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Love as Valuing a Relationship

Niko Kolodny

At first glance, love seems 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. Love for one's parent, child, or friend is fitting, one wants to say, if anything is. On reflection, however, it is elusive what reasons for love might be. It is natural to assume that they would be nonrelational features of the person one loves, something about her in her own right. According to the "quality theory," for example, reasons for love are the beloved's personal attributes, such as her wit and beauty. In J. David Velleman's provocative and ingeniously argued proposal, the reason for love is the beloved's bare Kantian personhood, her capacity for rational choice and valuation.¹ But no such nonrelational feature works. To appreciate just one difficulty, observe that whatever nonrelational feature one selects as the reason for love will be one that another person could, or actually does, possess. The claim that nonrelational features are reasons for love implies, absurdly, that insofar as one's love for (say) Jane is responsive to its reasons, it will accept any relevantly similar person as a replacement.

Such problems lead other philosophers to deny that there are reasons for love. Harry Frankfurt, for example, contends that love is a structure of desires for states of affairs involving the person one loves, a structure of desires that is not a response to some antecedent reason.² Besides having other problems, however, this view fails to characterize love as a distinctive state. Without in fact loving Jane, one can desire to do the same things for her that her lover desires to do. For example, one can desire to help Jane out of, say, duty, or self-interest, or simply because one is seized by a brute urge. If her lover's desire is to be distinguished from these other desires, it must be distinguished in terms of the distinctive reasons for it: the reasons in light of which helping Jane seems worth doing. If there are distinctive reasons for the desires constitutive of love, then there are distinctive reasons for love—which again raises the question what these reasons could possibly be.

We will not get beyond this impasse so long as we assume that any reason for loving a person would have to be a nonrelational feature that she has. This is because, as I will argue, one's reason for loving a

person is one's relationship to her: the ongoing history that one shares with her.³ The reason one has for loving Jane, in any given case, is that she is one's daughter, sister, mother, friend, or wife. This proposal avoids the problems that plague the views that cite nonrelational features as reasons for love. For instance, the fact that Jane is one's daughter is a reason for loving her, but not a reason for loving a substitute with identical nonrelational features. And this proposal identifies the distinctive reasons for love that views such as Frankfurt's ignore at their peril.

For two reasons, however, this proposal is bound to strike some as a nonstarter. First, the supposition that one's reason for loving Jane is some connection that she has to oneself, instead of something about her in her own right, may seem to give love the wrong object. We don't love relationships, after all; we love people. Second, certain relationships, such as friendships and romantic relationships, are constituted by love. To say that such relationships are reasons for love may sound like saying that love is a reason for itself. If there are any reasons for feelings of friendship or romantic love, it again appears that they have to be nonrelational features of one's friend or lover.

I begin, in section 1, by clarifying the subject matter of this paper and discussing the general appeal of, as well as one common misgiving about, the idea that there are reasons for love. In sections 2 and 3, I describe the problems facing the quality theory and Frankfurt's "no-reasons" view. In sections 4 and 5, I present the "relationship theory" that I favor, explaining how it avoids these problems. Sections 6 and 7 are devoted to defending the relationship theory against the two aforementioned objections: that it gives love the wrong object and that it makes love a reason for itself. This elaboration of the relationship theory brings into focus certain problems with Velleman's proposal, which I address in section 8. I close with a discussion of some implications of the relationship theory.

1. Love and Reasons for It

The word 'love', in ordinary usage, attaches both to more and to less than the kind of psychological syndrome with which I am concerned. On the one hand, I understand love exclusively as a state that involves caring about a person. However, it is perfectly correct English to say that someone "loves" something that is not a person, or "loves" a person in a way that does not involve caring about him. I can be said to love

candy apples, for example, and the French can be said to love Jerry Lewis, where this means only that they enjoy his movies. This is the sense in which 'love', in ordinary usage, attaches to more than the psychological state with which I am concerned. My narrowed focus is, I hope, acceptable. The species of love that involves caring for another person is the species that most attracts the interest of moral philosophers.⁴

On the other hand, I apply the word 'love' not only to the attitudes that family members and romantic lovers have to each other, but also to the attitudes that friends have to each other. Moreover, I believe that my account of love may capture the characteristic attitudes between colleagues. Some may find these latter uses of 'love' strained, even fulsome. This is the sense in which 'love', in ordinary usage, attaches to less than the kind of psychological state with which I am concerned. Nevertheless, part of what I want to argue is that there are important similarities between the attitudes of family members and romantic lovers, on the one hand, and the attitudes of friends, and perhaps even colleagues, on the other. This is something that the relationship theory will help us to see.

At least three kinds of consideration suggest that there are reasons for love, so understood. First, from the first-person perspective of someone who loves, the constitutive emotions and motivations of love make reflexive sense. That is, they seem appropriate to the person who experiences them. Second, from the third-person perspective of an adviser or critic, we often find love or its absence inappropriate. Consider our reactions to the wife who loves her abusive and uncaring husband, or to the parent who is emotionally indifferent to her child. Third, it is plausible that love consists in certain kinds of psychological states, and there may be reasons to believe that states of those kinds are, in general, responses to reasons. Some believe that there are reasons for love, for example, because they believe that love is an emotion and that all emotions are responses to reasons.⁵ If love consists in motivations as well as emotions, and if there are reasons for motivations in general, then this would be a further reason for thinking that there are reasons for love.

Despite these considerations, there is a particular misconception that often causes people to recoil from the idea that there are reasons for love. "While there may be certain explanatory reasons why one comes to love people," they observe, "one does not weigh reasons for loving someone and then decide whether or not to do so. One just

finds that one loves or that one does not. Furthermore, to suggest that there are reasons for love is to imply that people in certain situations should be blamed for loving or not loving. This is cruel and absurd." Both observations are true. One does not decide to love on the basis of considering reasons, and one should not be blamed for loving or failing to love. This much follows from the fact that one cannot decide to love at all. Love is nonvoluntary.⁶ But it does not follow that there cannot be normative reasons for love, that love cannot be assessed as appropriate or inappropriate to its object.

Compare belief. Belief, it is generally supposed, is not the object of deliberate decision, but it does not follow that there are no reasons for belief. Or, to take an example closer to practical than to theoretical reason, consider emotions, which I believe are at least partly constitutive of love. Emotions are nonvoluntary responses, but at least some emotions are responses to reasons. Typically, emotions toward an object are simply caused, in a way that is beyond one's voluntary control, by beliefs that the object has some relevant property. Nevertheless, the emotion is appropriate or inappropriate depending on whether the object has the property and its having that property justifies the emotion. One typically fears X, for example, because one believes that X has some fearsome property, such as lethality. Fearing X is uncalled for if it is not the case that X has this property, and it is phobic if the property is not in fact fearsome. Phobias may be criticized, but this does not mean that phobics should be blamed for having them. Love might be the same way.

2. The Quality Theory

A better reason for questioning whether there are reasons for love is that it is obscure what these reasons might be. According to the quality theory, the features that constitute reasons for loving a person are that person's lovable qualities, such as beauty, wit, or vivacity. Two considerations lend plausibility to the quality theory. First, one is typically attracted to particular people as potential lovers in response to such qualities. This is why the "personals" section of the classifieds is as long as it is. Second, love involves a disposition to appreciate certain personal qualities of one's beloved. Loving parents, for example, are notoriously captivated by and voluble about the lovable traits of their children.

The quality theory is nevertheless beset by problems. Consider, first, the problem of *familial love*. While we typically admire and appreciate certain qualities of our parents, siblings, and children, it is odd to suppose that we see these qualities as reasons for loving them. It is enough that they are our parents, siblings, and children. Suppose I am waiting for the outcome of Sarah's operation, and a hospital volunteer asks me why I am so emotionally wound up about this patient in particular. It would be bizarre if I rattled off a list of her personal qualities—she's charitable, modest, has a goofy sense of humor—and then added, as an afterthought, that she happened to be my mother.

Second, there is the problem of *modes*. Heather's mother and Heather's teenage friend may both love her, but they love her, or at least they ought to love her, in different ways. Her mother's love ought to be more resilient, and it ought to ask for less in return. How is the quality theorist to explain this? He might suggest that Heather's mother and friend are acquainted with different qualities, and those different qualities are reasons for different kinds of love. Yet, from the fact that Heather's mother is not aware of Heather's other traits, it does not follow that those other traits are not reasons for her to love her in the way in which her friend does. Reasons of the kind at issue are not relative to an agent's epistemic state. At any rate, we can suppose, unusual though it might be, that Heather's mother learns of her other traits. (Heather's mother finds her diary, suppose, and reads of her exploits with her friends.) Would Heather's mother then have reason to love her in some different way, to have, say, some amalgam of maternal love and friendship?

With these problems in view, we can already see that the considerations that are supposed to lend support to the quality theory are less than decisive. The first consideration, that attraction to personal qualities gives rise to love, is not true of familial love. Although romantic love and friendship may be preceded by such attraction, parental, filial, and fraternal love are not.⁷ With regard to the second consideration, while love in its many forms involves the appreciation of personal qualities, what is appreciated may not be viewed as a reason for love. The search for and appreciation of such qualities may simply be part of a response called for by reasons of a different kind. Intimate awareness of and delight in one's child's appealing traits may be part of the expression of parental love, for example, without those traits being reasons for parental love.⁸

The quality theory might appear more plausible, therefore, as an account of forms of nonfamilial love, such as romantic love and friendship. This appearance, however, results from confusing the attitudes that often give rise to romantic love and friendship with the attitudes of romantic love and friendship themselves. Although a person's qualities may serve as reasons for wanting, as well as seeking to cultivate, a friendship or romantic relationship with that person, they are not reasons for the attitudes of friendship and romantic love that sustain the relationship once it is cultivated. This is the lesson to take from the three remaining problems: constancy, nonsubstitutability, and amnesia.

Constancy: If Jane's qualities are what justify my loving her, then that justification lapses as soon as she loses those qualities. Insofar as my love is responsive to its reasons, therefore, it too ought to lapse as soon as she loses those qualities. Such a fickle attitude, however, hardly seems like love. As Shakespeare suggests: "Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds." The quality view thus seems to imply that love cannot be responsive to its own reasons.

The sonnet, no doubt, overstates the case. My love for my wife of many years should not alter if it merely finds her looks faded, her wits dulled, or her self-confidence shaken. Yet, as I will discuss in greater depth in section 7, my love perhaps should alter if it finds that she has become cruel and unfeeling toward me, or monstrously evil toward others. This concession, however, offers little to the quality theory. On the one hand, although my love may properly lapse in response to my wife's cruelty toward me, her cruelty toward me is a distinctly relational property. The quality theory, by contrast, appeals to nonrelational properties. And although my love may properly lapse if she becomes monstrously evil, her not being monstrously evil seems more a background condition than a positive reason for loving her. It would be odd to answer the question, "Why do you love her?" with the reply, "Because she is not monstrously evil." It does nothing to distinguish her from the crowd of other people whom I find acceptably decent. On the other hand, my love would *not* properly lapse in response to changes in her looks, wit, and self-confidence, and these are the kinds of qualities on which the quality theory relies. Part of what lends the quality theory its initial plausibility, recall, is the fact that personal qualities such as these often draw one into friendships and romantic relationships.⁹

Nonsubstitutability: If Jane's qualities are my reasons for loving her, then they are equally reasons for my loving anyone else with the same qualities. Insofar as my love for Jane is responsive to its reasons, there-

fore, it ought to accept anyone with the same qualities as a substitute. But an attitude that would accept just as well any *Doppelgänger* or swamp-Jane that happened along would scarcely count as love.

Now, it might seem at first to matter when Jane's double would appear: after Jane suddenly vanishes or while she is still on the scene. Is it a question of replacement or addition? It might be said that in the latter case, I do not have reason to love both Jane and her double, either because the kind of love at issue (romantic love, say) is by its nature exclusive, or because I lack the emotional resources to love both. However, from the fact that I do *not* have reason to love *both* Jane and her double, it does not follow that I *have* reason to love Jane *rather than* her double. As far as the quality theory is concerned, I might as well swap her with her twin. For all the theory says, I have just as much reason to love a type-identical stranger, whether as a replacement or an alternative, as I have to love my wife or friend of many years.¹⁰

Amnesia: Why does the loss of certain memories extinguish love? A natural thought, if one believes that love is a response to reasons, is that the amnesia victim loses cognitive access to the reasons for his love. If this is correct, then a proponent of the quality view would have to explain amnesia's effect on love in terms of its effect on the lover's knowledge of the beloved's qualities. But consider the case of the amnesiac biographer. He spent his early fifties writing the biography of a contemporary, a political activist whose accomplishments were already noteworthy by that age. His biography drew on the reminiscences of her closest friends and amounted to a strikingly intimate portrait of her life and character. As a result, he found her in many ways admirable and attractive, but they had never met, and the thought of a relationship with her never entered his mind. She was simply the subject of his biography. In their late fifties, they met, fell in love, and married. He often teased her that he learned everything he ever learned about her from writing the biography, by which he meant that she was who she was, that her beliefs, motivations, and feelings were always in full view. This forthrightness was one of the things he found so endearing about her. A decade later he suffers a special kind of memory loss. He can recall everything that happened to him up until a few years before their relationship started, but nothing after. We would not expect him to love her, and indeed it is hard to see how he could. To him, she is no longer the woman he fell in love with, but instead simply the attractive and admirable subject of his biography. This is so even though his beliefs about her personal qualities, and his confidence in

them, have changed only slightly, if at all (or so let us suppose for the purposes of this admittedly idealized example). This marginal change in his beliefs about her personal qualities seems insufficient to explain the categorical change in his attitude toward her.

3. Frankfurt and the No-Reasons View

In view of certain of these difficulties, some philosophers deny that there are reasons for love. Most conclude that love is a certain set of desires, rather than an emotion, because they find it more plausible that there are no reasons for desires—or at least underived, basic desires—than that there are no reasons for emotions.¹¹

Although Harry Frankfurt does not present his account of love in precisely these terms, he subscribes to this “no-reasons” view. He explicitly contrasts his account with one “according to which love is basically a response to the perceived value of the beloved,” and he suggests no other perceived value to which love might be a response.¹² Furthermore, impressed by the problem of nonsubstitutability, Frankfurt seeks to anchor love in a feature that no one else could possibly have. “The focus of a person’s love is not those general and hence repeatable characteristics that makes his beloved *describable*. Rather, it is the specific particularity that makes his beloved *nameable*—something that is more mysterious than describability, and that is in any case manifestly impossible to define.”¹³ The focus of love, on Frankfurt’s view, is the beloved’s bare identity: her being Jane, her being this very person, her being she. Thus, love has no causal tendency to transfer to substitutes or, although Frankfurt does not mention this implication, to alter as it alteration finds. The beloved’s bare identity, however, cannot serve as a reason for loving her. To say “She is Jane” is simply to identify a particular with itself. It is to say nothing about that particular that might explain why a specific response to it is called for.¹⁴

Frankfurt concludes that love is a “complex volitional structure that bears both upon how a person is disposed to act and upon how he is disposed to manage the motivations and interests by which he is moved” (165). Roughly, love is a set of first-order desires for states of affairs involving a person, as well as second-order “volitions” regarding those first-order desires: that is, second-order desires that those first-order desires be effective in moving the agent to action.

Two objections to Frankfurt’s account can be stated briefly. The first objection is a variant of a problem that afflicted the quality theory. The

claim that love is focused on the beloved's nameability makes it mysterious why amnesia should extinguish love. Since the amnesiac biographer can still identify, say, Mary as Mary (whatever that comes to), it cannot be the loss of this knowledge that explains why he no longer loves her. The second objection is one of the grounds that I cited at the outset for thinking that love is a response to reasons. From a third-person perspective, the presence or absence of love can strike us as inappropriate. Frankfurt's account cannot make sense of our reactions to the abused wife and the indifferent parent.

The main objection that I wish to pursue, however, involves the other two grounds that I cited: that from a first-person perspective, love seems reflexively appropriate, and that there seem to be reasons, in general, for the kinds of states that are thought to constitute love. The problem is that unless we can appeal to reasons for the desires that are supposed to constitute love, we cannot distinguish love from psychological states that it manifestly is not. Not all first-order desires for states of affairs involving a person, even when accompanied by second-order desires to sustain and act on those desires, amount to love. Take any list of the things that a loving agent is supposed to desire regarding his beloved. We can easily imagine a case in which X desires these things regarding Y, but does not love Y. Frankfurt's paradigm of a loving desire, selected to emphasize what he calls the "disinterested" character of love, is a desire to help one's beloved (168). Yet X might desire to help Y not out of love, but out of duty or for personal advantage. The difference between these desires, one might have thought, lies in the perceived reasons for them: in the considerations in light of which helping Y appears to X to be worth doing. In the case of duty, for example, the perceived reason is that helping Y is morally required, whereas in the case of personal advantage, the perceived reason is that helping Y would serve X's interests. It is easy enough to draw these distinctions, if we accept a cognitivist account of desire, according to which desires consist, in part, in representations of what is desired as worth obtaining in some respect. On this cognitivist account, there are reasons for desires; desires are reasonable insofar as what is desired is, in fact, worth obtaining in that respect.¹⁵ If the desires constitutive of love are to be distinguished in terms of the perceived reasons for them, however, then there must be reasons for love.

The question, therefore, is whether we can distinguish loving from nonloving desires, if we view desires as brute causal forces impelling us to realize states of affairs, rather than as representations of what is

desired as worth obtaining in some respect. The worry is that if we view desires in the former way, then we can distinguish them only in terms of the states of affairs that they seek to realize, and loving and nonloving desires may seek to realize the same states of affairs. But perhaps one might distinguish loving from nonloving desires in terms of their relations to other desires. In "On Caring," Frankfurt compares a case in which an agent gives money to a stranger out of duty with one in which an agent gives money to his beloved out of love. In both, Frankfurt suggests, the agent's "reason" is the same, namely, that giving money would help the recipient, say, Jane. The difference has to do with why this fact "counts" as a reason. In the duty case, the agent must believe that he has a duty to help Jane in order for this fact to count as a reason. In the love case, no such belief is necessary. "No additional element is needed to mediate between his love for the needy person on the one hand and, on the other, his recognition that he is provided with a reason for giving money to the needy person by the fact that the money will help to meet that person's need" (176). According to Frankfurt's terminology, it appears, the fact that by ϕ -ing, S will ψ "counts as a reason" for S to ϕ insofar as S's belief that by ϕ -ing, S will ψ and S's desire to ψ combine to produce in S a desire to ϕ . Since the loving agent desires to help Jane, his belief that by giving Jane money he will help Jane counts by itself as a reason for him to give the money. The dutiful agent, by contrast, desires to do his duty. His belief that by giving money he will help Jane does not count by itself as reason to give the money. He must also believe that by helping Jane, he does his duty. Only then does the belief that by giving money he helps Jane count as a reason for him to give the money. The underlying distinction, then, is that loving desires to help Jane are *basic* desires to help Jane, whereas dutiful desires, and nonloving desires more generally, are *nonbasic* desires: that is, desires that one has only because one has another desire. This resonates with Frankfurt's point that love is focused on a person's nameability, not her describability. The dutiful agent desires to help Jane only once she is described as someone whom he has a duty to help. The loving agent, by contrast, does not need to bring her under any further description. He simply desires to help Jane, as such.

While identifying love with basic desires may distinguish love from dutiful or self-interested desires, it does not distinguish love from mere urges, which are also basic. Suppose I wake up with a basic urge to help one of my daughter's classmates, Fred Simmons. Fred is a complete stranger to me, apart from my having read his name on a class list. I see

some point in wanting to help him, of course: the same point I see in wanting to help any human being who needs it. But I don't see any point in my fixation on helping him in particular. I just find myself drawn to giving him special assistance. "Must ... help ... the Simmons kid," I find myself thinking. I would not, I submit, love Fred. Whatever attitude I take toward him, it is not of the same kind as my love for my own daughter.

It might be suggested, on Frankfurt's behalf, that this is only because I lack a second-order desire to sustain and act on my first-order desire to help Fred. If I had this second-order desire, then I would love Fred. But this is not so. I might simply wake up with a mysterious second-order urge to sustain and act on my first-order urge. "Must ... sustain ... and ... act ... on ... my desire to help the Simmons kid," I might find myself thinking. Again, I submit, this would not mean that I love him. It would still be unlike my love for my daughter.

What makes it attractive to try to distinguish my loving desire to help my daughter from my urge to help Fred in terms of the presence of a second-order desire, I suspect, is the conjunction of two thoughts. The first thought is that the presence of a second-order desire to sustain my first-order desire implies that I normatively endorse that first-order desire—that I take myself to have some reason for that first-order desire, that I see what I desire as worth obtaining in some way. The second thought is that my normative endorsement of my desire to help my daughter is what distinguishes it from my urge to help Fred.¹⁶

The first thought is false. A second-order desire, understood simply as a brute causal force impelling me to realize a state of affairs in which I have some other desire, does not entail a normative endorsement of that desire. We can always imagine that I have a higher-order desire, but withhold normative endorsement of the lower-order desire that is its object. This is, in effect, what is going on when I am assailed by a second-order urge to sustain and act on my first-order urge to help Fred. The second thought, however, seems to me correct. What distinguishes loving desires to do X from mere urges to do X is a certain kind of normative endorsement. The urge to help Fred makes no normative sense to me; I see no reason to endorse it. This is so even if it makes causal or explanatory sense to me: even if I know full well, say, that it was induced by post-hypnotic suggestion. My desire to help my daughter, by contrast, is not simply an impulse that overtakes me. I see the point in it. It strikes me as appropriate.

Initially, it might have seemed that the problem with my urge to help Fred was not that it was groundless, but instead that it was, first, too abstract and, second, affectless. If we added more concrete desires, such as a desire for Fred's company, and if we added emotions to these desires, one might have thought, then my attitude toward Fred would approximate love. Never mind that Frankfurt and the no-reasons theorists have principled grounds for resisting these additions. (Frankfurt avoids appeal to concrete desires, such as the desire for a person's company, on the grounds that they are false to love's "disinterested" character; and proponents of the no-reasons view generally avoid appeal to emotions, on the grounds that emotions are plausibly viewed as responses to reasons.) The real difficulty, as we have just seen, is that these additions do not help, so long as they are as groundless as the original desire. To suppose that I am assailed not only by an urge to help Fred, but also by an urge to be with him and by emotions that vary depending how I believe he fares, is only to make my psychological state more alarming. What is crucially missing, again, is my appreciation of reasons for these attitudes, reasons of the kind that I appreciate in the case of my love for my daughter.

4. The Relationship Theory

What, then, are these reasons for love? My reason for loving Jane, I suggest, is my relationship to her: that she is my daughter, or my mother, or my sister, or my friend, or the woman with whom I have made my life.

Love is not only rendered *normatively appropriate* by the presence of a relationship. Love, moreover, partly *consists* in the belief that some relationship renders it appropriate, and the emotions and motivations of love are *causally sustained* by this belief (except in pathological cases). Special concern for a person is not love at all when there is no belief that a relationship renders it appropriate. Such is the case with my urge to help Fred Simmons, who is a stranger to me. Love is inappropriate when there is such a belief, but the belief is false. Stalkers, for example, often believe that they have relationships to the objects of their obsessions. Sometimes this reflects a willful interpretation of the evidence, other times a full-blown psychosis. A different kind of inappropriate love results when a person is misled, say by someone who is just using her. Here the belief in a relationship may be epistemically reasonable, but it is nonetheless false. Similarly, the absence of love is

inappropriate when there is a relationship that calls for it, as is the case with a mother's indifference to her own child.

The relationship theory avoids the problems with the quality view. If relationships are reasons for love, then it is unsurprising that the appreciation of personal qualities neither gives rise to *familial love* nor justifies it. No wonder it would be bizarre to answer someone who asked why I was so concerned about this woman in particular with a list of traits, instead of the decisive fact that she is my mother. Different *modes* of love are appropriate to different relationships. This is why a mother's concern for her daughter ought to differ from her teenage friend's concern for her, despite their awareness of the same qualities.

While the appreciation of personal qualities may play a role in the cultivation of romantic relationships and friendships, one does not view these personal qualities as one's reasons for romantic love and friendship, once these relationships are cultivated. Instead, one views the relationship itself as one's reason. This is what explains *constancy*: the fact that love, insofar as it is responsive to its reasons, does not alter as alteration (in qualities) it finds. The relationship remains, even as qualities change. A similar explanation can be given for *nonsubstitutability*: the fact that love for someone is not, insofar as it is responsive to its reasons, satisfied by anyone with identical traits. The reason why I would not have the same love for any qualitatively identical twin-Jane who came along is that I would not have had any meaningful relationship with that twin. The twin would not be the woman with whom I made my life. "But"—it might be objected—"we could just as easily imagine a 'relationship *Doppelgänger*': a person who has the same relational features as my beloved. The relationship theory implies that in this case, I would have just as much reason to love this *Doppelgänger*." This is true, but it is not a counterexample to the relationship theory. If my wife and I decide to have a second child, for instance, then we bring into this world a relationship *Doppelgänger* to our first child. The relationship theory implies that we have just as much reason to love the second child as the first. But this is the right implication. We have reason to love both equally, for each is our child.¹⁷ Finally, if love consists, in part, in a belief that one has a relationship to one's beloved, then we can explain why the biographer's *amnesia* should extinguish his love for his wife. It erases his memory of the relationship that he had with her.¹⁸

What are these "relationships" that are supposed to be reasons for love? When two people satisfy some two-place predicate, we can say that

they stand in an interpersonal relation. Not every interpersonal relation, in this broad sense, is an interpersonal relationship, in the sense in which relations between friends, lovers, and family members are relationships. Some relations belong to a different ontological category.

First, relationships are *ongoing*. They persist over time. At any given moment, it can be true that I am Kevin's friend. Our friendship, however, is not the momentary obtaining of some relation, but something that has persisted, and may continue to persist, over time. Contrast a relation that obtains between two people, if it ever does, only at an instant, such as "being exactly twice the age of."

Second, relationships obtain between *particular* people over time. Relationships are individuated by the identities of their participants; they cannot survive substitutions of participants. Contrast the ongoing relation constituted by my having, at any given time, *some* dentist. This ongoing relation would be constituted by a collection of relations to particular people at contiguous periods of time, but would not itself be a relation to a particular person over time. A friendship is not a collection of relations to particular people.

Finally, relationships are *historical*. Whether I stand in a relationship to someone at a given time depends on some fact about our pasts. Kevin is my friend only if there has been a historical pattern of attitudes and actions between us. Sarah is my mother only if she raised me, gave birth to me, or supplied the egg from which I developed. Contrast a relation such as "sitting to the left of." While this relation can be ongoing, it is not historical. Although I can continue to sit to the left of someone, whether I am sitting to the left of someone depends only on our present situation. We need not know anything about our pasts to know whether this relation obtains. Many institutional relations (such as the relation of a highway toll collector to a passing motorist, or that of an emergency room doctor to the next patient on the triage list) and many causal relations (such as being in a position to help someone) are in this way nonhistorical.

Not every interpersonal relationship, even in the narrower sense of a relation that satisfies these three conditions, provides reasons for love. For the time being, I will focus on friendship, romantic relationships, and family relationships as paradigm cases. I will also remain agnostic on the question whether family relationships are constituted by biological ties, or instead by histories of occupying certain social set-

tings, which might better account for love within, say, adoptive relationships.¹⁹

However, some further distinctions in what we mean by “relationship” are relevant to the concerns of this paper. “Attitude-independent” relationships, such as family relationships, can exist independently of any historical pattern of concern. Whether Ivan is my brother does not depend on how we feel about one another; it depends on a biological tie, or a fact about our upbringing. Any plausible account of familial love must view its grounds as being independent of one’s caring. One cannot legitimately claim that one has no reason to care about one’s child, parent, or sibling on the grounds that one has never cared about them. The word ‘relationship’ is sometimes used in a second way, however, to refer to the pattern of concern that participants have for one another, for the relationship, and for the pattern itself. If someone asks me whether I have a “good relationship” with my brother, it is the pattern that she means. In the case of “attitude-dependent” relationships, such as friendships and romantic love, there is no distinction between these primary and secondary senses of ‘relationship’. A friendship or romantic relationship just is an ongoing pattern of concern.

Especially with regard to attitude-dependent relationships, ‘relationship’ is often used in a third way, to refer to the activities characteristic of the relationship. With friendships, the activities may involve spending leisure time together. With romantic relationships, the activities may involve, in addition, living together and expressing, in one way or another, sexual drives. When people speak of “ending relationships,” they usually mean deciding to stop engaging in those activities: that is, deciding to move out or no longer see one another socially. The relation between the relationship, understood as the pattern of concern, and the characteristic activities is complex. While one can engage in these activities without the pattern of concern, extended engagement in the activities typically gives rise to it. Similarly, the pattern of concern can persist independently of engagement in the characteristic activities. Most people have “old friends” about whom they care deeply, but with whom they rarely have the opportunity to socialize. Nevertheless, the relationship would not be a relationship of the relevant type if it was not marked at some point in its history by engagement in those activities. And in many cases, ceasing to engage in the activities changes the nature of relationship. To the extent that a relationship that was once romantic is no longer structured around the expression of sexual

drives, for example, it may make more sense to view it simply as a friendship.

5. What Love Is, According to the Relationship Theory

According to the relationship theory, love is a psychological state for which there are reasons, and these reasons are interpersonal relationships. More specifically, love is a kind of valuing. Valuing X, in general, involves (i) being vulnerable to certain emotions regarding X, and (ii) believing that one has reasons both for this vulnerability to X and for actions regarding X.²⁰ One can value something in different ways. For example, one can value X instrumentally— that is, value X as a way of bringing about or realizing some distinct Y or some state of affairs involving Y (by causing Y, partly constituting Y, or being partly constituted by Y). In this case, one values X “nonfinally”: one values X, but one sees some distinct Y as the source of one’s reasons for valuing X. Notice, however, that nonfinal valuation need not be instrumental. To take a familiar, if morbid, example, consider how we value human remains. We believe that we have reasons to treat them with dignity and respect, and we are apt to feel anguish or rage when they are mistreated. Our valuation is nonfinal insofar as we take the source of our reasons for valuing the remains to be not the remains themselves, but rather the person whose remains they are. Nevertheless, this valuation is not instrumental. We do not view the remains as a way of bringing about the person or some state of affairs involving the person. To value X “finally,” by contrast, is both to value X and to see X as the source of one’s reasons for valuing X.²¹ In this case, one both (a) is emotionally vulnerable to X and believes that one has reasons for being emotionally vulnerable to X and for actions regarding X, and (b) believes that the source of these reasons is X itself.

Love is both a final valuation of a relationship, from the perspective of a participant in that relationship, and a nonfinal, noninstrumental valuation of one’s “relative” (the covering term I will use for the other participant). In other words, love consists (a) in seeing a relationship in which one is involved as a reason for valuing both one’s relationship and the person with whom one has that relationship, and (b) in valuing that relationship and person accordingly.²² More precisely, A’s loving B consists (at least) in A’s:

- (i) believing that A has an instance, *r*, of a finally valuable type of relationship, *R*, to person B (in a first-personal way—that is, where A identifies himself as A);
- (ii) being emotionally vulnerable to B (in ways that are appropriate to *R*), and believing that *r* is a noninstrumental reason for being so;
- (iii) being emotionally vulnerable to *r* (in ways that are appropriate to *R*), and believing that *r* is a noninstrumental reason for being so;
- (iv) believing that *r* is a noninstrumental reason for A to act in B's interest (in ways that are appropriate to *R*), and having, on that basis, a standing intention to do so;
- (v) believing that *r* is a noninstrumental reason for A to act in r's interest (in ways that are appropriate to *R*), and having, on that basis, a standing intention to do so; and
- (vi) believing that any instance, *r**, of type *R* provides (a) anyone who has *r** to some *B** with similar reasons for emotion and action toward *B** and *r**, and (b) anyone who is not a participant in *r** with different reasons for action (and emotion?) regarding *r**.

This schematic account, needless to say, requires further elaboration.

“r is a reason for A to”: In this context, “*r*” is shorthand for: “the fact that A has *r* to B, where *r* is an instance of a finally valuable type *R*,” that is, a type whose instances provide participants with reasons for certain emotional vulnerabilities and actions. This fact is straightforwardly a reason for A to *be* emotionally vulnerable to B and *r*, and to *act* in the interests of B and *r*. My claim that this fact is a reason for A to love B, however, requires that this fact is also a reason for the constitutive *beliefs* of love: the beliefs that A has *r* to B; that this fact is a reason to be emotionally vulnerable to B and *r*, and to act in the interests of B and *r*; and that this fact universalizes as a reason. Although it may sound odd to say that this fact is *evidence* for these beliefs, it is nonetheless a reason for those beliefs, in the sense that it is that in virtue of which those beliefs are *true*.

“Noninstrumental”: In other words, it is not the case that A's reason for being emotionally vulnerable to B (or acting in the relevant ways regarding B) is that doing so would somehow bring about an instance of *R*. One does not value one's relative as a mere accessory to or component of a relationship.

“Emotional vulnerability” (or “concern”): To say that A is emotionally vulnerable to B (or r) is to say, in part, that A is disposed to have a range of favorable emotions in response to A’s beliefs that B (or r) has fared or will fare well, and a range of unfavorable emotions in response to A’s beliefs that B (or r) has fared or will fare poorly. For example, A may feel content when B is well, elated when B meets with unexpected good luck, anxious when it seems that B may come to harm, grief-stricken when B does. (Notice that A is not simply emotionally vulnerable to how B *treats* A, although this is often what is meant by saying that one person is “emotionally vulnerable” to another.) When we say that r fares better or worse, we usually mean the pattern of concern associated with r. We say that a relationship between two brothers has improved, for example, to the extent that their attitudes to one another have become less guarded and resentful, even though, to repeat, their being brothers does not depend on their attitudes to one another. Thus, in saying that valuing a relationship finally involves being emotionally vulnerable to it, I mean this to include being emotionally vulnerable to how oneself and one’s relative care about it. Even if loving parents do not view their caring about their children to be conditional on their children’s caring about them or their bond in return, they ordinarily do care whether their children care about them and their bond. They are hardly indifferent to it. In addition, parents usually care whether they themselves care about their children. This caring might manifest itself, for example, in horror at the prospect of ceasing to care about them. A can also be emotionally vulnerable to B and r in their own right, however, and not simply to how B and r fare. For example, A may feel indignant when B’s standing or merit is questioned, even though such questioning may not mean that B fares poorly. And A’s emotional vulnerability to B can take the form of being disposed to appreciate specially the favorable qualities of B. Loving parents, for example, are inclined to take particular pleasure in the delightful features of their own children, greater pleasure than they would take in the same features of other people’s children.

“Acting in the interest of”: What counts as acting in the interest of B will depend on the relationship in question as well as the particulars of B’s situation. It should not be understood as being restricted to promoting B’s well-being. It might also include protecting or promoting what matters to B, where this may be something other than B’s well-being. One might also include, under this heading, expressing one’s attitudes

toward B, which might take the form of acquainting oneself with B's favorable qualities.

A acts in the interests of *r* by sustaining it and, where this is something distinct, its characteristic pattern of concern. If A is B's parent, for example, then that is a reason for A to seek to retain custody of B. If A is in a relationship of romantic love, then the relationship gives A a reason to avoid cultivating attitudes of romantic love for someone other than B. If A and B foresee their relationship unraveling, then that is a reason for them to seek out counseling. Acting in the interests of *r* can also involve observing certain constraints specific to *R*, such as requirements of sexual fidelity.

"Universalization": It may seem odd that love involves a belief along the lines of (vi), as if everyone who loved had to subscribe to a philosophical theory about it. But (vi) just reflects the truth that reasons are universalizable. We expect people who love to generalize from their own case. We expect our justifications of our actions for our relatives to be understood and appreciated, in particular, by those who value relationships of the same type. "Anyone who loves her child," as people sometimes say, "will understand why I had to do it." Suppose a mother believed that she had reason to treat her own child specially, but refused to acknowledge that other mothers had similar reasons to treat their children specially. One would wonder whether she really had maternal love for her child, whether she loved it as her child. One would wonder whether her reason for loving it was not something else, which had nothing in particular to do with her being its mother. (Perhaps she believes that it is the messiah.)

"Nonparticipants' reasons for action": The "different" reasons for action that nonparticipants have regarding a particular relationship are chiefly reasons to respect the reasons that the relationship gives its participants. If I value a type of relationship as a nonparticipant, I believe that relationships of that type provide me with reasons not to hinder, and perhaps even to help, participants in responding appropriately to the reasons that their relationships give them. If I value a mother's relationship to her child, then I believe that I have reason not to undermine her relationship and perhaps even to provide her with the assistance she needs in order to care for it.

"Agent-relativity": This account implies that participants' reasons are "agent-relative." Because of the relation that A bears to relationship *r*—namely, that he is a participant in *r*—*r* provides A with reasons that it does not provide to some C who does not bear that relation to *r*.²³

6. First Objection: The Relationship Theory Gives Love the Wrong Focus

Until now, I have failed to mention a further objection to the quality theory: namely, that it construes love as focused on a person's accidents, rather than on her essence. This is, I suspect, part of what encourages Frankfurt to view love as focused on nameability. Jane's nameability, or her bare identity, seems a better candidate for her essence, for *her*, than repeatable qualities such as her wit or beauty. With respect to this objection, the relationship theory may seem to fare even worse than the quality theory. The quality theory focused on at least intrinsic accidents of one's beloved, properties that she has in her own right. The relationship theory, by contrast, appears to focus on the mere accident of her association with oneself.

This appearance, however, results from confusing the ground of valuation with its focus. The ground of valuation is the reason for the associated emotional vulnerability and actions. The focus of valuation is that to which one is emotionally vulnerable and that which one acts to serve, protect, and so on. On my proposal, love has a single ground (one's relationship) but two foci (one's relationship and one's relative).²⁴ One's relationship provides one with reason to be vulnerable to, and act in the interests of, both one's relationship and one's relative. This distinction between focus and ground is not ad hoc. As I noted in the last section, we often value things nonfinally: that is, we often value X as a focus, while taking another thing, Y, to be the ground of valuing X in that way.²⁵

Is this a sufficient response to the complaint that the relationship theory gives love the wrong object? First, it might be objected that according to my account, love is compatible with viewing one's relatives generically. A loving father, for example, might lack interest in, or even knowledge of, the identity or specific characteristics of his children. It would matter to him that a child of his had died, but not that it was, say, Sally. But my account does not imply this. While the grounds of love may be general features of particulars, the objects of love are the particulars themselves: particular relationships and particular people. Moreover, according to the analysis of the previous section, love involves seeing a relationship as a source of reasons to seek out and delight in the appealing features of one's beloved. Hence, a father who remained studiously ignorant of his children's distinctive features would be failing to respond to the reasons that his relationship gives him. For this reason, his love for them might come into question.

This point, I hope, answers a worry that the relationship theory does not do justice to the fact that love—which, after all, is a way of valuing a person—involves appreciating a person’s favorable qualities. The relationship theory can, and does, uphold the truism that love, of whatever form, involves admiring or taking pleasure in such qualities. What it claims, however, is that the source of one’s reason for these appreciative responses is the relationship itself. The relationship gives one reason to attend specially to and to delight specially in the appealing features, whatever they may be, of one’s relative. This kind of appreciation of personal qualities differs from that imagined by the quality theory, in at least two important respects. On the relationship theory, there is no antecedently fixed list of qualities to which a person must conform, and continue to conform, in order to warrant one’s love. Love is a response that is warranted by a relationship, but it is a response that consists, in part, in seeking out and appreciating whatever appealing qualities one’s beloved has to offer. This is why familial love can be resilient to changes in the beloved’s qualities. And on the relationship theory, one’s relationship gives one reason to appreciate the qualities of one’s beloved specially, that is, to a greater degree than one would appreciate comparable qualities in a stranger. This is why parents, say, can be captivated by the angelic features of their own children, while recognizing that they are no more angelic than any other children. On the quality theory, this is inexplicable.

Second, it might be objected that it isn’t enough to make the person *a* focus. The person ought to be the *only* focus. To care about a relationship, which is in part to care about one’s relatives’ reciprocal concern for oneself, is too self-regarding to count as love. There is a familiar kind of “neediness” that consists in caring more about one’s relatives’ concern for oneself, than about one’s relatives themselves. A mother, for example, might exact costly expressions of affection from her children, compelling them, as a test of their love, to turn down potentially rewarding opportunities in order to stay by her side. Her actions are hardly exemplary of maternal love. Even if we must accept that the relationship is the ground of love, therefore, we ought to deny that the relationship is a focus of love.

There is nothing in my account, however, that precludes viewing such neediness as a perversion of love. It is perfectly consistent to claim that while a valuable relationship may provide one with reasons both to care about and promote the well-being of one’s relatives and to care about and promote the flourishing of the relationship and its mutual

valuation, the second kind of reason does not necessarily take priority over the first. The real test of my account is not whether a mother who put her children's affection before their well-being would count as having the attitudes characteristic of maternal love, but instead whether a mother who was indifferent to her children's affection would count as having them. It's hard to see how she would.

Third, it might be objected that it is not enough simply to make the person a *focus* of love. The person ought also to be the *ground* of love. On my account, even if it is the person who is loved, he is loved for an accidental feature—that he is related to the lover in a certain way—and not for himself or for his essence. This is not the kind of love that we want.

The sense in which, according to my account, we are “loved for a relationship” is simply that those who love us believe that their attitudes toward us are appropriate in virtue of the relationships that they have to us. It does not mean, to repeat, that their concern for us is only instrumental, that they care about us as mere means to or components of relationships. The relationship theory does not entail that those who love us care about what happens to us only insofar as the outcome affects some other end called “the relationship.” The relationship theory affirms that those who love us care about what happens to us, independently of what happens to whatever other ends they have, and believe that they have reason to act in our interests, independently of the consequences for whatever other ends they have.

Nevertheless, it may be replied, even if we are not valued only instrumentally on the relationship theory, we are still valued extrinsically and nonfinally. Our relatives value us, it might be said, in the way one might value a now useless pen that once belonged to Winston Churchill: as an extrinsically worthless object that merits a certain response only because it is associated with something of final worth. This analogy, however, is misleading in at least two respects. First, our relatives do not deny that we are finally valuable. However else they view us, they view us as persons, and hence as beings with final value. Second, it is not the case that our relatives' valuing us is optional, given that they value their relationships to us. According to the relationship theory, their valuing us is constitutive of their valuing their relationships to us, in the sense that they cannot respond appropriately to the value of their relationships to us without also valuing us. Admiring Churchill, by contrast, does not require fetishizing his possessions.

The fact that the ground of our relatives' valuation of us is their relationship to us does not imply (i) that they value us only instrumentally, (ii) that they deny that we are finally valuable, or (iii) that their valuation of us, given that they value their relationship to us, is optional. Once we recognize this, it is not clear what remains to trouble us. In fact, when "being loved for our participation in a relationship" is understood in this way, it is not clear that we don't want to be loved for our participation in a relationship. It doesn't seem a distortion to say that a child wants to be loved by its parents simply because it is their child, or that a wife wishes to be loved by her husband, at the deepest level, because she is the woman with whom he fell in love and made his life. "But isn't her being the woman with whom he fell in love and made his life," one might reply, "no less contingent an attribute than, say, her beauty?" Well, yes. But it is, or so I would claim, the right contingent attribute. Let her suppose that they had never met and had made their lives with other people. Imagining herself in this situation, would she still want him to love her? Would it make sense to her if he did?

I have been trying to answer the general complaint that believing that one's relationship is one's reason for love gives love the wrong focus. In discussions of acting from love, this complaint often takes a more specific form, which many find intuitively compelling. Being *moved* by the thought of one's relationship to one's beloved, the complaint runs, reflects a kind of alienation from one's beloved that is antithetical to *acting* from love.

Now, one might initially wonder why this complaint should be thought to apply to the relationship theory. The theory's central claim is that relationships are reasons for love, and to say this is not yet to say that thoughts about relationships are what move lovers to act. However, the theory also makes the more specific claim that love consists, in part, in believing that one's relationship is a reason for action. And this may seem very close to claiming that acting from love is being moved by thoughts about one's relationship. The questions, then, are these. First, what kind of thoughts about one's relationship might be antithetical to acting from love? Second, does my claim, that love partly consists in seeing one's relationship as a reason for action, imply that acting from love involves thoughts of that kind?

Consider, as an example of the complaint, Philip Pettit's claim that "[t]o act out of love ... is to be moved by love and not by the recognition of being in love."²⁶ Although this might be read as suggesting that motivation by the recognition of being in love is incompatible with act-

ing out of love, later remarks suggest that Pettit holds that it is compatible with, but neither necessary nor sufficient for acting out of love.²⁷ What is necessary and sufficient, according to Pettit, is motivation by a thought that is “rigidly individualized” in favor of one’s beloved: a consideration such that there is “no way of knowing exactly what the content of the consideration is—no way of understanding it fully—without grasping who the particular [beloved] is” (158). The consideration must pick out X essentially, by name or demonstrative identification, such as: “She is in need” or “Mary is in need.” The reason is that in acting out of love, one’s motivation must be focused on the person whom one loves, and not (or not simply) on some merely accidental feature that she has, such as being loved by, or being in a loving relationship with, the agent.²⁸

In effect, this complaint radicalizes Bernard Williams’s claim that motivation by thoughts about moral permissibility is incompatible with acting from love. In a case in which a husband chooses to rescue his wife instead of some stranger, Williams famously observes, “it might have been hoped by some (for instance, by his wife) that his motivating thought, fully spelled out, would be the thought that it was his wife, not that it was his wife and that in situations of this kind it is permissible to save one’s wife.” The thought that it is permissible to save one’s wife, Williams suggests, is in this sense “one thought too many.”²⁹ By bringing the action under an impersonal moral description, the agent alienates himself from the immediate object of his concern, namely his wife. According to the radicalized complaint, the thought that it is his wife is already “one thought too many.” Frankfurt argues this explicitly, and a similar thought seems to lie behind Derek Parfit’s remark (which Liam Murphy approvingly reports): “It’s odd that Williams gives, as the thought that the person’s wife might hope he was having, that he is saving her because she is his wife. She might have hoped that he saved her because she was Mary, or Jane, or whatever.”³⁰ To focus on his relationship to her is to risk being alienated from what ought to be the immediate object of his concern: namely her, Mary.

I do not wish to contest the claim that motivation by the recognition of a relationship is insufficient, and motivation by a rigidly individualized thought is necessary, for acting out of love. My account implies this, or something close to it. Someone who acts from love acts from the valuation of particulars: a particular relationship and a particular person. Thus, a father who was regularly motivated by thoughts of the form, “Some child of mine is in need,” and not, “This particular child

of mine, Sally, is in need,” might thus evince a failure to love his children. The issue of controversy, then, is whether motivation by a rigidly individualized thought is sufficient, and hence that the recognition of a relationship is unnecessary, for acting out of love: whether, as Pettit puts it, “a lover in the proper sense will have no need for such reflective thoughts in order to be motivated to pursue the beloved’s good” (156).

The basic difficulty with this claim is that loving agents do not take these rigidly individualized thoughts to be normative reasons, and this is simply because they are not normative reasons. This is obscured if we take the rigidly individualized thought to be of the form “Mary is in need,” for the fact that any person is in need is, of course, a normative reason to help that person. What the rigidly individualized thought is supposed to capture is what is distinctive about this person in particular. “Mary is in need” runs together two thoughts: that some person is in need, and that that person is Mary. The second of these is the rigidly individualized thought proper. To keep this in focus, it may help to imagine a situation, like Williams’s, in which others are in equal or greater need. The question, then, is whether that she is Mary is a normative reason for the agent to help her over a stranger who is at least as needy. It should be clear that it is not. The thought that she is Mary simply identifies a particular with itself; it does not ascribe a property to that particular that might make a certain response to it appropriate. After all, the stranger left to drown might point out that he is Fred. Why isn’t this just as good—or, rather, as bad—a reason as that she is Mary? This is not some *recherché* philosophical conclusion; loving agents are perfectly aware of it. When called upon by a third party to justify his actions, Mary’s husband will know better than to say, “She is Mary.” He will know that he needs to convey that she is his wife.

Pettit seems to accept that the rigidly individualized thought is not a normative reason. It is not what justifies the loving agent in acting, he argues, but instead what moves the agent to act. The question is how it can move the agent to act, given that he does not take it to be a normative reason. A plausible account of rational action, I would argue, must reflect the fact that “rational activity should be directly controlled by the agent’s own deliberative grasp of what they have reason to do. That is, one’s understanding of considerations ... as normative—as recommending or speaking in favor of doing, say, *x*—should itself be what governs one’s consequent motivation to do *x*.”³¹ If the agent must view his reason for action as a normative reason, then the rigidly individu-

alized thought that it is Mary cannot be the agent's reason for helping Mary over the others.

Motivation by a rigidly individualized thought, therefore, is insufficient for acting out of love, and motivation by recognition of one's relationship is necessary. Nevertheless, the idea that motivation by recognition of one's relationship is at the very least unnecessary has some intuitive appeal. Deliberating in terms of one's beloved's relationship to oneself, at least in certain cases, seems to reflect a kind of detachment. How are we to explain this?

To begin with, we should not overestimate the intuition. In many cases, it does not strike us as at all alienated for an agent to conceptualize her beloved in terms of a description, even in the heat of action. If the exclamations of movie characters are any guide, then "My baby!" is precisely what we expect the loving mother to think as the carriage cascades down the staircase, or the dingo trots off into the darkness.

What the intuition reflects is our recognition that loving agents do not typically reflect on their relationships when they attend to their relatives' needs. It is not as though whenever parents feed, bathe, and clothe their children, they reflect on their most basic reason for doing so. They just recognize that the child is hungry, needs a bath, or has spilled juice on its shirt, and they act directly. Similarly, when my wife sees that I am gloomy and preoccupied, she simply listens to my complaints, without any high-minded thoughts about what a loving marriage requires. This is because love consists in standing intentions to care for one's relatives, intentions that are formed and sustained by the recognition that one's relationship to one's relatives provides one with reason to care for them. That A has a valuable relationship to B is a reason for A to sustain such a standing intention to care for B (in a way appropriate to the relationship). Suppose that A recognizes that B needs help in a particular instance. If this standing intention is in place, then A may act directly to help B. A need not reflect on the reasons for having that standing intention. Caring for one's relatives, like any other ongoing, coordinated pattern of activity, involves a hierarchy of nested intentions. When one intends to pursue a long-term activity, one usually forms more specific intentions to pursue it in certain ways, in the service of which one forms even more specific intentions, and so on. In forming a more specific intention to ϕ , as a way of satisfying a more general intention to ψ , one need not reflect on the reasons that justify one's ψ -ing.³²

This is not to deny that certain circumstances may compel A to reflect on his reasons for the standing intention. First, as we have seen, A may need to justify to a third party his helping B in particular. This justification will typically amount to informing the third party of his relationship to B, the fact that justifies his having a standing intention to attend specially to B's needs. Second, A may be faced with an unfamiliar case, which leaves him unsure whether the kind of need that B has or the kind of assistance that he might give is appropriate to the relationship. He may be driven to reflect on the nature of the relationship in order to resolve the question. ("Is this what I should do as B's friend? Or would I be being a busybody?") Third, A may become aware of a reason to reconsider his standing intention. This will typically be reason to reconsider whether he has a relationship of a sort that would justify it. Finally, A may become aware that the cost, whether to himself or to others, of attending to B's needs in a particular instance is especially high. This may compel A to reflect on whether his reasons for attending specially to B's needs justify incurring that cost.

We can thus explain within the confines of the relationship theory why excessive reflection on the relationship as a source of reasons for action may sometimes reflect alienation from one's relatives. It may reflect doubt that one has a valuable relationship to them, or that one's relationship to them justifies sacrifices of certain kinds.

7. Second Objection: The Relationship Theory Makes Love a Reason for Itself

Attitude-dependent relationships, such as friendships and relationships of romantic love, are constituted by emotional vulnerabilities. One is not in a friendship or romantic relationship unless one has non-instrumental concern for the other person and this concern is reciprocated. When applied to attitude-dependent relationships, therefore, the claim that relationships are reasons for love may seem to involve a kind of bootstrapping. It may seem to imply that love is a reason for itself.

I begin with a concessive reply. The love that characterizes friendships and romantic relationships consists in more than simply the emotional vulnerabilities that constitute those relationships. It consists in the beliefs that a relationship exists and that the relationship provides one with reasons for action. There is no bootstrapping involved in the claim that a relationship constituted by emotional vulnerabilities could be a reason for these other attitudes constitutive of love. If there is

bootstrapping, it has to do with the claim that a relationship constituted by emotional vulnerabilities is a reason for those very vulnerabilities, not that it is a reason for action or for beliefs about the relationship and the reasons for action that it provides. The concessive reply, then, is that friendships and romantic relationships are reasons for part of love, if not all of it.³³

A less concessive reply is defensible, however. What the relationship theory implies is that my having a friendship or romantic relationship is a reason for my present concern for my friend or lover. This need not be circular, so long as this friendship or romantic relationship consists in something other than my present concern itself. And if my friendship or romantic relationship is established and ongoing, then it does consist in something other than my present concern. It consists, first, in our history of shared concern and activity, and, second, in my friend's or lover's present concern for me. These can be reasons for my present concern, for my sustaining the emotional vulnerability that constitutes the relationship going forward.

Consider what, in normal cases, causally sustains the concern constitutive of friendship and romantic love. What causally sustains my emotional vulnerability to Jane, as a friend or lover, is my belief that, first, we have a history together, a history marked by engaging in shared activities, and having and expressing love for one another, and, second, that she continues to reciprocate my feelings. My attitude toward her would change if I lost these beliefs—for example, if, like the amnesiac biographer, my memories of our history were erased. And my attitude would change if I came to think that that belief was false—if, say, I learned that she had been simply going through the motions all along, or no longer felt the same way about me. Ask yourself why you love your friend or spouse. Your thoughts will naturally turn to one's shared history with him or her. He or she is someone with whom you "go way back" or with whom you have shared your life.

What, in normal cases, causally sustains this concern is a good guide to the normative reasons for it. In general, the contents of the beliefs that normally sustain an emotion also serve as normative reasons for it. The history of an established relationship with a person, and the fact that she continues to reciprocate one's feelings, in turn constitute a normative reason for one's present emotional vulnerability. Why does it make sense for you to be so concerned, here and now, about what happens to that woman in particular? Why isn't it a kind of arbitrary favoritism? Because she is your friend or life partner. (Contrast simply

being seized by an emotional vulnerability to a stranger like Fred Simons.)

My claim, then, is that the presence of an established, ongoing friendship or romantic relationship—understood, in part, as a history of shared concern and activity, and, in part, as one’s friend’s or lover’s present disposition to perpetuate this concern—can be a reason for one’s present concern, a concern that constitutes the relationship going forward. Even if this is not bootstrapping, one might respond, it is nevertheless false. It implies that once one enters into a friendship or romantic relationship, one is locked into it, normatively speaking, for life. Yet people fall out of love all the time. Is this somehow inappropriate? Isn’t it more plausible to say that while it may be regrettable, there is nothing to which it is answerable?

This objection assumes that the reasons in question are “insistent.” The presence of either an insistent or a noninsistent reason renders the presence of some characteristic response appropriate or reasonable. But only the presence of an insistent reason renders the absence of that response inappropriate or unreasonable. If the only reason for a response is a noninsistent reason, then while it is reasonable to have the response, it is not unreasonable to fail to have it. Insistent reasons require a response, whereas noninsistent reasons leave it optional.³⁴ One might therefore propose to accommodate the objection by holding that the reasons for concern that established attitude-dependent relationships provide are noninsistent. Yet this would be a mistake. Before a friendship takes root, perhaps, one views it as optional whether or not one develops the concern that would constitute it. But once the friendship has taken root, it is not as though at each successive moment it is an open question whether to continue to have that concern. If someone views it that way, one wants to say, then a friendship has not really taken root.

I do want to claim, then, that ceasing to have the relevant kind of concern within the context of an established, valuable friendship or romantic relationship is inappropriate. One must be clear about what this means. These attitudes are not under one’s direct voluntary control. In falling out of love with someone, one may not have done anything wrong. It is not an act of betrayal or disloyalty. Whatever kind of criticism the charge of inappropriateness amounts to, it is not blame. It is something like criticism of the opposite of a phobic response: the absence of fear in the presence of something patently fearsome. What

is criticizable is the lack of an emotional response in the context of that which makes it appropriate.

The only way to evaluate my claim is to survey the various ways in which the concern that marks friendships and romantic relationships can be lost. First, one can fall out of love in response to a belief that one's relative does not, or never did, have concern for one. So long as the belief is true, this reaction is not inappropriate, according to the relationship theory. It is a warranted response to the recognition there never was, or is no longer, a friendship or romantic relationship.

Second, one's attitudes can change in response to the belief that one's friend or lover has failed to act on the reasons that the relationship provides, even if he still has the concern that constitutes the relationship. He may simply be weak-willed. Retrospectively, the relationship has been marred by infidelity or betrayal, and prospectively, it is a relationship in which certain kinds of trust may no longer be possible. Insofar as the reason for one's concern is the value of the relationship that one has for that person, this reason has been undermined. Moreover, the conduct in question may justifiably draw down anger and resentment, and these may crowd out concern for one's relative. There is a sense in which relationships contain the seeds of their own destruction. To value a relationship is to see certain attitudes to be appropriate responses to breaches of the relationship, and these attitudes may swamp, or consist in the withdrawal of, one's concern for that person.

Third, one may fall out of love with someone because one loses respect for him: because his behavior, for example, attracts one's contempt or indignation. Imagine the wife of a once reputable historian, who has since devoted himself to denying the holocaust. He does this, she comes to realize, because the acclaim he receives from neo-Nazi organizations serves what is now revealed as his boundless intellectual vanity. As far as his work is concerned, this is all that matters to him; he gives no thought to its integrity, much less to the harm it causes. Although she does not see this shift as a betrayal of her, and although he continues to have and express deep concern for her, she finds that she cannot respect what he has become, and so cannot love him.

This is a familiar phenomenon, but it is curious, at least at first glance. Why should a loss of respect lead to a loss of love? The explanation cannot be simply that disrespect is a "negative" attitude and so tends to compete with the "positive" attitude of love. If this were so, then familial love would be vulnerable to loss of respect in the same way

as friendship and romantic love, and this is not the case. Billy Carter's buffoonery is less likely to undermine one's love for him if Billy is one's brother, rather than one's husband. Nor is the explanation, as a version of the quality theory might have it, that our reason for loving our friends and lovers is that they are not loathsome. That we do not find them loathsome seems more a background condition than a positive ground. In response to the question, "Why do you love Jane?" I would not naturally answer, "Because she is not loathsome." That does nothing to distinguish her from all of the other people I find more or less decent.

I have only a speculative suggestion to offer. The reason why friendship and romantic love, in particular, are vulnerable to the loss of respect has something to do with the fact that friendship and romantic love involve viewing one's friend or lover as someone with equal standing. There must be symmetry in the participants' attitudes to each other, as a kind of background condition on friendship and romantic love. It is difficult to see a person as someone with whom one could have a symmetrical relationship, as someone with equal standing, if one does not see him as an equal, if one is all the time choking back a sense of contempt of his foolishness, or indignation about his treatment of others, attitudes that represent him as being somehow beneath one. Family relationships appear to require less in the way of symmetry; this is why familial love seems less vulnerable (if not wholly invulnerable) to the loss of this kind of respect. If relationships are reasons for friendship and romantic love, a loss of concern for a former friend or lover that results from a warranted loss of certain kinds of respect, therefore, may not be inappropriate. Having lost respect of that kind for him, one no longer can see him as an equal, as someone whom one could continue to have as a friend or lover.³⁵

Fourth, there is the psychologically real, but metaphysically vexed, phenomenon of no longer identifying the person now before one with the person with whom one once had a relationship. Perhaps the person with whom one once had a relationship was a fiction that one confused with this other person. Perhaps the person once existed, but has come to be replaced by this other person. As people say in movies, and as we might expect the historian's wife to say, "You're not the man I married," or "I don't know who you are anymore." The difference at issue, it should be stressed, is not mere qualitative difference, but qualitative difference of such an extreme degree or abruptness as to suggest numerical difference. The fact that the man with whom you shared so

much has become a different *kind* of person—less cheerful, more self-doubting—does not mean that your reasons for loving him lapse. Such is the “constancy” of love. But the fact that the man before you is so different from, and so tenuously connected to, that person as to call into question his being *him* does undermine your reasons. And this is not at odds with the relationship theory. You have reason to love the man with whom you had a relationship. If the man before you is no longer *that* man, then you have no special reason to love him.

Although it is not uncommon for people to think in this way, it implies, as I say, some difficult metaphysics. Derek Parfit has suggested that our attitudes may best be explained in terms of our relations to a person’s “successive selves”: “the object of some of our emotions may not be another person timelessly considered, but another person during a period in this person’s life.”³⁶ This explanation of what might justify the loss of concern is easier to accept, of course, if one accepts Parfit’s claim that “what matters” in general is not personal identity but rather degrees of psychological connectedness. Perhaps all that one needs to accept in order to appeal to this explanation, however, is that what matters for concern is degrees of psychological connectedness. (Perhaps one can remain agnostic on the question of whether it is also what matters for, say, questions of desert.) Needless to say, this explanation raises some extremely contentious questions about what sort of psychological connectedness defines a self, and what sort of disconnections suffice to constitute a different self. One imagines that answers to these questions in any particular case will be fraught with uncertainty and ambivalence. But this need not undermine the explanation. In any particular case, the question whether change justifies a loss of concern is bound to be fraught with uncertainty and ambivalence. The question is whether this uncertainty and ambivalence is, at least in part, uncertainty and ambivalence about whether one continues to have a relationship with the same person.

Finally, one may find that one is no longer attracted to one’s relative. Participating in the characteristic activities no longer engages one. Perhaps this is due to changes in oneself, in what attracts one, or to changes in one’s relative, in the features to which one was once attracted. To the extent that the relationship is partly constituted by participating in activities that are marked by attraction, loss of attraction may mean a change in the relationship. It may mean, for example, the end of a specifically romantic relationship. It is unclear to me whether loss of attraction in an established relationship is inappropri-

ate: whether an established relationship is an insistent reason not only for continued concern, but also for continued attraction. As I suggest below, in discussing how friendships and romantic relationships arise, it is natural to view reasons for attraction as nonrelational qualities of the person to whom one is attracted, qualities in light of which one finds engaging in the characteristic activities with him or her appealing. One might say, perhaps, that these are reasons only for initial attraction, and once a relationship takes root, the relationship itself becomes an insistent reason for attraction. But I am not sure that this is correct.

However we settle this question, loss of attraction is one thing, and loss of concern another. To the extent that we identify love with such concern, loss of attraction is not, in itself, loss of love. If one really did value the relationship, if it really was a friendship or loving relationship, then one valued more than simply the activities. One valued the relationship in which those activities were pursued, a relationship constituted by broader forms of noninstrumental concern for one another. One cared about one's relative not simply as an accomplice in these activities, but as one's friend or lover. The loss of interest in engaging in the characteristic activities, and even the decision no longer to engage in these activities, is not itself a loss of this concern. Of course, the decision to withdraw from the activities may, fairly or unfairly, give rise to anger and resentment, and these emotions may extinguish this concern and the possibility of any further relationship. But it is not uncommon for old friends and ex-spouses, whose lives have taken them in different directions, and who no longer engage in the activities that once defined their relationship, to continue to have a deep concern for one another, a concern rooted in the recognition of their shared history and the continued concern of each for the other. They are still willing to go to great lengths for one another, and they are still deeply affected by what happens to one another.

This suggests how we should understand the "constancy" of love. Love and friendship, insofar as they are responsive to their reasons, are resilient to changes in the personal qualities, such as beauty and wit, that initially made the prospect of certain activities with that person appealing. This is because to love someone is to view her as more than simply an accomplice in those activities. Nevertheless, love and friendship, even when they are responsive to their reasons, may be vulnerable to changes that render one's lover or friend unloving, or contemptible,

or alien. The fact that love is vulnerable to changes of these kinds, or so I have been arguing, can be explained by the relationship theory.

Hence, even on the assumption that established relationships provide insistent reasons for the concern that, going forward, constitutes those relationships, we can still identify situations in which those reasons lapse, and failing to have such concern is not inappropriate. This is what happens when one learns that one no longer has (or never had) a relationship marked by the presence and expression of mutual concern, when one finds that one can no longer go forward on the footing of equality that such a relationship requires, or when one no longer recognizes the person before one as the person with whom one once had a relationship.

The test of my view, then, is whether the loss of love would be inappropriate—would be like the opposite of a phobic response—in a situation in which none of the above reasons had lapsed. Suppose that you were to discover one day that you were no longer specially concerned for your (former) friend or lover. It is not that you are no longer especially interested in engaging in the activities you once shared. Perhaps you are; perhaps your (former) friend or lover still strikes you as the sort of person you find entertaining and attractive. Instead, you find that you are not disposed to be especially affected by what happens to her or by her attitudes toward you, at least not any more than you would a complete stranger. This is not because she has done something to lose your respect. Perhaps you find her entirely decent and self-possessed. Nor do you believe that she has betrayed you or has ceased to care about you. You just wake up one day to find that she means nothing to you. This does seem an inappropriate emotional response, analogous to the failure to fear what is patently fearsome. If this happened to you, you would find it alarming, to say the least. Even from the inside, it would seem that something had gone wrong, that your emotional reactions were seriously dysfunctional. Your emotional life would have become unmoored from its surroundings. It would be as if you had been overcome by a kind of localized depression, an inability to muster an emotional response to an evaluatively significant feature of your situation. If this is correct, then it suggests that attitude-dependent relationships do provide insistent reasons for the concern that constitutes those relationships going forward.

I began this section by defending against the charge of bootstrapping the claim that established attitude-dependent relationships can be reasons for the emotional vulnerabilities that perpetuate those rela-

tionships. It might be argued, however, that the charge of bootstrapping is most compelling in contexts in which attitude-dependent relationships have not yet been established. One enters into friendships and romantic relationships only by first acquiring certain emotional vulnerabilities, the argument would go. Friendships and romantic relationships cannot be reasons for these vulnerabilities, which first constitute the relationships, even if, once established, the relationships are reasons for the vulnerabilities that perpetuate them. Relationships cannot be reasons for falling in love, because they do not exist until one has fallen in love.

Nevertheless, I believe that there are reasons for acquiring the emotional vulnerability that first establishes a friendship or romantic relationship, and that these reasons are remarkably similar to the reasons for the emotional vulnerabilities that perpetuate the relationship, once established. The best way to elucidate these reasons, at risk of gilding the lily, is to consider how friendships typically arise. For one reason or another, you find yourself participating with Lisa, say, in activities of the kind that characterize established friendships, such as enjoying your leisure together, sharing a sense of humor, getting to know one another, exchanging confidences, providing assistance, and so on. Provided that nothing comes to light that would preclude a friendship with her, this pattern of interaction gradually gives rise to noninstrumental concern for Lisa—provided, in other words, that she is disposed to reciprocate one's emerging concern (she isn't antecedently hostile, for example, or divisively competitive, or self-absorbed, or sociopathic) and that there is no entrenched difference in social standing that prevents you and Lisa from going forward on a footing of equality.

The reasons for the noninstrumental concern that first establishes friendships are therefore much like the reasons for the noninstrumental concern that characterizes already established friendships. In both cases, the reasons are, in part, backward looking—a response to a past pattern of interaction—and, in part, forward looking—a response to the prospect of continuing or developing that pattern. The main difference in the content of the reasons that apply in each case lies in what one looks backward and forward to. In the context of a friendship that has not yet been established, one looks backward to a history of shared activities, whereas in the context of an already established friendship, one looks backward to a history of shared activities marked by noninstrumental concern. In the context of a friendship that has not yet been established, one looks forward to the development of a relation-

ship characterized by noninstrumental concern, development that would be made possible by the other person's readiness to reciprocate one's concern, whereas in the context of an already established friendship, one looks forward to the continuation of a relationship already characterized by noninstrumental concern, which would be made possible by one's friend's continuing to reciprocate this concern.

In addition to this difference in the content of the reasons that apply in each case, there may also be a difference in the stringency of those reasons. As I noted above, I believe that the reasons that apply in the case of an established relationship are best understood as insistent reasons, which not only make the presence of concern appropriate, but also make the absence of concern inappropriate. The reasons that apply in the case of not yet established relationships, by contrast, may be noninsistent reasons, which make the presence of concern appropriate, but do not make the absence of concern inappropriate. Perhaps while it is not unreasonable not to acquire the kind of concern that makes someone your friend, it is unreasonable to lose one's concern for a person who has been your friend. There may be a helpful analogy here in the different reasons provided by potential and actual human lives (or works of art). The fact that a potential life (or artwork) would be valuable if actual is a noninsistent reason to bring it into being. It renders one's efforts to create it worthwhile, even if it does not require one to create it. The fact that an actual life (or artwork) is valuable, by contrast, does require one to treat it, say, with respect and concern. While it may not be unreasonable not to bring it into being, it may well be unreasonable to degrade or destroy it, once it has been brought into being.

If the history of shared "friendly" interaction and the prospect of developing a genuine friendship constitute at least noninsistent reasons for the concern that would first constitute that friendship, then it must be the case that the absence of either reason would make such concern inappropriate. This appears to be correct. To begin with, concern that arises without any interaction does seem inappropriate. Consider my hypnosis-induced concern for Fred Simmons, which is not even accompanied by the belief that there has been such interaction. Or consider a stalker's concern, which is accompanied by a delusion that there has been such interaction. Furthermore, concern that arises from such interaction may still be inappropriate, if it is clear that there is no prospect of a genuine friendship, either because there is a pronounced inequality in our positions, or because there is no prospect of

Lisa's reciprocating my concern for her. If my concern for Lisa is fated to be unrequited, then it is open to a familiar kind of criticism, which may come first in the gentler form of advice to "get over it and move on," and later in the more forbidding form of a restraining order.

While our tendency to valorize unrequited love may seem to speak against this, I do not think that it really does. This tendency reflects, in part, our admiration of perseverance in face of overwhelming odds, and, in part, our fascination, inherited from Romanticism, with unruly and immoderate emotions. It does not reflect, however, a conviction that unrequited love, as such, is somehow worthwhile. Although one feels a wet blanket for saying so, it is a simple fact that we do not encourage our friends in their futile pining in the way in which we might encourage them in their creative ambitions or actual relationships. Indeed, if it persists, we are apt to find it unsettling. Either our friends are in the grip of emotions that they themselves can no longer see the point of, or they have lost touch with the reality of their situation. Moreover, unrequited noninstrumental concern for another person is quite rare, a fact that may testify to our belief that it is inappropriate. Usually when we speak of unrequited love or friendship, what we mean is not an unrequited noninstrumental concern, but instead an unrequited desire for a relationship. In normal cases, what goes unrequited is my desire for a relationship with Lisa that would be constituted by mutual concern, not the concern itself. In normal cases, I do not have such concern yet. I simply do not have enough of a history with her for it to make sense.

I have been suggesting that both what typically gives rise to the concern that constitutes friendships and what makes that concern appropriate is repeatedly interacting in relevant ways with someone, provided that that person is well disposed to one and an equal. Surely, one might object, there is more to it than that. What crucially gives rise to friendship and romantic love is attraction to a person in light of his or her personal qualities. As I tell the story, the person could be just about anyone, so long as he or she is not hostile or difficult to respect.

The question is how to accommodate the insight that animates this objection—namely, that attraction plays an important role in the development of friendship and romantic love—with my claim that the noninstrumental concern that establishes friendship and romantic love is a response to the reasons constituted by a past pattern of shared interaction and the future prospect of a relationship. The answer is that attraction often makes possible, in one of two ways, the kind of shared

interaction that gives rise to noninstrumental concern. Attraction to a person often is a reason *to pursue and sustain* the relevant kind of interaction with that person, and attraction to a person often is partly *constitutive* of the relevant kind of interaction.

Attraction, unlike admiration, involves not simply appreciating certain qualities that a person has, but appreciating them as qualities that would make engaging in activities with that person pleasurable or otherwise rewarding. This seems clear enough with sexual attraction. You not only recognize that the person has certain charms, as one might in a mood of disinterested appraisal, but also view his or her charms as (not to put too fine a point on it) making sex with him or her seem appealing. Similarly, you can be attracted to qualities that make socializing in other ways appealing, such as a complementary sense of humor or a readiness to take an interest in what interests you.³⁷

The fact that you are attracted to that person reflects that you do or would find engaging in certain activities with that person rewarding. This is a reason to pursue those activities, and it is, in turn, a reason to want a relationship with that person in the context of which those activities might be pursued. In certain circumstances, of course, one can pursue the activities apart from any relationship or expectation of one. One can enjoy conversation or sex with a charming sociopath, for example, who can only be an accomplice in the characteristic activities, but never a friend or lover. Often, however, it is difficult, if not impossible, to pursue these activities apart from genuine friendships and romantic relationships. In part, this is because of the problems of pursuing certain activities, such as sharing confidences, in the absence of the broader, noninstrumental concern that marks these relationships. In part, this is because sustained engagement in these activities is apt to give rise to friendships and romantic relationships. At any rate, the activities are more meaningful within a friendship or romantic relationship, and such relationships are worth having in their own right. Insofar as one wants to have some friends or some lover, then, it makes sense to desire and to seek to cultivate relationships with people with whom the shared activities would be especially appealing, rather than people with whom those activities would be a chore. Thus, the fact that one is attracted to a particular person can be a reason for wanting a friendship or romantic relationship with that person. Wanting to have a relationship with someone, however, is not the same thing as having noninstrumental concern. Rather, what one wants is to have this con-

cern and for it to be reciprocated. The way to bring this about is to cultivate a relationship, by interacting with that person in relevant ways.

Attraction, therefore, is one reason for the kind of interaction that gives rise to friendships and romantic relationships. In situations in which one is free to interact with whomever one chooses, it is usually the decisive reason. Yet in other situations, there are other reasons. Even though one has no antecedent interest in pursuing a relationship with a person, for example, one may be thrust together with him by some common adversity. Consider the bonds that develop between fellow prisoners of war, or colleagues who have to contend with the same awful boss. In such cases, personal attraction is not what draws them into shared activity. What matters is that they must work together, that they view each other with respect, and that a friendship between them is not foreclosed by antecedent hostility, divisive competition, or self-absorption.

As I mentioned earlier, however, attraction often plays a second role in relation to the kind of interaction that gives rise to friendships and romantic relationships. It often is part of what renders the interaction of the relevant kind. If among the shared activities that typically give rise to friendship, say, are such things as enjoying leisure together and sharing a sense of humor, then it may be impossible to engage in these activities without being attracted to that person, without seeing his or her specific qualities as making those activities rewarding in some respect. Thus, even if attraction is not what draws one into interacting with a particular person, it may nevertheless be what renders that interaction of the right kind to give rise to a friendship or romantic relationship.³⁸

8. Assessing Velleman's Account, in Light of the Relationship Theory

In "Love as a Moral Emotion," Velleman proposes that love is a kind of valuation of rational nature. Love, in his view, is the "optional maximum response to one and the same value" to which Kantian respect is the "required minimum" response (366), namely, the value of a person as a "rational nature" or "capacity of appreciation or valuation—a capacity to care about things in that reflective way which is distinctive of self-conscious creatures like us" (365). Velleman's account thus responds to the "focus" objection to the quality theory—namely, that it makes love focused on accidents—without abandoning the idea that nonrelational features are reasons for love. Instead of identifying the

beloved's essence with her bare identity as a particular, as Frankfurt does, Velleman identifies the beloved's essence with her rational nature. The fact that one's beloved has a rational nature can be a normative reason; it does not identify a particular with itself. Of course, Velleman is well aware that personal ads do not read: "Bare Kantian person seeks same." On his view, specific qualities of particular people, which serve as "expression[s] or symbol[s] or reminders of [their] value as [people]" (371), lead us to recognize their rational nature, and this recognition, in turn, "arrests our tendencies toward emotional self-protection from [them], tendencies to draw ourselves in and close ourselves off from being affected by [them]" (361). In sum, love is an emotional vulnerability produced by an arresting awareness of rational personhood, an awareness that is produced by an appreciation of specific personal qualities.³⁹

An immediate objection is that the etiology of familial love entailed by Velleman's account is implausible. Parents' love for their children, for example, does not wait for the appreciation of personal qualities as reminders of rational nature. Moreover, the etiologies of friendship and romantic love entailed by his account seem, at least at first glance, implausible, although for slightly different reasons. Many of the qualities that play a role in the development of friendship and romantic love are not evocative of rational nature in any straightforward way. It is mysterious, for example, how someone's "gait" might be "an expression or symbol or reminder of his value as a person" (371). It seems more a reflection of his physiology or unreflective habit than of anything to do with choice or valuation. Conversely, many of the qualities that one might have thought were most evocative of rational nature, such as being a superb reasoner, chooser, or valuer, are qualities that often fail to give rise to attitudes of friendship or romantic love. If this were not the case, then we would all be in love with the same mathematicians, or *phronimoi*, or art critics.

However, Velleman's etiology of friendship and romantic love may be more realistic than these initial criticisms would suggest. He explicitly warns against overintellectualizing the rational nature that one comes to value, as well as the way in which one recognizes its expression in empirical qualities. On the one hand, what one comes to value is not an intellect, but a capacity for appreciation or concern (365–66). On the other hand, one does not simply conclude intellectually that the person in question is a rational nature; one perceives it in his empirical qualities in some more immediate way. An example that might suit

Velleman's purpose, so understood, is that of a friendship developing out of a shared sense of humor. One can see how a sense of humor might express a more general capacity for appreciation. And one can see how, in taking pleasure in someone's jokes, one might be said to perceive their sense of humor as expressing this more general capacity in a particularly direct and disarming way.

However, suggestions of this kind would not suffice to explain why some apprehensions of expressions of rational nature "arrest" our emotional defenses, whereas others do not. One might appreciate the same sense of humor in a friend as in a television comedian, and one might find each equally "disarming" in the familiar sense, without having any tendency to come to love the comedian in the way one does one's friend. Now, Velleman might deny that any further explanation is possible. Some apprehensions of a given expression of rational nature just do arrest us, whereas other expressions, even of the very same kind, just don't. Such are the mysteries of the heart. But the present example casts doubt on this. After all, we would predict that one's appreciation of one's friend's sense of humor, but not, say, Jerry Seinfeld's, would have this arresting effect. So some explanation of this causal regularity would seem to be forthcoming. The relationship theory provides such an explanation. As I suggested in the previous section, *interaction* that involves an appreciation of a person's qualities is one of the kinds of interaction that can give rise to friendship. One's appreciation of one's friend's sense of humor plays a role in the development of one's attitudes of friendship toward him, therefore, because it colors interaction with him. Since one does not interact with Seinfeld, the appreciation of the same trait in him does not play a similar role.

In addition to having doubts about the plausibility of Velleman's etiology of love, one might wonder how Velleman can claim that it is appropriate to love only some people and not others, in light of the fact that all people share the rational nature that is supposed to make love appropriate. Anticipating this concern, Velleman observes that it is impossible to love everyone. Since love for one person "exhausts the attention that we might have devoted to finding and appreciating the value in others," "we are constitutionally limited in the number of people we can love" (372). If "cannot" implies "not having reason to," then it is not the case that one has reason to love everyone. From the fact that it is not the case that one has reason to love everyone, however, it does not follow that it is the case that one has reason—even noninsis-

tent reason—to love one person and, of necessity, not others. It does not follow that loving some people and not others is ever an appropriate response to the rational nature that all of them have.

Consider a parallel, in the context of action as opposed to that of emotion. Suppose that I have “overconcern” for Sally: I give her interests twice as much weight as those of anyone else in deciding what to do. It is an arithmetical truth that I cannot have overconcern for *everyone*. We might conclude, therefore, that having overconcern for *everyone* is not an appropriate response to his or her rational nature. Yet it does not follow that having overconcern for *Sally* is an appropriate response to the rational nature that she shares with everyone else. Indeed, overconcern for anyone is clearly an inappropriate response to rational nature, as Velleman implicitly affirms in his treatment of Williams’s famous example.

Of course, the man in Williams’s story should save his wife in preference to strangers. But the reasons why he should save her have nothing essentially to do with love.

The grounds for preference in this case include, to begin with, the mutual commitments and dependencies of a loving relationship. What the wife should say to her husband if he hesitates about saving her is not “What about me?” but “What about us?” That is, she should invoke their partnership or shared history rather than the value placed on her by his love. Invoking her individual value in the eyes of his love would merely remind him that she was no more worthy of survival than the other potential victims, each of whom can ask “What about me?” (373)

As far as action is concerned, the husband ought to respond to his wife’s “individual value” by recognizing that she is “no more worthy of survival than the other potential victims.” He ought to see that her individual value, rooted in her rational nature, gives him no more reason to save her than them, and that any justification for doing so must lie instead in the mutual commitments and dependencies of their relationship. This is very close to the view that I have been advocating: that partiality in action is justified, if not by the mutual commitments and dependencies of a relationship, then by the relationship itself. The question is why, if Velleman concedes that an appeal to rational nature cannot justify partiality in action, he nonetheless maintains that an appeal to rational nature can justify partiality in emotion. Why is love appropriate whereas overconcern is not? Granted, the consequences of partiality in emotion tend to be less significant than the consequences of partiality in action. But this seems to show only that partial-

ity in emotion is in one way more excusable, not that it is in fact appropriate.

At the risk of offering a philistine reduction of Velleman's gracefully argued essay, let me suggest, on his behalf, a possible distinction: that emotion is a scarce, indivisible resource, whereas action is often divisible. Emotion is "indivisible" in the sense that we have only two emotional settings: respect and full-blown love. There is no intermediate emotion that one might have toward more people than one can love. Once our defenses are disarmed and the floodgates are opened, there is no stopping halfway. Suppose that Velleman accepts the following principle: whenever one cannot equally distribute scarce, indivisible resources among several people, an appropriate response to the rational nature that all of those people possess is to allocate, by means of a suitably arbitrary procedure, the resources only to some and, of necessity, not to others. By appealing to this principle, he might then explain why loving only some people and not others is an appropriate response to the rational nature that all of them have. Emotion is a "scarce, indivisible resource," he might claim, and coming to an arresting awareness of a person's rational nature can be treated as "a suitably arbitrary procedure." Action, by contrast, is often a divisible resource, in the sense that one can often distribute one's time, energy, and material resources to equal effect among all of those who need it. In situations in which such equal distribution is possible, it is the only appropriate response to rational nature; overconcern is inappropriate. However, in situations in which equal distribution is not possible, such as cases in which one can rescue only some and not others, the principle applies, and it is an appropriate response to rational nature to rescue only some and not others, as determined by some suitably arbitrary procedure.⁴⁰

I do not know if this is what Velleman has in mind, and, at any rate, the claim that emotion is indivisible stands in need of defense. Yet even if Velleman might succeed in explaining why it is appropriate to love only some people and not others, he would still fail to explain why loving certain people in particular is an appropriate response, whereas loving others may not be. This is the main shortcoming of his account. Velleman gives a causal explanation of how, in fact, one comes to love certain people and not others, but not a normative reason for loving them and not others. What are we to say about a parent who just happens—it is a contingent matter, after all—to see an expression of rational nature in his child's classmates, but not in his own child? Ought we to say that this is inappropriate? Velleman believes that we ought to say

this: “Of course, a person’s love for his children shouldn’t necessarily lead him to love other children. Ideally, he will find his own children especially lovable—that is, especially expressive, in his eyes, of an incomparable value” (373). But what licenses the insertion of the normative terms, “shouldn’t” and “ideally”? If love is an appropriate response to a value that everyone has, why can’t it be an appropriate response to anyone?

To put the point another way, the effect of shifting the reasons for love from qualities to rational nature is that the nonsubstitutability problem proliferates. Whereas on the quality view we faced only the hypothetical possibility of a substitute twin-Jane, on Velleman’s view we face the actuality of billions of substitutes. One has just as much reason to love a stranger as one has to love one’s child or lifelong friend. As far as one’s reasons are concerned, the stranger is just as good a substitute.

This complaint may seem to turn a deaf ear to Velleman’s insistence that while love is an appreciation of the value of a person’s rational nature, it nonetheless involves appreciating one’s beloved as “special and irreplaceable.” Although this value is generic, a value that everyone has, Velleman argues, it is a value with a “dignity,” rather than a “price”: a value to which it is inappropriate to respond by “comparing or equating one person with another” (367). While one “judges” that one’s beloved has a value that everyone shares, this value calls for one to “appreciate” or value one’s beloved as nonsubstitutable.

For the same reason, we can judge the person to be valuable in generic respects while also valuing her as irreplaceable. Valuing her as irreplaceable is a mode of appreciation, in which we respond to her value with an unwillingness to replace her or to size her up against potential replacements. And refusing to compare or replace the person may be the appropriate response to a value that we attribute to her on grounds that apply to others as well. The same value may be attributable to many objects without necessarily warranting substitutions among them. (368)

It is far from clear, however, what “appreciating someone as irreplaceable” or “refusing to compare or replace someone” actually amounts to in this context. It cannot amount to refusing to recognize the (alleged) fact that one has just as much *reason* to love anyone as one has to love one’s child or lifelong friend. That is, it cannot amount to refusing to recognize that one’s child or lifelong friend is substitutable *in the sense that worries proponents of the nonsubstitutability objection*. For to refuse to recognize this (alleged) fact is just to refuse to recognize the conjunction of the fact that everyone has rational nature and the

(alleged) fact that this rational nature is one's reason for love. Velleman accepts this point, at least in his discussion of practical deliberation. Evidently, the wife's "dignity" is not violated if her husband responds to her "individual value" by recognizing that she is "no more worthy of survival than the other potential victims," that is, that he has just as much reason to save them. *This* kind of comparing and equating is an acceptable response to her dignity. Why then should her dignity be violated if her husband responds by recognizing that she is no more worthy of his emotional vulnerability than the other potential victims—that he has just as much reason to love any (although not all) of the others? Indeed, it is hard to see how it could be otherwise. What kind of "appreciation" of one's beloved as "special and irreplaceable" could be compatible with the "judgment" that one has just as much reason to appreciate anyone in that way? Perhaps appreciating one's beloved as "special and irreplaceable" consists in acknowledging the fact that one's beloved is a distinct person, such that if one's love migrates to someone else (even someone with identical qualities), one recognizes the difference? One's child or lifelong friend might find some consolation in that, I suppose. But presumably what they would really like one to appreciate is that one has reason to love them in particular, reason that one does not have to love other people.

Moreover, the problem is not simply that one ought to love certain people in particular, but also that one ought to love those people in particular ways. Recall the problem of modes. There are many kinds of love: parental love, fraternal love, romantic love, friendship, and so on, and we tend to think that certain kinds of love are appropriate from certain people to certain others. It's not just that we "ideally" ought to have love for our own children, but moreover that we ideally ought to have parental love for them, and not, say, mere friendship. But if love is a response to rational nature, then why should parents and friends respond so differently?

9. Conclusion

Let me close by discussing three implications of the relationship theory. First, there has been considerable debate over what, if anything, might justify "partiality": our special treatment of our family, friends, and others with whom we have significant ties. If the relationship theory is correct, then love consists, in part, in the recognition of a justification for partiality. Love consists in perceiving a relationship as a

source of reasons for, among other things, treating one's friends, family, and other relatives specially.

One might wonder how far this observation actually justifies partiality. Granted, it might be said, the fact that love consists, in part, in treating our relationships as sources of reasons implies that if we are to love at all, we must treat our relationships as sources of reasons. Since human life would be barren without love, this means that we had better treat our relationships as sources of reasons. But this hardly shows that our relationships are in fact sources of reasons.

This is true, and it shows that the moral of the relationship theory is not that we had better go about believing that our relationships are sources of reasons, lest love perish. The moral is instead that we do, in fact, believe that our relationships are sources of reasons. In constructing any theory of what reasons and values there are, we must start from what we, here and now, believe about reasons and value. We have no other point of departure. What the relationship theory makes clear is that as a conviction constitutive of love, the conviction that our relationships are sources of reasons for partiality is as solidly rooted in our normative outlook as any other we have. It ought to be taken no less seriously.⁴¹

Second, the relationship theory would seem to pave the way for an understanding of the reasons for partialities of other kinds. We are partial not only to our friends and family, but also to our careers, causes, groups, and institutions. We are committed to our own professions, charities, cultures, and nations, and would not think of abandoning them for a life of a different kind. Yet we know full well that they are no more important than any one of a number of other professions, charities, cultures, or nations. Just as our love for particular people is responsive not to the special value of those people, but instead to the value of our histories with them, so too perhaps our commitment to particular projects and associations is responsive not to the special value of those projects and associations, but instead to the value of our histories with them.

Finally, while the relationship theory establishes that partiality is part of practical reason, it does not necessarily show that partiality is part of morality. The relationship theory does imply that one putative ground for excluding partiality from morality is not available—namely, the familiar claim that duty involves motivation by reason, whereas love involves motivation by unreasoned “passion.”⁴² In another way, however, the relationship theory might seem to heighten the widespread

sense of uneasiness about including partiality within morality. For if the relationship theory is correct, then our reasons for partiality arise from the value of relationships. Yet moral reasons, it is often thought, arise distinctively from the value of persons. To be moral, according to a familiar conception, is to respect the worth of persons, either as loci of well-being, as utilitarianism claims, or as rational natures or ends in themselves, as broadly Kantian theories would have it. By contrast, if the relationship theory is correct, to be partial is to be beholden to the value of mere things. Indeed, if one subscribes to this conception, then Velleman's identification of love with the valuation of personhood may seem the only hope for vindicating love as a "moral emotion." In sum, the relationship theory may appear to succeed in finding a place for partiality within practical reason only by undermining its claim to be part of morality. Whether this appearance is accurate, however, is a question that I must leave for another paper.

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Notes

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¹ "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109 (1999): 338–74.

² "Autonomy, Necessity, and Love" and "On Caring," in *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 129–41, 155–80; and "Some Mysteries of Love," *Lindley Lecture* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2001).

³ This "relationship theory" is in broad agreement with a suggestion made by Thomas Hurka, "The Justification of National Partiality," in *The Morality of Nationalism*, ed. Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 139–57, at 150. To love a person "as an individual," Hurka pro-

poses, “involves loving the person for certain historical qualities, ones deriving from his or her participation with one in a shared history.” I have doubts, however, about Hurka’s claim that the relevant, reason-giving histories are ones of “doing good” together. First, a father who has thus far neglected his child has not had a history of doing good for it, but nonetheless has reason to love it. Second, a father who has cared for his young child has done good for it, but has not done good together with it. If the child is severely autistic, say, then the father may never do good with it. It might be replied that a history of one participant’s doing good for the other is sufficient. But this would imply that the stalker who seeks to ingratiate himself by benefiting his target can succeed in dramatic fashion. He can, by doing so for long enough, give his target compelling reason to love him. Finally, the good done in a relationship often depends on the value of the relationship itself. Whether one views my friendship with someone as a history of doing good together, or instead as a history of arbitrary favoritism, would seem to depend on a prior judgment on whether that friendship provides me with valid reasons to treat my friend specially. That being said, there is a significant class of valuable relationships that consist in histories of realizing together some independently defined good. These are the “extrinsically finally valuable” relationships, such as relationships of collaboration, that I discuss in note 21, below. Other intimations of the relationship theory appear in W. Newton-Smith, “A Conceptual Investigation of Love,” in *Philosophy and Personal Relations*, ed. Alan Montefiore (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 113–36, at 124; and Robert Brown, *Analyzing Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 108–9. The relationship theory is also similar, in certain respects, to the account of “attachment” offered by John Maier, “Attachment and Identity” (unpublished typescript). Maier suggests that attachment to a particular object comes about, as a causal matter, through a history of “favoring” that object. For many of the reasons just discussed in conjunction with Hurka’s theory, I do not think that normative reasons for love can be identified with histories of favoring, were one to attempt to turn Maier’s account to this purpose. I suspect that there is no one single kind of history that gives us reasons for love, that in the end we must accept a kind of pluralism about valuable relationships.

⁴That being said, there are some important commonalities between ‘love’ in some of its broader senses and ‘love’ in the narrow sense with which I am concerned. There is the obvious commonality that ‘love’ in all of these senses denotes a positive or favorable response to its object. More significantly, judgments that one has reasons to love some X are what I will call “subject nonuniversalizable.” It does not follow from the fact that I have reason to love X that everyone else has reason to love X. This is as true of love of candy apples and Jerry Lewis’s movies as it is of love of particular people. By contrast, judgments that one has reasons for certain other favorable attitudes, such as admiration and respect, are subject universalizable. If I have reason to admire Lincoln or to respect human rights, then you do too. This is one way in which love is more personal, or expressive of one’s individuality, than admiration or respect. See note 37, below, for further discussion of subject nonuniversalizability. I am indebted to Stephen Engstrom for this point. Finally, when we consider loving

one's life's work, one's cause, or one's group, we may find an even closer commonality with loving a person. In these cases, one sees an ongoing history with one's work, cause, or group as a source of reasons for one's attitudes toward it, just as in the case of loving a person one sees an ongoing history with that person as a source of reasons for one's attitudes toward her. I return to this point in the conclusion, below.

⁵ For an exploration of this view, see Gabrielle Taylor, "Love," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 76 (1976): 147–64. G. Pitcher, "Emotion," *Mind* 74 (1965): 326–46, at 340–42, and, to a lesser extent, D.W. Hamlyn, "The Phenomena of Love and Hate," *Philosophy* 53 (1978): 5–20, agree that love is an emotion, but conclude that it is an exception from the general rule that emotions are responses to reasons.

⁶ Some might think that this concedes too much to the objection. After all, are people not blamed for being unloving parents or spouses? I suspect that in these cases people are blamed not for failing to love, but instead for failing to perform some relevant voluntary action, such as doing what a loving person would do, or taking steps to bring it about that one does love. At the very least, this is all that people can properly be blamed for, or so I would claim. If I am wrong about this, and one can properly be blamed for failing to love, then so much the worse for the objection. I am indebted to Gavin Lawrence for pointing out that the relevant notion is not involuntariness, but instead nonvoluntariness.

⁷ See Frankfurt, "Some Mysteries of Love," 4.

⁸ Compare Elizabeth Anderson's discussion of parental love in *Value in Ethics and Economics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 4; and Alan Soble, *The Philosophy of Sex and Love: An Introduction* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1998), 97.

⁹ See O. H. Green, "Is Love an Emotion?" in *Love Analyzed*, ed. Roger E. Lamb, (Boulder: Westview, 1997), 209–24, at 211; and Robert Kraut, "Love *De Re*," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 10(1986): 413–30, at 425. For critical discussions of the idea that love is constant, see Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, "The Historicity of Psychological Attitudes: Love Is Not Love Which Alters Not When It Alteration Finds," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 10(1986): 399–412; and Soble, *Philosophy of Sex and Love*, 145–51.

¹⁰ It might be said that this overlooks a reason that I have for loving Jane rather than her double: namely, that I have led Jane, but not her double, to expect certain things of me. Therefore, I have a promissory obligation, or something like it, to love Jane, whereas I have no such obligation to love her twin. To begin with, this proposal cannot save the quality theory, since it appeals to relational facts, which lie outside the confines of the quality theory proper. At most, the quality theory could be one part of a hybrid theory that viewed some combination of nonrelational personal qualities and relational promissory obligations as grounds for love. At any rate, for reasons that I can only gesture at here, a hybrid theory of this kind would still be inadequate. First, Jane may lack expectations of me. Perhaps she—my loving wife of fifty years, with whom I shared this life and raised these children—has been ravaged by Alzheimer's disease to the point where she can no longer recognize

who I am. In this situation, the hybrid theory would seem to imply that now my love might as well migrate to her twin. Second, I may not have voluntarily and intentionally encouraged Jane's expectations, in which case I am not obligated to fulfill them. Now, it is true that in friendships and romantic relationships, I usually will have voluntarily and intentionally encouraged expectations. Yet in many family relationships, this is not the case. If Jane is my older sister, then I may have done nothing to invite her expectations of me. The hybrid theory would seem to imply that in this instance, my love for Jane might as well transfer to her double. Finally, and most decisively, there simply are no promissory obligations to love. This is revealed by the familiar phenomenon of "leading someone on." In leading Jane on, I get Jane to form the expectations of me that she would have if we in fact had a genuine friendship or romantic relationship, even though I lack the love for her needed for that to be the case. No one believes that I have thereby acquired an obligation to love her, and I would be insane to think I ought to go through the motions of loving her, as a kind of second-best strategy for minimizing her disappointment. Instead, my obligation is to come clean as gently as possible and to try to make amends, to the extent that I can do so in a way that is not painfully condescending. The theoretical explanation of this commonsense view, I suspect, is that one cannot have a promissory obligation to give a response, such as love, that is beyond one's voluntary control. For further discussion of these issues, see my *Relationships as Reasons* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2003), chap. 1. On nonsubstitutability generally, see Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 167–68; Kraut, "Love *De Re*," 427–29; Sobel, *Philosophy of Sex and Love*, 139–45; Roger Scruton, *Sexual Desire: A Philosophical Introduction* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1986), chap. 5; and Thomas Nagel, "Sexual Perversion," in *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 39–52, at 42–43. For a defense of the quality view against this objection, see Roger E. Lamb, "Love and Rationality," in *Love Analyzed*, 23–47. The nonsubstitutability objection should be distinguished from a related objection that might be labeled "subject nonuniversalizability." The objection is that if the quality view is correct, then insofar as X reasonably loves Y because Y has Q, for all Z, Z is unreasonable if Z does not love Y because Y has Q. If Jane's having Q justifies my loving her, then it requires everyone to love her. See, for example, William Lyons, *Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 78–80. In note 37, below, I argue that the analogous objection against reasons for attraction depends on the false assumption that having a reason to ϕ implies that, other things equal, it is unreasonable not to ϕ .

¹¹ See Green, "Is Love an Emotion?"; and Laurence Thomas, "Reasons for Loving," in *The Philosophy of (Erotic) Love*, ed. Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1991), 467–76. The notion of love as "bestowal" invoked by Irving Singer, *The Pursuit of Love* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) bears a certain affinity to the view of Frankfurt that I go on to discuss.

¹² "Some Mysteries of Love," 3.

¹³ "On Caring," 170. All subsequent page references are given in the text.

¹⁴This is an assumption that I make, but do not defend, throughout this paper: that giving a reason to respond to some particular in a distinctive way necessarily involves predicating some general feature of that particular. I am indebted to Calvin Normore, who has expressed doubts about this assumption, for prompting me to make it explicit.

¹⁵Proponents of this cognitivist account include Jonathan Dancy, *Practical Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 35–37; Warren Quinn, “Putting Rationality in its Place,” in *Morality and Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 228–55; Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 140–43; and *Engaging Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 50–56; T. M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 37–49; and R. Jay Wallace, “Addiction as a Defect of Will” *Law and Philosophy* 18 (1999): 621–54.

¹⁶For a similar interpretation of the underlying appeal of Frankfurt’s invocation of second-order desires, one to which I am heavily indebted, see R. Jay Wallace, “Caring, Reflexivity, and the Structure of Volition,” in *Autonomes Handeln: Beiträge zur Philosophie von Harry G. Frankfurt*, ed. Monika Betzler and Barbara Guckes (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000), 215–36. See also Gary Watson, “Free Agency,” *Journal of Philosophy* 72 (1975): 205–20.

¹⁷I am indebted to Melissa Barry and Alison Simmons for prompting me to make this explicit.

¹⁸One might suggest that a variant of the no-reasons view could enjoy many of the advantages of the relationship theory. Love, on this variant, consists not in basic desires to, say, help Jane, but instead in a nonbasic desire to help Jane produced by the conjunction of a basic desire to help one’s friends and the belief that Jane is one’s friend. This would provide a way to differentiate the desires constitutive of loving Jane from mere urges and instrumental desires to help Jane. It would also solve the problem of amnesia, by explaining how forgetting that Jane is one’s friend extinguishes the desire to help Jane. When combined with what we might call a “weak Humean” theory of reasons for desire, this version of the no-reasons view could even account for the inappropriateness of love in certain cases. According to the weak Humean theory, there are no reasons for basic desires, but one can have (or lack) a reason for a nonbasic desire D insofar as D would survive (or fail to survive) proper and fully informed deliberation from one’s basic desires. The combination of this variant of the no-reasons view and the weak Humean theory would hold that one has no reason to love Jane if one’s belief that Jane is one’s friend (that is, that she reciprocates one’s attitudes) is false. But it would hold that there are no reasons for love in the sense that there are no reasons for the basic desire to help one’s friends that is partly constitutive of love. This variant would still be inadequate, however, in two respects. First, it would fail to explain why the absence of love is inappropriate in certain cases, such as when a father has no basic desire to help his children. Second, it would subscribe to what I believe is a distorted view of desire and rational action.

¹⁹This issue is discussed in greater detail in my *Relationships as Reasons*, chap. 3.

²⁰This account of valuing is indebted to Samuel Scheffler, “Projects, Rela-

tionships, and Reasons,” in *Reason and Value: Themes from the Moral Philosophy of Joseph Raz*, ed. Jay Wallace, Philip Pettit, Samuel Scheffler, and Michael Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). It is also similar to Anderson, *Value in Ethics and Economics*. My analysis, however, stresses the idea that valuing is a matter of being *disposed to have* certain emotional responses, rather than of *actually having* emotional responses. I also claim, whereas Anderson denies, that valuing X consists not only in a susceptibility to certain emotional responses, but also in certain beliefs: first, the belief that something provides reasons for this susceptibility and, second, the belief that something provides one with reasons for action.

²¹ For most purposes, “final” value is equivalent to what is more often called “intrinsic” value. The reason why I avoid the more familiar language of “intrinsic” value is that it suggests a value that something has independently of anything else. Regimenting this suggestion a bit, one might say that X is *intrinsically* valuable insofar as X is valuable whether or not any distinct Y is valuable, and X is *extrinsically* valuable insofar as X is valuable only because some distinct Y is valuable. While it is true that nonfinal value implies extrinsic value, it is not true that final value implies intrinsic value. Some final values are extrinsic; some things are sources of reasons only because something else is valuable. This is often true of what are called “personal projects” in the philosophical literature: individuals’ avocations or life’s work. A medical researcher, for instance, might have the personal project of finding a cure for some disease. On the one hand, his project is valuable only because what it might achieve—a cure—is valuable. In this sense, his project is extrinsically valuable. On the other hand, it is natural to say that his project is a source of reasons for him, a source of reasons distinct from the value of what it might achieve. This is suggested by the fact that the project provides him with reasons to continue with his own efforts, for example, even if abandoning the project would not significantly reduce the chances that a cure would be found by someone else, because, say, there is an equally talented researcher waiting to take his place. This is the phenomenon that Frankfurt has in mind, I believe, when he writes, “certain kinds of activity—such as productive work—are inherently valuable not simply *in addition to* being instrumentally valuable but *precisely because of* their instrumental value” (“On Caring,” 178). See also his “On the Usefulness of Final Ends” in *Necessity, Volition, and Love*, 82–94; and David Wiggins, “Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life,” in *Needs, Values, Truth*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 87–137, at 132–34. Some relationships, such as those constituted by a history of collaboration on some joint enterprise or by a history of occupying correlative roles within an institution, are finally extrinsically valuable in a similar way. Relationships of these kinds are valuable only insofar as the aims of the enterprise or institution are valuable. If we come to believe that these aims are worthless or evil, then the relationships that they partly constitute will come to seem to us hollow, absurd, or worse. This helps to explain how we criticize claims that relationships of certain types, such as relationships between collaborators in an oppressive oligarchy, terrorist organization, or gang, are finally valuable. To say that friendships are finally valuable is not to explain why they are sources of reasons, but

instead to report it. A particular relationship is a source of reasons because it falls under a specific kind, such as friendship, not because it has some further, more general property—"final value"—that it shares with, say, you, Picasso's *Guernica*, and the Grand Canyon. I am indebted to Judith Jarvis Thomson for compelling me to clarify this point.

²² Wai-hung Wong points out an apparent counterexample: children can be said to love their parents long before they have the conceptual resources to believe that their relationships are sources of reasons. My response is that 'love', when ascribed to children who lack these conceptual resources, simply denotes a different kind of psychological state. This is an instance of a more general phenomenon. Certain conceptual capacities are required for many of the psychological states to which normal adults human beings are subject, such as belief, desire, and fear. To have a belief, for example, one needs the concept of truth. To the extent that brutes and children lack these capacities, they do not have states of this kind. Their sensitivity to their environment involves counterparts to these states, which we typically understand by way of analogy to them.

²³ Moreover, this is not to be explained in terms of differences in how A and C are causally or constitutively positioned to "promote" or "realize" instances of R. It is not as though A and C have the same reasons to "promote" friendship in general, say, and recognize that the most effective way to do this is to concentrate on their own friendships. This is not the way in which participants see their relationships as giving rise to reasons. Compare Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, 88–90.

²⁴ Compare Soble's judicious insistence on the distinction between the "basis" and "object" of love, *Philosophy of Sex and Love*, 95.

²⁵ In my view, the quality theorist is entitled to a similar response. Although my ground for loving Jane is that she is beautiful, the focus of my love is Jane herself, not the quality of beauty, or this particular instantiation of beauty. Although my reason for loving Jane is that she has these accidents, what I love is Jane, not the accidents. A quality theorist need not subscribe, for example, to the alleged Platonic view that what one loves is the Form that the beloved instantiates. See Gregory Vlastos, "The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato," in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 3–34; and L. A. Kosman, "Platonic Love," in *Facets of Plato's Philosophy, Phronesis* supp. vol. 2 (1976): 53–69.

²⁶ "Love and its Place in Moral Discourse," in Lamb, *Love Analyzed*, 153–63, at 156. All subsequent page references are given in the text.

²⁷ For example, Pettit countenances rigidly individualized thoughts that contain descriptive elements: "This, my friend, is in need" (158).

²⁸ Compare Kraut's remark, "So we might say: a proper name is committed to its bearer, in much the same way that a lover is historically committed to the object of his love" ("Love *De Re*," 424).

²⁹ "Persons, Character, and Morality," in *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1–19, at 18.

³⁰ Frankfurt, "Some Mysteries of Love," 2–3; and Liam Murphy, *Moral Demands in Nonideal Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 140 n. 36.

Frankfurt correctly observes that the mere legal relationship of being someone's wife seems insufficient to bear the weight that Williams appears to place on it. After all, the man and his wife might despise one another, or they might have a marriage of convenience. I take it that Williams intends us to imagine a longstanding, loving marriage. She is not simply his wife, but the woman with whom he made his life, with whom he raised these children, who stayed by his side as he fought cancer, and so on.

³¹ R. Jay Wallace, "Three Conceptions of Rational Agency," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 2 (1999): 217–42, at 225. At times, Pettit himself seems sympathetic to this view: "After all, it is not as if loving someone produces behaviour in a blind, reason-free gush of passion or in an unthinking exercise of habit" (157).

³² A point emphasized by Michael Bratman, *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

³³ Note that this concessive reply is sufficient for the purpose of justifying partiality in friendships and romantic relationships, which is an application of the relationship theory that I describe in the conclusion.

³⁴ The terms 'insistent' and 'noninsistent' are from Shelly Kagan, *The Limits of Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 378–81. I am less skeptical than Kagan is, however, that there are noninsistent reasons.

³⁵ This phenomenon perhaps depends on a distinctively modern conception of friendship and romantic love, to which equal standing is essential. Historically, there have been relationships of these kinds that have not assumed equal standing. The present explanation implies, as seems correct, that the kind of love that "superior" participants in these relationships had for their "inferiors" did not depend on the degree to which they respected them as equals. Of course, they might still have respected their inferiors in some other way, say, as sturdy and dependable servants (albeit coarse and childish in their way).

³⁶ *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 305. See also his discussion of the nineteenth-century Russian, 327.

³⁷ It might be objected that there cannot be reasons for attraction, because these "reasons" do not universalize over subjects. From the fact that I am attracted to Jane, in light of her sense of humor, it does not follow that you are rationally required to be attracted to her, in light of her sense of humor. This objection is misguided, although the issue is complex. Certain qualities cannot count as reasons for *anyone* to be attracted a person. The weight of a person's kidneys or her social security number, for example, do nothing to render attraction to her intelligible. Nevertheless, we are fairly promiscuous about the qualities that we recognize as rendering attraction intelligible. Within these permissive limits, the reasons for attraction provided by these qualities are noninsistent reasons. Finding *one set of qualities* (within these limits) appealing is appropriate, but failing to find some other set (within these limits) appealing is not inappropriate. This judgment universalizes. It is open to everyone, but not required of everyone, to be attracted to this set of qualities. Moreover, one can have an insistent reason to be attracted to *a particular person*. Given that one is the *kind* of person who finds this *set of qualities* appealing, the fact that Jane has this set of qualities is an insistent reason to be attracted to Jane.

This reason also universalizes. For everyone who finds such qualities appealing, the fact that Jane has such qualities is a reason to be attracted to her. If one is not attracted to Jane, because one falsely believes that Jane lacks the qualities that one prizes, then space opens up for a kind of normative advice: "You ought to be attracted to her; she's just your type." This reason also universalizes over other objects of attraction with the same qualities. Note that one has just as much reason to be attracted to Jane as to be attracted to twin-Jane. Attraction is not nonsubstitutable. I am indebted to Sam Scheffler for helping me to sort these issues out.

³⁸ I owe this point to Jay Wallace.

³⁹ Whereas I argued that the problem with Frankfurt's view is that we cannot find a list of things regarding one's beloved desiring which is *sufficient* for love, Velleman argues, in effect, that the chief problem with Frankfurt's view, as well as the similar views of "analytic philosophers on love," is that we cannot find a list of things regarding one's beloved desiring which is *necessary* for love. The problem, according to Velleman, is that for any given list of things that a loving agent is supposed to desire regarding his beloved, we could imagine a case in which X does not desire these things regarding Y, but nonetheless loves Y. He observes, with characteristic sensitivity to the complexities of human psychology, that one can love a "meddlesome aunt, cranky grandfather, smothering parent, ... overcompetitive sibling," or ex-spouse without having any "desire for his or her company," and that "someone whose love was a bundle of these urges, to care and share and please and impress—such a lover would be an interfering, ingratiating nightmare" (353). One might worry that these examples tell equally against my claim that love is partly constituted by the belief that one has reasons to act in one's beloved's interests. This worry would be misplaced. The case of the ex-spouses, for example, is a case, like the one described in the previous section, in which the desire to engage in certain activities with one's beloved fades, but one's noninstrumental concern does not. A lover who is an interfering, ingratiating nightmare is simply a lover who either fails to understand fully the reasons that relationships of the relevant type provide, or acts, akratically, against that understanding.

⁴⁰ Hence, if the choice that Williams describes is between saving his wife or some other single person, then the man's saving his wife *could* be viewed as an appropriate response to rational nature. He might simply let the selection be determined by whom he loves. By the same token, it would be an equally appropriate response to rational nature to let the selection be determined by who has a deeper voice, which might lead him to save the stranger. It is to explain why it would be *uniquely* appropriate to save his wife, and *inappropriate* to save the stranger—which seems to be what Velleman has in mind—that one needs to appeal to values other than rational nature, such as his relationship to his wife.

⁴¹ Compare Michael Smith, "Immodest Consequentialism and Character," *Utilitas* 13 (2001): 173–94, to which I am indebted.

⁴² See, for example, Lawrence A. Blum, *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), chap. 5; and Frankfurt, "Autonomy, Necessity, and Love," 135.