verkligen

har de egenskaper som påkallar rädsla. Kärlek kan vara mer eller mindre bra eller lyckosam, men inte mer eller mindre rationell, enligt the no-reasons view. Istället är all kärlek lika rationellt tillåten. Även om den här teorin undviker problemen för den ovan nämnda the reasons view of love, så verkar den inte kunna förklara varför vi till vardags ger och efterfrågar skäl för kärlek och kritiserar fall av kärlek där sådana skäl tycks saknas.

En annan version av the reasons view of love än den ovan nämnda tycks emellertid kunna undvika båda dessa teoriers problem. Enligt denna the reasons view 2 så kan vi enbart vara rationellt förbjudna att älska vissa personer men aldrig rationellt tvungna att börja älska eller fortsätta älska en person. Existerande kärlek kan vara irrationell men det är aldrig irrationellt att *inte* älska en viss person. Problemet med den här teorin är att den konstaterar en rimlig asymmetri när det gäller kärlek, men utan att redogöra för varför det ligger till på det här viset.

Mitt förslag är att vi ger the no-reasons view ett nytt försök genom att komplettera den med en redogörelse för hur vår praktik att ge och efterfråga skäl för kärlek snarast kan förstå som en rationaliseringspraktik. Enligt detta synsätt så svarar vi inte på skäl när vi älskar någon. Skälen för kärlek, eller sätten på vilka den älskade framträder som älskansvärd infinner sig i stället samtidigt som vi börjar älska personen ifråga. De skäl vi ger handlar om att förklara, eller begripliggöra vad vi ser hos den vi älskar, eller vad hos henne som framstår för oss som bedårande eller älskansvärt. Dessa skäl är inte rättfärdigande skäl för att älska, utan rationaliserande skäl i den meningen att man med dem gör reda för det ljus i vilket man ser någon som man älskar. Detta ljus kan vara mer eller mindre vettigt eller begripligt beroende på hur ens övriga attityder ser ut. Att älska någon som enbart har egenskaper som man i vanliga fall ser som vidriga är t.ex. inte begripligt. Med hjälp av skälen den älskande anger som svar på frågan: ”Varför älskar du din älskade?” kan den som älskar rationalisera i betydelsen begripliggöra sin kärlek. För att lyckas med detta krävs alltså att det som man finner älskansvärt hos sin älskade passar någorlunda ihop med ens totala mängd värdemässiga attityder. Genom att se vad som krävs för att rationalisera kärlek, och därmed bli klar över sätt på vilka rationaliseringar kan misslyckas, menar jag att vi kan härleda villkor för rationellt tillåten kärlek, även

utifrån the no-reasons view. Visserligen är dessa rationella krav på kärlek av ett annat slag än de som the reasons view 1 och 2 föreslår. Icke desto mindre menar jag att en no-reasons view som tar fasta på nämnda idé kan behålla en större del av den intuitiva koppling vi upplever mellan kärlek och rationalitet. Därmed har vi getts åtminstone ett skäl för att föredra the no-reasons view framför the reasons view 1 och 2.

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