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On Loving Some People More than Others

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Philosophy

by

Aaron Michael Mead

2015

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

On Loving Some People More than Others

by

Aaron Michael Mead

Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Pamela Hieronymi, Chair

Augustine makes the following argument:

- (1) The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has.
- (2) Every person has equal value.
- (3) Therefore, we should love all people equally.

It seems there is something wrong with the argument since its conclusion conflicts with the intuition that, for example, we should love our own children more than a new friend. Premise (1) seems like the source of the problem, though it is not obvious what is wrong with it. Indeed, it seems there is *some* connection between appropriate love and value. Thus, even if premise (1) is false, it is worthwhile trying to say what is wrong with it, since that effort promises to illuminate the connection between appropriate love and value. The first aim of the dissertation, then, is to identify the central problem with premise (1), which I take to be an unstated assumption that underlies it: that love for a person should be a response to the value possessed by that person *as such*. I argue that love need not be a response only to that value; rather it may also be a response

to the value of certain qualities of the beloved, or of a relationship to him, neither of which necessarily constitutes his value as a person. Thus, I argue that Augustine's view of love's connection to value is too narrow. The second aim of the dissertation is to give an account of why we should love some people more than others. I begin with a basic principle of practical reason: when faced with a forced, mutually exclusive choice between two goods, we should choose the more valuable over the less. I then argue that preferential love for those relationally close to us is (in part) a tendency of will to choose a more valuable relationship over a less valuable one. Thus, in the end, I claim that we should love those close to us more than those more distant from us since such love is (in part) a tendency to choose in just the way that practical reason dictates.

The dissertation of Aaron Michael Mead is approved.

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2015

To Terry and Peter

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“...Isn’t it an awful thing! Our poets have composed hymns in honor of just about any god you can think of; but has a single one of them given one moment’s thought to the god of love, ancient and powerful as he is? As for our fancy intellectuals...I’ve actually read a book by an accomplished author who saw fit to extol the usefulness of salt! How could people pay attention to such trifles and never, not even once, write a proper hymn to Love? How could anyone ignore so great a god?”

Plato, *Symposium* 177a-c

“When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’ He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Matthew 22.34-40

INTRODUCTION

Most of us think we should love some people more than others. If we did not love our own children more than a new friend, something would be wrong. However, in *De doctrina christiana* Augustine makes the following argument, which I explain in Chapter One:

- (1) The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has.
- (2) Every person has equal value.
- (3) Therefore, we should love all people equally.

Obviously, Augustine's conclusion conflicts with the intuition that we should love some people preferentially, or more than others. Thus, it seems there is something wrong with his argument. Premise (1) seems like the obvious source of the problem. However, as I suggest in Chapter One, the problem with the first premise is not immediately obvious. Indeed, it seems there is *some* connection between appropriate love and value. Thus, even if premise (1) is false, it is worthwhile trying to say just what is wrong with it, since that effort promises to illuminate the connection between appropriate love and value. The first aim of the dissertation, then, is to point

out the central problem with Augustine's argument and thereby illuminate this connection. The second aim of the dissertation is to explain why we should love some people more than others.

I take the main problem with Augustine's argument to be an unstated assumption underlying premise (1): that love for a person should be a response to the value possessed by that person as such. My argument for this claim begins in Chapter Four, where I consider different views of love's "proper grounds"—those valuable features in response to which love properly arises or is sustained. David Velleman agrees with Augustine that mere personhood is love's sole proper ground.¹ Niko Kolodny argues that only certain relationships between lover and beloved (e.g., friendships, and romantic and familial relationships) may serve as proper grounds of love.² Both Velleman and Kolodny oppose the view that qualities like wit, talent, or virtue might play this role. In Chapter Four I reject the views of Velleman and Kolodny, arguing that love's proper grounds are plural and include, in addition to mere personhood and relationships, certain valuable qualities. With the pluralist view in hand, in Chapter Five I argue that Augustine has misunderstood the connection between love and value. Love need not be a response to the value of a person as such; rather it may properly be a response to the value of certain qualities of the beloved, or to the value of a relationship to him, neither of which necessarily constitutes his value as a person. Thus, in the end, Augustine, Velleman, and Kolodny all take too narrow a view of love's connection to value.

Having understood the main problem with Augustine's argument for equal love, we might still wonder why we should love some people more than others. Since addressing this aim requires an account of what love is, in Chapters Two and Three I give such an account. Harry Frankfurt and Eleonore Stump have argued that love consists in certain desires.³ Velleman holds

¹ David Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics*, no. 109 (January 1999): 338–74.

² Niko Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship," *The Philosophical Review* 112, no. 2 (April 2003): 135–89.

³ Harry Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012),

that love is a certain emotion, while Kolodny has argued that love partially consists in certain standing intentions. In Chapter Two I claim that none of these views are adequate. I begin with Thomas Aquinas's claim that love aims at two targets: the good of the beloved and union with him. I then argue that love could not consist in occurrent desires for such things, or related emotions, since love often remains steady while desires and emotions come and go. It seems more plausible that love consists of two standing intentions: to bring about the beloved's good and to bring about union with him. However, since the lover cannot always achieve love's two targets, it seems love cannot consist of intentions either, since we only intend things that seem achievable to us. For example, if the good of your beloved includes her promotion at work and you cannot bring this about, then you cannot intend this aspect of her good. Nevertheless, love involves some motivational attitude toward such goods.

Thus, in the end, I claim that love consists of two conditional tendencies of the will—toward the beloved's good and toward union with him. Consider, for example, love's tendency toward the beloved's good: if some aspect of the beloved's good is lacking or threatened, and if it seems both possible and appropriate for the lover to remedy the situation, then the lover will intend to do so. If it seems either impossible or inappropriate to do so, then she will merely desire it for him. If no aspect of the beloved's good is lacking or threatened, then love's tendency toward the beloved's good simply remains in the background until relevant circumstances arise. On my view, then, the occurrent desires, emotions, and intentions often associated with love are all downstream effects of love and do not constitute the attitude itself.

Given this account of love, in Chapters Six and Seven I explain why we should love some people preferentially. I begin by arguing that properly love-grounding relationships consist in *union* between lover and beloved—a collection of states (e.g., knowledge of one another) and activities (e.g., attending to one another) that make the people “one” in some sense. Since love is

(in part) a tendency of will toward such union, preferential love may be understood (in part) as a tendency of will to prefer or prioritize one properly love-grounding relationship over another. I then argue that since closer instances of such relationships are more valuable than more distant ones, we should (*ceteris paribus*) choose a closer relationship over a more distant one, if we cannot choose both. Finally, then, we should love preferentially those we are relationally closer to since such love is, in part, a tendency of will to choose those closer and more valuable relationships over more distant and less valuable ones.

CHAPTER 1 – AUGUSTINE ON LOVING EQUALLY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In Book I of *De doctrina christiana* (DDC) Augustine notoriously claims that we should “use” our neighbor to “enjoy” God. This claim encapsulates his reading of what it is to love God and neighbor according to the two great love commands of the New Testament. Over the years, scholars have made interesting work of both raising and defusing difficulties for this controversial formulation.⁴ While this issue in DDC is well-trodden, Augustine’s related and similarly interesting claim in Book I that “All people should be loved equally”⁵ has been less thoroughly examined in contemporary scholarship. Those familiar with this claim will recall that immediately after he makes it, he clarifies that unequal *action* toward some people over others is not only allowed but required. Given human limitations, Augustine thinks we must do good

⁴ Oliver O’Donovan’s seminal work exemplifies both approaches. See Oliver O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), esp. 27–29, and Oliver O’Donovan, “Usus and Fructus in Augustine De Doctrina Christiana I,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 33, no. 2 (October 1982): 361–97. O’Donovan argues both that the formulation raises problems for Augustine in DDC and that the formulation is not his mature view.

⁵ DDC Book I, XXVIII 29. All English quotations of DDC are adapted from R.P.H. Green’s translation Saint Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, trans. R.P.H. Green, 3rd ed., Oxford World’s Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Latin quotations are from Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, trans. R.P.H. Green, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Green’s translation (the most recent available) is from his 1995 Latin text.

preferentially toward those with whom we have close relations, such as friends and family members. Nevertheless, that our *love* should remain equal, despite preferential beneficence, remains a hard teaching. The claim is of course controversial because, to most of us, it seems quite fitting to love some people more than others. For example, if we did not love our own child more than a new friend, something would seem wrong. The counterintuitive nature of Augustine's claim makes one wonder what, exactly, he could mean by it, and how he could possibly support it. My central aim in this chapter, then, is to give an exposition and analysis of this less-examined claim, and the argument Augustine makes in favor of it.

His argument for the claim may be summarized as follows:

- (1) The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has.
- (2) Every person has equal value.
- (3) Therefore, we should love all people equally.

The majority of the chapter will focus on an interpretation of this argument as it occurs in DDC, and on other texts in Augustine's corpus that help to illuminate it. However, in the penultimate sections of the chapter, I will undertake to evaluate the argument by considering two possible responses to it. First, I will consider the view that Augustine has in mind a distinct kind of love (e.g., for one's neighbor) that has no implications for intimate loves such as those for one's own children or romantic partner. My verdict will be that while such a response does render Augustine's argument plausible as applied to such a distinct kind of love, it leaves open the question of why his argument does not *also* apply to the other intimate kinds of love. In short, I will argue that it leaves us wanting an explanation of why we should love some people more than others.

Second, I will consider the objection that premise (1) has obvious counter-examples, such as the case of a parent's preferential love for his child. After all, one's child and one's new friend

have equal value as human beings, yet it seems one should love one's child more than a new friend. Since one should love in this way, an interlocutor might insist, the case suggests that there is no need for proportionality between the value of the beloved and the degree of one's love, contrary to premise (1). In response, I will concede that the objection is effective and that premise (1) thereby seems false. Nevertheless, I will argue that there should be *some* connection between love and value, though it is challenging to say just what it should be. Indeed, I will suggest that it is difficult to point out exactly what is wrong with Augustine's premise (1), even if we think it false.

The upshot of this chapter, then, will be that Augustine's argument is an effective spur to further reflection on important and difficult questions about love. Specifically, it prompts us to consider more carefully the proper relation between love and value—which includes the question of exactly what is wrong with Augustine's premise (1)—and the question of why we should love some people preferentially over others. These are the questions I will undertake to address in subsequent chapters of my dissertation. I will say more about these subsequent chapters and the aims of the dissertation in the concluding section of this chapter. I will turn now to an exposition of the context of Augustine's argument.

1.2 *FRUITIO*: LOVE AS ENJOYMENT

The context of Augustine's argument is his attempt in Book I of DDC to interpret the two "greatest commandments," i.e., the love commands of the *New Testament*: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind," and, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."⁶ In particular, Augustine's claim that all people should be

⁶ Matthew 22.38-40. These commandments are also mentioned other places in the *New Testament (NT)* including Mark 12.28-31, Luke 10.25-28, Romans 13.8-10, Galatians 5.14, and James 2.8. Of course, these commandments have their origin in the *Hebrew Bible* (Deuteronomy 6.5 and Leviticus 19.18), though the *NT* couples them together and gives them a meaning and pride of place that is not immediately evident from their original context (at least in the case of the second commandment).

loved equally is part of an effort to interpret what it might mean to love one's neighbor as oneself. Augustine begins this interpretive effort with a distinction between "enjoyment" (*fruitio*) and "use" (*usus*). In this section I will discuss his notion of enjoyment. In the next section I will take up his notion of use.

According to Book I of DDC, "to enjoy something is to hold fast to it in love for its own sake."⁷ From this definition, it seems that Augustine views enjoyment as an aspect or kind of love. This view is confirmed by his subsequent claim that enjoyment is the proper mode of love for God in fulfillment of the first great commandment.⁸ According to the first part of the definition, enjoyment-love involves "holding fast" (*inhaerere*) to a thing, or clinging to it.⁹ Since the proper object of enjoyment-love is God, it seems that Augustine is speaking metaphorically here: one cannot physically cling to an immaterial God. Thus, his meaning seems to be that to enjoy something is to maintain a close relation of some sort to it.

The second part of the definition holds that to enjoy something is to love it "for its own sake" (*propter se ipsam*). By this phrase Augustine means that we maintain the relevant close relation to the beloved as an end or final good, i.e., we maintain it because of the good that the object itself is.¹⁰ Given his eudaimonist ethical framework, Augustine understands things we take

⁷ DDC Book I, IV 4.

⁸ DDC Book I, XXII 20. See also DDC Book I, V 5.

⁹ Augustine says something similar in *De trinitate* VIII.3.4: "For the good of the soul that is to be sought is not that over which one flies by judging, but that to which one adheres [*haeret*] by loving, and what is this but God?" Augustine, *On the Trinity, Books 8-15*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews, trans. Stephen McKenna, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). While the verb translated "adhere" (*haerere*) is not identical to that used in DDC (*inhaerere*), the two are obviously closely related and seem to express the same idea of sticking, clinging, cleaving, or adhering to something. All references to the Latin text of *De trinitate* make use of the following critical edition: Sancti Aurelii Augustini, *De Trinitate, Libri XV*, ed. W.J. Mountain, vol. 50, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1968).

¹⁰ As Peter Geach has pointed out, the noun phrase following the "for-sake-of" locution may pick out either a good of some sort (i.e., an end) or a beneficiary of some good. As an illustration of the second usage, I might drive across town for the sake of my daughter if she needed a ride somewhere. See Peter Geach, "Teleological Explanation," in *Explanation*, ed. Stephen Korner (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), 82. It seems obvious to me that Augustine has in mind the first usage, i.e., for the sake of an end and not for the sake of a beneficiary since it seems obvious, on Augustine's picture, that God is not a beneficiary of our holding fast to him. Rather, God is a great good for humans, according to Augustine, and thus we should hold fast to God.

to be final goods as things we understand to be constitutive of our happiness.¹¹ If they make us genuinely happy, they are properly objects of enjoyment.¹² We can thus understand why he claims that God alone is to be enjoyed, since he understands God alone to be our true happiness.¹³

Importantly, although Augustine seems to hold that people can love God with enjoyment-love here and now, it seems he also thinks complete enjoyment-love of God is deferred until after death when, presumably, a person will be with God in the fullest sense. He claims, “...in this mortal life we are like travelers away from our Lord,”¹⁴ and he speaks metaphorically of God as the “homeland” toward which we are journeying, suggesting that we travelers may “live happily only in our homeland...the object of our enjoyment.”¹⁵ He further comments that “if something is to be loved on its own account [*propter se*], it is made to constitute the happy life, even if it is not as yet the reality but the hope of it which consoles us at this time.”¹⁶ Thus, the journey of the mortal life, for Augustine, is but a prelude to complete enjoyment-love of God after death, when the happy traveler will hold fast to God in the most complete sense.

Nevertheless, it also seems clear that Augustine thinks people may love God in their earthly life. Indeed, it is obvious from the general thrust of discussion in DDC that he thinks the two love commands of the NT are to be carried out here and now; otherwise there would be no point to his lengthy teaching on the matter. In the following passage, he links the carrying out of the command to love God with enjoyment of God. He writes,

¹¹ DDC Book I, XXII 20.

¹² DDC Book I, III 3.

¹³ DDC Book I, IV 4 and XXII 20.

¹⁴ DDC Book I, IV 4.

¹⁵ DDC Book I, IV 4.

¹⁶ DDC Book I, XXII 20.

For the divinely established rule of love says, ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself’ but God ‘with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,’ so that you may devote all your thoughts and all your life and all your understanding to the one from whom you actually receive what you devote to him. And when it says ‘all your heart, all your soul, all your mind’, it leaves no part of our life free from this obligation, no part free as it were to back out and enjoy some other thing...¹⁷

In this passage, Augustine states that love of God according to the commandment is to include devotion of all of one’s thoughts, understanding, and life to God. Moreover, in the last sentence of this passage he implies that such love just is the enjoyment of God, which is not to be compromised by enjoying something else. Thus, if the commandment to love God is to be carried out here and now—which seems obvious from context—and if carrying it out amounts to enjoying God, then it seems that Augustine thinks there is a sense in which people are to love God with enjoyment-love here and now, even if the completion or fulfillment of that love is deferred until after death.

Although Augustine does not develop the “here-and-now” sense of enjoyment-love much further in DDC, he seems to do so in *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* (DDQOT).¹⁸

There he writes,

For to love is nothing other than to desire [*appetere*] something for its own sake [*propter se ipsam*]. . . Then again, since love is a kind of motion, and since there is no motion except it be toward something, when we seek what ought to be loved we are looking for something to which this motion ought to direct us.¹⁹

Here Augustine describes love as a “desire” for something for its own sake. That the lover desires the thing “for its own sake” suggests that Augustine is talking about what he calls

¹⁷ DDC Book I, XXII 21.

¹⁸ If Mosher’s dating of Questions 35 and 36 (those cited here) in DDQOT is correct (391 CE) then Augustine wrote it only four years before the common dating of Book I of DDC (395 CE). Thus, it would be unsurprising if his conception of love for God were similar in these two works. See Saint Augustine, *Eighty-Three Different Questions*, trans. David L. Mosher, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 20 (Introduction); Saint Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, ix (Introduction).

¹⁹ DDQOT, 35.1. All English quotations of DDQOT are from Saint Augustine, *Eighty-Three Different Questions*. All references to the Latin text of DDQOT are from the following critical edition: Sancti Aurelii Augustini, *De Diversis Quaestionibus Octoginta Tribus, De Octo Dulcitii Quaestionibus*, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher, vol. 44A, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975).

“enjoyment” in DDC. The formulation in this passage is, of course, different from the definition of enjoyment in DDC: the notion of “holding fast” to something is not identical to the notion of “desiring” it. Nevertheless, his language of love as “desire” would seem to fit well with the “here-and-now” sense of enjoyment implied in DDC, since “desiring” God seems to capture well the traveler’s earthly longing for, and journey toward, her homeland.²⁰ Thus, it does not seem too much to think that Augustine’s discussion of love in DDQOT may shed some helpful light on the notion of enjoyment-love in DDC.

In the passage from DDQOT above, Augustine suggests that love’s desire amounts to a kind of “motion” toward the beloved object. If enjoyment-love for God is indeed in view, it seems we should again understand his language as metaphorical: there is no sense to physical motion toward Augustine’s immaterial God.²¹ Rather, love’s desire is a motion of the soul or will—an attraction toward the beloved that may or may not issue in physical movement toward the beloved. This reading is confirmed by Augustine’s claim (soon after the passage above) that covetousness is “a base love by means of which *the soul chases after things* inferior to itself.”²² Thus, for Augustine, love’s desire is a motion in the soul and not the body.

Other passages in DDQOT suggest that it is not so much that love desires the beloved object *itself*, but rather that love desires to stand in a certain *relation* to the beloved object. As such, the aim of love’s desire might also be understood as this particular relation to the beloved,

²⁰ It is worth noting that desire for the beloved can be a feature of love even when the beloved is near. In that case, the desire is to maintain the close relation and not necessarily to establish it. Thus, desire of some sort seems plausibly attributable to both phases of Augustine’s conception of enjoyment-love for God.

²¹ Compare his claims in DDC that “progress towards the one who is ever present [i.e., God] is not made through space...” (Book I, X 10), and that “we are on a road—in spiritual, not spatial terms...” (Book I, XVII 16).

²² DDQOT, 35.1. Emphasis added.

on Augustine's view.²³ But, what is the relation? One way that Augustine talks about this relation is as "possessing" or "having" (*habere*) the beloved. Consider the following passage:

Accordingly that should not be loved which can be taken away from a love persisting and delighting in its object. Therefore, what kind of object should a love love, unless it be that kind of object which cannot be absent while being loved? That object is what is possessed [*habere*] in the knowing of it. But as for gold and any material thing, possessing them is not the same as knowing them; so they should not be loved. Moreover something can be loved and not had [*haberi*], not only of those things which should not be loved, e.g., something of physical beauty, but also of those things which should be loved, e.g., the happy life.²⁴

Here Augustine is trying to distinguish those things that should be loved from those that should not. Setting aside questions about the veracity of his claims, in this discussion he indicates the kind of relation to the beloved that he thinks the lover desires in loving the beloved for its own sake, namely the "possession" or "having" of the beloved. The passage suggests that a lover seeks to possess the beloved object whether or not that object is a proper object of love. For example, in the case of love for improper objects such as gold, possession remains the lover's aim; it is just that such possession is tenuous since it is not accomplished by mere knowledge of the object. As Augustine's use of this example makes clear, loving something does not amount to possessing it. Rather, as for the "here-and-now" sense of enjoyment-love for God in DDC, love may amount merely to a desire to possess the beloved—a longing for the "homeland"—without actually possessing it. Importantly, however, the passage above also implies that there is a sense in which God may be possessed by mere knowledge of God. Thus, part of Augustine's point seems to be that "here-and-now" love for God need not consist merely in a desire to possess God; by knowing God we may also possess God in an actual, though perhaps incomplete, way.

²³ Aquinas fusses over this distinction in *Summa Theologica*, I-II 3.1. Of course, it is not inconsistent to talk about the object of love's desire as both the beloved itself, and as a certain relation to the beloved. After all, when we desire a thing (e.g., an apple) we generally want to *have* it, i.e., to stand in a relation of "possession" to it. Thus, both the thing and a certain relation to it are sensibly understood as the object of our desire for "it".

²⁴ DDQOT, 35.1.

There is a sense in which it will not do to talk of “possessing” God, the proper object of enjoyment-love. Possession of an object often implies the idea that the object may be put to use by the one who possesses it, as a house or a tool may be put to use by its owner. Such a view of what it might be to “possess” God seems patently contrary to Augustine’s idea of loving God for his own sake. Thus, this possible instrumental implication of possession does not seem intended by Augustine in this context. This point is reflected in other ways that Augustine describes the relation of a lover to God. After the passages from DDQOT that we have been considering above, Augustine makes the following comment, which I quote as a fragment: “However, when God is loved more than the soul so that a man prefers *to belong to him* rather than to himself...”²⁵ Here Augustine describes loving God more than oneself as preferring “to belong to him” (*eius esse*) than to oneself. The relation at which love aims remains something like “possession,” but instead of suggesting that the lover aims to possess God, Augustine suggests that the lover aims to *be possessed* by God, or to belong to God.²⁶ This switch to lover as “possessed” further suggests that the instrumental sense of “possession” will not do when speaking of what humans go for in loving God. The switch may also suggest a kind of mutuality to the relation aimed at in love, i.e., lover and beloved mutually possessing or belonging to each other.

The picture of enjoyment-love emerging from DDC and DDQOT, then, is that of a kind of love that takes God alone as its proper object and a certain relation to God as its end or final good. Augustine seems to have a loosely two-phased understanding of such love. If the lover is apart from God, then enjoyment-love is perhaps best characterized as a desire for God, or as a desire for a close relation to God. On the other hand, if the lover is with God in the fullest sense (after death, for Augustine), then enjoyment-love is best characterized as actually maintaining

²⁵ DDQOT, 36.1. Emphasis added.

²⁶ As the Latin shows, Augustine does not use the verb *habere* here. Rather, he employs *eius esse* to express a similar idea. The phrase might be literally translated as “to be of him”, since *eius* is a genitive form.

that close relation to God, i.e., actually holding fast or clinging to God in mutual possession. However, the distinction is not overly strict: it seems Augustine also thinks there is a sense in which we may bear a close relation to God “here-and-now,” prior to death, through knowledge of God. In any case, both senses seem important to Augustine’s notion of enjoyment in DDC.

1.3 *USUS: LOVE AS USE*

Augustine contrasts his idea of enjoyment with that of “use.” He states, “to use something is to apply whatever it may be to the purpose of obtaining what you love...”²⁷ By “what you love,” Augustine here means what you enjoy or love for its own sake. Augustine employs his example of a journey to illustrate the idea of use. As noted above, he imagines travelers who can live happily only in their homeland, but who find themselves far from home. Their homeland is the object of their enjoyment, and so they wish to return to it. To do so, they must find some means of transport, such as a cart or a boat, which they will use to get there. In general, then, to use something is to treat it as a means of achieving something else—an instrument for realizing some further (and, ultimately, final) good. According to Augustine, to fix on the cart or the boat as objects of enjoyment would be an erroneous distraction since the only thing that could make the travelers genuinely happy, and thus the only thing that should be enjoyed, is their homeland.

Of the set of things to be either used or enjoyed, Augustine claims “it is only the eternal and unchangeable things which I mentioned that are to be enjoyed; other things are to be used so that we may attain the full enjoyment of those things.”²⁸ The phrase ‘eternal and unchangeable things’ is clearly a reference to God, the sole proper object of enjoyment. Other things in the

²⁷ DDC Book I, IV 4.

²⁸ DDC Book I, XXII 20. While Augustine acknowledges the possibility that some things might be both used and enjoyed (cf. DDC Book I, III 3 and XXII 20), he does not always seem careful to carry through this logical possibility in his argumentation. For example, in the passage just quoted he seems to view “use” and “enjoyment” as mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories for the set of things in question. In any case, it does not seem the third category of things—those to be used *and* enjoyed—plays an important role in the topics under discussion here.

relevant set are to be used. Augustine puts human beings in that category, concluding that they are to be used (to enjoy God) and not enjoyed.²⁹ Indeed, Augustine holds that to use one's neighbor—by whom he means anyone³⁰—as a means of loving God is to love the neighbor as oneself, in fulfillment of the second great commandment.³¹ His reasoning to the claim that we should merely use our neighbor to enjoy God seems to be that enjoyment is reserved only for that which constitutes the happy life, a role that human beings should never occupy.³² Augustine further claims that use is the sort of love I ought to have for myself, since I too am a human being.³³

Importantly, Augustine does not think that our use of just any object amounts to a kind of love. Rather, it is only objects that have some close association with human beings and God that we are to use-love. As he puts it,

(A) There are four things that are to be loved—one, that which is above us; two, that which we are; three, that which is close to us; four, that which is beneath us. No commandments needed to be given about the second and fourth of these. For however much a man may lapse from the truth, he retains a love of himself and a love of his own body.³⁴

²⁹ DDC Book I, XXII 20.

³⁰ DDC Book I, XXX 31.

³¹ As O'Donovan argues, it seems this way of putting things—*using* one's neighbor to *enjoy* God—was an early formulation that Augustine later found inadequate and abandoned. See O'Donovan, "Usus and Fructio in Augustine De Doctrina Christiana I." and O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine*, 24–32. Although it is an interesting topic in its own right, I will not pursue objections and replies to this early formulation.

³² DDC Book I, XXII 20 and XXXIII 36. Nevertheless, Augustine holds that we can enjoy other human beings "in God." Although the meaning of this second formulation is hard to discern, it seems Augustine thinks enjoying your neighbor in God amounts to somehow understanding the pleasure and goodness you find in loving your neighbor as having its source in God. In this way love for neighbor still looks beyond the neighbor to God and so still amounts to enjoyment of God and not the neighbor (DDC Book I, XXXIII 37). O'Donovan suggests that this is Augustine's mature reading of love for neighbor. O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine*, 24–32.

³³ DDC Book I, XXII 21.

³⁴ DDC Book I, XXIII 22.

Four things are to be loved, according to Augustine: God (“that which is above us”), our own self or soul (“that which we are”), our neighbor (“that which is close to us”) and our own body (“that which is beneath us”). Given that God is to be enjoyed and not used, the kind of use that amounts to love is reserved for our own body and soul, and for our neighbor. Thus, our use of a hammer or an ox does not amount to love on Augustine’s view. Interestingly, in the passage just quoted we see both Augustine’s Platonistic dualism about human nature (body and soul/self) and an allusion to a certain order or scale of value indicated by the language of “above” and “beneath.” Since this idea of a scale of value will be important for interpreting the claim that we should love all people equally, I will explain it further in the next section.

First, however, I must say more about what Augustine thinks it is to love one’s neighbor by using him. Importantly, it is different from the desire to possess the beloved, as suggested above for enjoyment. Rather, by “use” it seems Augustine has in mind benevolence.³⁵ Passage (B) suggests this point:

(B) Human beings must also be told how to love, that is, how to love themselves so as to do themselves good. (It would be absurd to doubt that anyone wishes [*velit*] to love himself and do himself good.) They must also be told how to love their own bodies so as to look after them systematically and sensibly; for it is equally obvious that one loves one’s own body and wants [*velit*] it to be healthy and sound.³⁶

Here Augustine is suggesting that while there is no need for a commandment *to* love oneself or one’s body—people do this instinctively; to doubt it would be absurd—there is a need for teaching about *how* they should love themselves. What is important for my purposes is that in making this point he suggests that to love oneself and one’s body is related closely to doing good

³⁵ O’Donovan agrees. He writes, “The love which man has for God is cosmic love, the attraction of the creature toward the supreme good; the love which he has for himself is benevolent love.” O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine*, 39. O’Donovan’s focus in this quotation is self-love. However, his reference to love for oneself should not be understood to exclude love for other people. Love for self and other people clearly both fall under “use” in DDC. That “use” is equivalent to benevolence when applied to people might seem odd to the modern reader: why would Augustine call benevolence “use”? Augustine’s point in maintaining this equivalence, it seems to me, is to keep the proper relation between one’s love for neighbors and one’s love for God in view. He wants to insist that benevolence for neighbors is not at odds with the all-consuming first love command, but rather is the means of satisfying it.

³⁶ DDC Book I, XXV 26.

to them. Love and doing good are not, however, identical here. Augustine says, in the first part of (B), that we must be instructed how to love “so as to” or “in order to” (*ut*) do ourselves (or our souls) good. Thus, love may bring it about that we do ourselves good, but love is not, itself, the doing of good. A similar idea emerges from Augustine’s discussion of love for one’s own body in the second part of passage (B). He says we must be told how to love our bodies “so as to” (*ut*) look after them. Thus, again, the love we are to have for our bodies seems distinct from the acts of taking care of them.

What, then, is use-love, for Augustine? Both the parenthetical comment and the final line of passage (B) seem to suggest that use-love for oneself—body and soul/self—is at least partially constituted by a wish or desire for one’s own good, i.e., a motivational attitude of benevolence toward oneself. As noted above, in passage (B) Augustine seems to be contrasting the idea *that* we love ourselves with the idea of *how* we should love ourselves. Given this interpretation, as a whole the parenthetical comment in (B) seems to express the thought (obvious to Augustine) that every person loves her own soul/self. Thus, I take it that the final idea in the parenthetical comment—“wishing to do oneself good”—is simply a (perhaps partial) explanation of what it is to love oneself.³⁷ The last line of passage (B) seems to play a role similar to the parenthetical comment, though pertaining this time to love for one’s own body. Again, as a whole, the line seems to express the thought (obvious to Augustine) that every person loves her own body. Thus, I take it that the final idea of the last line—“wanting one’s body to be healthy and sound”—is, again, a (perhaps partial) explanation of what it is to love one’s own body. Thus, together, the parenthetical comment and the last line of (B) seem to suggest that use-love for oneself at least partially consists in benevolence toward one’s own body and soul/self. Given relevant

³⁷ I grant that Augustine’s usage here is not as clear as we might like it to be, but the view I have expressed seems, to me, to be the clear sense of the passage.

circumstances, this motivational attitude (benevolence) then issues in the actual doing of good to oneself (beneficence).

That Augustine distinguishes benevolence and beneficence in this way is evident in other passages in his corpus. For example, elsewhere he writes, “But there is a certain friendship of benevolence, so that we sometimes render service to those we love. What if there is not any service we may render? Benevolence alone is sufficient for the one who loves.”³⁸ Here love is described as an attitude that inclines one to help the beloved if he is in need (i.e., benevolence) and so, in the absence of a need, love does not necessarily issue in action. Thus, in this passage, love as benevolence seems distinct from the actions of beneficence. Such acts are the natural result of benevolent love when the beloved is needy and the lover is able to serve him.

Thus, if my reading is correct, passage (B) indicates that our love for ourselves and our bodies—two of the three proper objects of use-love—amounts, at least in part, to benevolence, a motivational attitude aimed at the good of the beloved. Given that Augustine’s focus on oneself and one’s body in passage (B) began as a reply to a possible worry about using one’s neighbor —“If we are also to use ourselves and our bodies, why should my neighbor worry that I use him?”—it seems that Augustine also thinks use of one’s neighbor amounts, at least in part, to benevolence toward her.³⁹ Thus, on this reading, Augustine’s view in DDC is that the second great commandment—to love one’s neighbor as oneself—urges us (at least in part) to a kind of benevolence toward ourselves and our neighbors, which Augustine calls “use” and views as a means of enjoying God.

³⁸ *Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos* 8.5. All English quotations are from Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John 112-24, Tractates on the First Epistle of John*, trans. John W. Rettig, vol. 92, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995). The PL remains the most recent available critical edition of this work: Augustinus Hipponensis, *Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 35, 162 vols., *Patrologia latina* (Paris, 1844).

³⁹ See also his discussion of the meaning of ‘neighbor’ in the command to love one’s neighbor as oneself, in DDC Book I, XXX 32. There he says, “...so it is clear that we should understand by our neighbour the person to whom an act of compassion is due if he needs it or would be due if he needed it.” Love for neighbor implies benevolence here.

For Augustine, one important upshot of viewing love for neighbors a means of loving God is that we can satisfy the second great commandment without jeopardizing our satisfaction of the first—to love God with all of one’s heart, soul, and mind. For example, as partially quoted above Augustine states that when the first commandment

says ‘all your heart, all your soul, all your mind’, it leaves no part of our life free from this obligation, no part free as it were to back out and enjoy some other thing; any other object of love that enters the mind should be swept towards the same destination as that to which the whole flood of our love is directed.⁴⁰

According to Augustine, then, the loves referred to in the two greatest commandments should be ordered in this means-end way. Those who fail to love in this way—perhaps by loving oneself or one’s neighbor for his own sake—love in a disordered manner. According to Augustine, such disordered love is the mark of an unjust person.⁴¹ This idea of “ordered love,” which I have explained at length in this and the preceding section, will be crucial for properly understanding Augustine’s claim that we are to love all people equally. A second idea crucial to this task is Augustine’s notion of orders or scales of value, as I hinted above. Thus, before directly addressing the claim that all people should be loved equally, I will explain Augustine’s view of orders or scales of value.

1.4 THREE SCALES OF VALUE

At several points in Book I of DDC, Augustine seems to have in mind a certain order or scale of value according to which objects may be evaluated. For example, Augustine suggests that worthy, cogent thinkers think as follows:

Whatever corporeal form occurs to them, they establish that it either lives or does not live; and they esteem what lives more highly than what does not. They understand that the living corporeal form, however outstanding its light, however outstanding its size,

⁴⁰ DDC Book I, XXII 21.

⁴¹ DDC Book I, XXIII 23.

however outstanding its beauty, consists of two separate things, namely itself and the life by which it is energized; and they raise that life above the mass which is energized and activated by it to a position of unrivaled status. Then they proceed to examine that life, and if they find it has energy but not sense (as in the case of trees) they subordinate it to a sentient form of life (like that of livestock), and they subordinate that in turn to an intelligent form of life (like that of humans). Realizing the mutability of human life, they are obliged to subordinate that too to some unchangeable form of life, namely the life which is not intermittently wise but rather is wisdom itself.⁴²

Here Augustine suggests that certain kinds of things are above or below others in proper “esteem” or “status.” For example, he suggests that inanimate matter has the lowest status and is exceeded by living things. Similarly, the life that animates matter in the case of living things (such as trees) is higher in status than the matter it animates. Non-sentient life (e.g., the life of plants) is, in turn, subordinate in status to the life of sentient things (e.g., that of livestock), while the life of non-intelligent sentient beings is subordinate to that of intelligent sentient things (e.g., that of humans). Finally, the immutable form of life—God—is above even the life of intelligent sentient things that are subject to change and corruption. Augustine’s talk here of “status” and proper “esteem” suggests that he has in mind a certain ranking or scale of value on which objects of different kinds fall as described above.

Furthermore, that he ranks by kind of thing suggests that he views it as a scale according to the *nature* of the various things. That the ranking is according to nature seems confirmed in the following statement, which comes only two sentences after the quotation above:

They [i.e., those who rank the immutable above the mutable] certainly see that the actual standard of truth, by which they maintain the superiority of that [immutable] life, is not subject to change, and they can only see this as belonging to a realm above their own nature, since they see themselves to be subject to change.⁴³

Although Augustine’s idea here is not as clear as one might like, his thought seems to be that the immutable standard of truth, which he takes to be the basis for ranking the immutable God above mutable human beings, belongs to a realm above mutable human nature. Moreover, it belongs to

⁴² DDC Book I, VIII 8.

⁴³ DDC Book I, VIII 8.

this higher realm in virtue of its immutability: this quality is what sets it apart from mutable human beings. Thus, it stands to reason that Augustine’s immutable God would also belong to this higher realm, and so would surpass human nature in status and proper esteem. If this is correct, then it seems a short step to think that God ranks above human beings, on Augustine’s view, in virtue of God’s superior nature, of which immutability is one important feature. But, if the distinction in nature between God and human beings is what accounts for their relative ranking, then, given the context, it would make sense to think that the distinctions in status or value between *all* the different kinds of things that Augustine considers (e.g., inanimate matter, plants, sentient animals, etc.) are attributable to differences in their natures. In short, Augustine seems to have in mind a kind of ranking or scale of nature.

Such a scale of nature again seems evident in passage (A), quoted above, where Augustine enumerates the four things that are to be loved according to the love commandments—God, soul, neighbor, and body. Recall that he there describes God as “that which is above us,” our soul/self as “that which we are,” our neighbor as “that which is close to us,” and our body as “that which is beneath us.” Here, talk of God as “above us” seems to imply the sort of scale of nature just described: God ranks above human beings in value because of God’s superior (immutable) nature. Similarly, describing the body as “that which is beneath us” seems to imply that the body ranks below the soul/self in value because of its inferior nature. His description of our neighbor as “that which is close to us” seems to imply that he thinks our neighbor has a value commensurate with our own in virtue of her commensurate nature.⁴⁴ In addition to this seeming

⁴⁴ My guess is that Augustine uses the vague language of “close to us” rather than the sharper “equal to us” since he wants to leave open the possibility that our neighbor might be an angel, and so our value according to nature might not be identical but would still be “close”. Immediately before passage (A) he writes, “It is not the case that all things which are to be loved are to be loved; but only those which exist in some kind of association with us and are related to God, like a man or an angel...” Moreover, at XXX 33 Augustine argues that the commandment to love one’s neighbor “also embraces the holy angels...”

evidence in passage (A), Augustine hints at the scale of nature in still other passages of Book I.⁴⁵ Thus, such a scale does seem to be part of the framework of Book I. The scale of nature reappears more clearly and explicitly in *De ciuitate dei* (DCD),⁴⁶ one of Augustine's later works.⁴⁷ Thus, it seems the idea persisted through most of his writing career.

In addition to the scale of nature, in DCD XI.16 Augustine discusses two contrasting scales of value: the scale of utility, and the scale of righteousness or justice. Although these scales are not explicitly in view in Book I of DDC, my evaluation of Augustine's argument in subsequent sections will be aided by a brief explanation of these scales here. Augustine makes the following memorable comments about the scale of utility:

(C) But there are also various standards of value arising out of the use to which we put this thing or that; and, for this reason, we often prefer some things which lack sensation to some which have sensation. So strong is this preference, indeed, that we would abolish the latter from nature altogether if we could, whether out of ignorance of the place that they hold in nature, or, knowing this, still putting our own convenience first. Who, for example, would not rather have bread in his house than mice, or gold than fleas? But why should we wonder at this? For even in the estimation of men themselves, whose nature is certainly very great in dignity, a horse is often worth more than a slave, or a jewel than a maidservant. So far as freedom of judgment is concerned, then, the reason of the thoughtful man is far different from the necessity of one who is in need, or the desire of the pleasure-seeker. For reason considers what value a thing has in itself, as part of the order of nature, whereas necessity considers how to obtain what will meet its need. Reason considers what appears to be true according to the light of the mind, whereas pleasure looks for whatever agreeable thing will gratify the body's senses.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ For example, at XXII 20 he writes, "A human being is a major kind of thing, being made 'in the image and likeness of God' not by virtue of having a mortal body but by virtue of having a rational soul and thus a higher status than animals." Furthermore, at XXIV 25 he describes the conflict between spirit/soul and body as follows: "The spirit fights back not out of hatred, but to establish its primacy, because it wants the body it loves to be subservient to something better."

⁴⁶ DCD XI.16, to be precise.

⁴⁷ DCD is typically dated 413-426 CE. See Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, trans. R.W. Dyson, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xxx (A brief chronology of Augustine's life).

⁴⁸ DCD XI.16. All English quotations of DCD are from Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*. In quoting DCD I make use of the following critical edition: Sancti Aurelii Augustini, *De Ciuitate Dei, Libri XXII*, ed. Emanuel Hoffman, vol. 40, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna: Academiae Litterarum Caesareae Vindobonensis, 1899).

According to passage (C), then, the scale of utility is a scale of instrumental value—the value something has for furthering the purposes of a person in a particular setting. Thus, anything that satisfies our needs or desires has this sort of utility or use-value. Augustine points out that evaluating objects according to the utility scale may result in an entirely different evaluative ranking than that of the scale of nature: for example, on the utility scale the non-living (e.g., bread, gold) may well rank above the living (e.g., mice, fleas). He also notes that the scale of nature is objective while the scale of utility is subjective. Judgments of utility vary from person to person and situation to situation according to a person’s need or desire for pleasure. Not so judgments according to the scale of nature: these look to the “value a thing has in itself,” they are guided by reason, and they admit of truth.⁴⁹

Finally, immediately after passage (C) Augustine introduces the scale of righteousness or justice⁵⁰ with the following comment: “In the case of rational natures, however, a good will and a rightly ordered love have, as it were, such great weight that, even though angels rank above men in the natural order, good men are nonetheless placed above the wicked angels according to the law of righteousness.”⁵¹ On the scale of justice, then, the value of an object—in this case, only rational beings—is determined by the condition of the will, which, for Augustine, amounts to the status of the being’s loves, whether properly ordered or disordered. Thus, a virtuous rational being (with a good will, well-ordered loves, or good character) is more valuable on the scale of justice than a vicious one. Moreover, Augustine points out that this ranking of value according to the scale of justice may be different from that of the scale of nature, since a good person ranks

⁴⁹ Of course, judgments of use value may also be guided by reason, in a certain sense, and also may well admit of truth and falsehood. So, there is more to be said here about the subjective-objective distinction Augustine is going for. Nevertheless, something like this distinction seems to be what he has in mind.

⁵⁰ For convenience I will refer to it simply as the “scale of justice”.

⁵¹ DCD XI.16.

more highly than a bad angel on the scale of justice.⁵² Though it is not entirely clear from the passage, he may also think that the scale of justice and the scale of nature are commensurate, and thus that some sort of combined total value (e.g., nature-value plus justice-value) may be figured for a rational being. If Augustine's point is that the *total* value of a good man ranks above that of a bad angel, despite the fact that the order of nature would rank them in reverse order, then this sort of commensurability of the nature and justice scales may be in view. In any case, whether or not Augustine thinks the two scales are commensurate, it seems he thinks both are objective.

1.5 VALUE AS THE CAUSE OF LOVE

In *De trinitate*, a work that is roughly contemporary with DDC,⁵³ Augustine makes the following claim: “Certainly you love only the good...”⁵⁴ Here, Augustine claims that good things are the objects of love. Presumably Augustine means that good things are both the actual and proper objects of love, and that they are properly love's objects in virtue of their goodness. Although Augustine is not as direct in Book I of DDC, the same picture seems to be operating there. For example, near the end of a discussion of enemies that do not love God, he claims, “If they turned to him, it is inevitable that they would love him as the goodness which is the source of all happiness and love us as joint participants in such goodness.”⁵⁵ Here, it is God's goodness that makes God a proper object of love. Indeed, Augustine thinks human beings may somehow “participate” in God's goodness, thereby making them worthy of love also.

⁵² The passage also tells us that angels—which are “close” in value to humans according to DDC—rank above humans on the scale of nature, according to Augustine.

⁵³ *De trinitate* is typically dated 399-426 while DDC is typically dated 395-426. See Augustine, *On the Trinity, Books 8-15*, xxx (Chronology); Saint Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, ix–xi (Introduction).

⁵⁴ *De trinitate*, VIII.3.4. Translation from Augustine, *On the Trinity, Books 8-15*.

⁵⁵ DDC Book I, XXIX 30.

If Augustine holds that the good things we are to love are properly objects of love in virtue of their goodness, it stands to reason that the goodness of such objects serves as a kind of *proper cause* (or *proper ground*, as I will call it in Chapter Four) of love, i.e., that in response to which love is properly sustained, or that which properly brings about love, whether enjoyment or use. According to this picture, a person would encounter something good, and in response to its goodness a relevant kind of love would quite appropriately arise. This picture of value as a proper cause of love seems borne out in the following lines from DDC: “A miser buys himself bread in spite of the fact that he loves money; in doing so he gives away the money which he loves so much and wants to have more of, but he does this because he puts greater value on the health of his body, which needs the bread for its sustenance.”⁵⁶ These lines come immediately after passage (B) in a discussion of love for one’s own body. Augustine tells us that the miser gives away some of the money he loves “because he puts greater value on the health of his body.” In context, Augustine seems to be suggesting that the miser loves his own (healthy) body more than the money he trades for bread insofar as he views his (healthy) body as more valuable than the money. Thus, the picture here seems to be one on which the degree of the miser’s love for the two different objects—a healthy body and money—is responsive to the degree of value he apprehends in each. In turn, this picture seems best explained by the idea that his love is a response to such value, or is brought about by such value. If this reading is correct, Augustine seems to hold that when a lover loves something, it is the apprehended goodness or value of the thing that brings about or causes her love. If the object is both of the sort to be loved and actually good, then that love is a proper response.

⁵⁶ DDC Book I, XXV 26.

1.6 ORDERED LOVE AND THE SCALE OF NATURE

A similar sort of picture seems implicit in passage (D), which immediately precedes Augustine's claim that all people should be loved equally. After briefly recapitulating his interpretation of the two greatest commandments, Augustine states the following:

(D) The person who lives a just and holy life is a sound judge of these things. He is also a person who has ordered his love, so that he does not love what it is wrong to love, or fail to love what should be loved, or love too much what should be loved less (or love too little what should be loved more), or love two things equally if one of them should be loved either less or more than the other, or love things either more or less if they should be loved equally. No sinner, *qua* sinner, should be loved; every human being, *qua* human being, should be loved on God's account; and God should be loved for himself. And if God is to be loved more than any human being, each person should love God more than he loves himself. Likewise, another human being should be loved more than our own bodies, because all these things are to be loved on account of God whereas another person can enjoy God together with us in a way in which the body cannot, since the body lives only through the soul, and it is the soul by which we enjoy God. All people should be loved equally.⁵⁷

Augustine begins, here, by claiming that a person who lives “a just and holy life” loves in an ordered manner. This claim complements his prior claim that the unjust person loves in a disordered manner, e.g., loving herself for her own sake and failing to love God.⁵⁸ He also specifies what it is to love in a well-ordered manner. First, one must love the correct objects. But what are these objects? Augustine tells us that “every human being, *qua* human being” is a correct object of love. Why? Augustine's use of “*qua* human being” seems to suggest that it is something about the nature of a person *as a human being* that makes her a correct object of love. The fact that Augustine thinks “every” human being should be loved as such further reinforces this thought; what else could warrant love for *every* human being but something about the common nature that each of them shares? I take it, then, that the best explanation of why every human being is a correct object of love, here, is that Augustine thinks that, according to the scale of nature, human beings have a certain value attributable to their nature and that this value makes

⁵⁷ DDC Book I, XXVII 28.

⁵⁸ DDC Book I, XXIII 23.

them proper objects of love, since goodness is the proper cause (or ground) of love for those things that are to be loved.

This reading of why every human being should be loved as such also explains well his other judgments in passage (D) about correct and incorrect objects of love. For example, he claims that a “sinner, *qua* sinner” is not a proper object of love. Why? Presumably because, considered merely as sinners, sinners are not created beings with natures, and thus they do not bear value on the scale of nature.⁵⁹ God, of course, is the preeminent object of love, for Augustine. This fact may be explained by God’s supreme value on the scale of nature; because of the exalted value of God’s nature, God is a correct object of human love. Finally, Augustine also implies in (D) that one’s own body is a correct object of love. Recall that in passage (A) Augustine claims that, although the body is a proper object of love, it is “beneath us,” i.e., lower in value than the soul/self on the scale of nature. Given that he thinks of the body in this way, his view that the body is a proper object of love may be explained by the idea that the body has a certain value on the scale of nature, and that this value makes it a proper object of love. If I am correct in my reading, here, it seems implicit in passage (D) that the love of the commandments is properly an attitude toward certain objects possessing value on the scale of nature—namely the four objects noted above in passage (A): God, the self/soul, neighbors, and the body—and that such objects are properly loved *because* they are valuable in this way.⁶⁰

A second characteristic of well-ordered love evident in (D) is that it must exhibit the correct means-end relationships expressed by Augustine’s distinction between use and

⁵⁹ Sinners *qua* human beings are, of course, an entirely different matter. They *are* worthy of love, according to Augustine.

⁶⁰ If my reading here is correct, one might still wonder why such things as trees and fleas are not also proper objects of love. After all, plants and animals of all kinds have value on the scale of nature for Augustine. Of course, Augustine thinks that the four proper objects of love are all implicated by the two love commands, and this clearly sets them apart from other objects. However, part of what Augustine seems to be trying to do, here, is to *explain why* the love commands single out the four proper objects of love, in which case it will not do to cite the commands as an explanation of why only those four objects are proper objects of love. I do not see an answer to this puzzle in the text.

enjoyment. As he told us before and reiterates in (D), God should be loved “for himself” (*propter se ipsum*): people should enjoy God, and thereby possess or belong to God (or desire to do so) because of God’s exceeding goodness. Again, as he told us before and reiterates in (D), every human being should be loved “on God’s account” (*propter deum*): we should exhibit benevolence toward every human being as a means of enjoying God. Similarly, Augustine includes our bodies as one of the “all these things” that are to be loved on account of God.

We might wonder, here, how Augustine’s seeming view that human beings are proper objects of love due to the value of their nature fits with his view that they are to be loved “on God’s account.” Specifically, one might worry that the two views are incompatible. If we are to love a human being in virtue of the value of her nature as human, insofar as she is in possession of that nature it seems we love her because of something inherently good *about her* and not merely as a means of attaining some further good, namely enjoyment of God. In short, if we properly love other human beings in virtue of their value as humans, in so doing it seems we do not *use* them but rather *enjoy* them. In so doing, it seems, then, that we would love other humans for their own sakes and not on God’s account.

Although I cannot give it a complete airing here, I think this worry is legitimate. Indeed, I think Augustine himself feels the problem insofar as later in Book I of DDC he experiments with the idea that we might enjoy other people “in God.”⁶¹ Although he seems not to abandon the idea that God alone should be enjoyed and that people should be used to that end,⁶² this new locution of “enjoying people in God” seems to evidence a certain dissatisfaction with his use-enjoyment formulation.⁶³ In any case, as far as his view in Book I of DDC is concerned, Augustine’s basic

⁶¹ DDC XXXII 35, XXXIII 37.

⁶² At XXXIII 37 he states, “When you enjoy a human being in God, you are enjoying God rather than that human being.” Thus, he refuses to concede that enjoying another person “in God” amounts to simply enjoying her. Rather, the object of enjoyment remains God.

⁶³ So thinks O’Donovan. As noted above, he suggests that Augustine did abandon the formulation in his later work.

strategy of reply to this worry seems to be that God is, ultimately, the source of the value of human nature, and so when our love is *properly* caused by the value of human nature, it somehow looks beyond that value to the value of God's nature. Put another way, for Augustine the cause of our love for a human being when we love her in virtue of the value of her nature is, strictly speaking, the value of God's nature as the source of her human nature. This sort of reply seems evident in Augustine's idea noted above that human beings "participate" in God's goodness and thereby become worthy of love.⁶⁴ The idea of "participation," here, seems to reflect both likeness (human goodness understood as *like* God's goodness in some way) and causation (the value of human nature understood as *caused* by God's goodness in some way).⁶⁵

I do not claim that Augustine's mode of reply, here, is effective. Indeed, I think both the worry and the reply would need further sharpening before we could tell. However, insofar as Augustine does seem to hold together the two views in question—that human beings are proper objects of love in virtue of the value of their nature, and that human beings should be loved for the sake of God—I will not be further detained by the worry.⁶⁶ My interpretive project demands only that Augustine held the two views in question and not that they are compatible.

A third characteristic of well-ordered love, according to (D), is that it is *in the correct degree*. This point is clear from Augustine's repetitive insistence that one not love something too much or too little, and that one love two things equally if they call for it. In passage (D), Augustine illustrates this point about degrees of love with the example of loving God more than any human being, including oneself. (Although he puts the point conditionally, it is clear that he

⁶⁴ DDC Book I, XXIX 30.

⁶⁵ This reading of "participation" seems to derive, ultimately, from Plato, who held that the mutable objects of the world "participated" in the Forms, insofar as they were images or likenesses of the Forms and depended on the Forms causally for what little "being" they had.

⁶⁶ I hope to take this worry up in future work.

also affirms the view.) Similarly, he suggests that another human being—body and soul⁶⁷—should be loved more than our own bodies, and that all people should be loved equally. By “equally,” I take his point to be that we should love no person more or less than another.

The best explanation of *why* Augustine holds to these distinctions in the proper degree of love seems to be that each kind of object possesses a different degree of value on the scale of nature. It seems that for Augustine some objects merit greater love than others since their nature is more valuable than that of others. Similarly, some objects merit less love than others due to their less valuable nature, and other objects merit equal love since they are equally valuable. This explanation seems most obvious for his claim that we should love God more than any human being. Why should we do this? Because God is the most valuable object on the scale of nature, and thus God’s value far exceeds that of any human being. Just as the miser does well to love his own (healthy) body more than money for bread⁶⁸—due to the greater value of a healthy body relative to the value of money for bread—so we do well to love God more than any human due to God’s exceeding value relative to human beings. Similarly, one should love another human being more than one’s own body because the value of one’s body is “beneath” that of a whole person (her soul, in particular) on the scale of nature.⁶⁹ Finally, it seems Augustine thinks that we should love all people equally because each person possesses the same value according to the

⁶⁷ Comments immediately preceding passage (D) indicate that by talking here of “human beings,” Augustine means to indicate both body and soul, or “your whole neighbor,” as he puts it. See DDC Book I, XXVI 27.

⁶⁸ We should not overestimate the miser’s accomplishment here. While he should certainly love his healthy body more than money for bread, Augustine would likely add that he should not love money at all, since it is not implicated by the two love commands. Thus, insofar as the miser loves money at all, he is still getting something wrong.

⁶⁹ Might Augustine have the scale of utility in mind here, rather than the scale of nature? In other words, might he think that another person has more use-value than one’s own body, and so should be loved more? It seems not. Apart from the fact that it seems he does not yet (in DDC) have a developed scale of utility in play (recall that the account I related was from the later DCD), he tells us that “all these things [i.e., bodies and whole persons] are to be loved on account of God,” and so loving each of them is equally a means of enjoying God. Thus, it does not seem he has in mind that a whole person would be more valuable according to the scale of utility, i.e., as a means of enjoying God, than would one’s own body. Rather, in passage (D) the salient difference between another person and one’s own body seems to be that the person (in virtue of her soul) has a natural capacity for enjoying God while a mere body does not. Presumably, this natural capacity gives a whole person greater value on the scale of nature than a mere body, and thereby renders it worthy of greater love.

scale of nature. That our love for all people should be equal fits well with the idea (suggested above) that every human being is a proper object of love in virtue of the equal value each possesses as a human, i.e., according to nature.

Augustine's claims in passage (D) about the degree to which we should love various things are the basis, then, of the two premises in my reconstruction of his argument. First, Augustine seems to be urging a sort of proportionality in one's love. For the kinds of love under consideration in DDC (namely, the love of God, neighbor, and self in the two greatest commandments), Augustine seems to think love should be proportioned to the value of an object on the scale of nature. Those things with greater value we should love more, those things with lesser value we should love less, and those things with equal value we should love equally. Here, then, is the textual basis for premise (1) of my reconstruction of Augustine's argument: "The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has."

Second, if my reading is correct, Augustine thinks we should love all people equally since he thinks every person bears identical value on the scale of nature. Implicit in this thought is the idea that the value we bear as human beings, according to our nature, is properly the kind of value to which love for neighbors is a response.⁷⁰ Augustine's claim, then, that we should love all people equally is partially supported by his view that every person has equal value, according to the scale of nature. Hence premise (2) of my reconstruction of Augustine's argument: "Every person has equal value."

1.7 LOVING EQUALLY

As noted in the last section, I read Augustine's claim that "we should love all people equally" as the claim that we should love no person more or less than any other; rather, we

⁷⁰ David Velleman would agree. He argues that the value inherent in us as people—specifically, the value of the human rational will—is the value to which all forms of love should be a response. See Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," 362, 365.

should love every person to the same degree in virtue of their equal value on the scale of nature. However, this interpretation does not get to the bottom of what, exactly, Augustine means by “loving equally.” In this section I will address that question directly.

One obvious reading of Augustine’s view in DDC might be that to love two people equally is simply to love each as a means of loving God, i.e., to use each to enjoy God. On this view, the equality of love would consist in the equal means-end relation according to which one should love each person on God’s account. On this view, equal love would not necessarily have to do with equality of one’s benevolent motivations toward each person. Indeed, one could be consistently more motivated toward the good of some people than that of others—e.g., that of one’s own children more than that of a stranger—without compromising the equality of one’s love. After all, as long as one loved both one’s children and the stranger as a means of loving God, the identical means-end relation would hold and one could be said to love each equally in the relevant sense. Such a view would surely be consistent with the thrust of Augustine’s argumentation in Book I of DDC and would fit with aspects of passage (D).

However, several of Augustine’s examples of loving some things more or less than others in DDC suggest that this interpretation is inadequate. Consider the examples in the following passage (E), which includes the passage about the miser and his bread, quoted above:

(E) Now it is possible to love something more than the health and soundness of one’s own body. It is well known that many people have voluntarily undergone pain and the amputation of limbs in order to obtain other things which they valued more. But it should not be said that someone does not value his body’s health and safety just because he values something else more highly. A miser buys himself bread in spite of the fact that he loves money; in doing so he gives away the money which he loves so much and wants to have more of, but he does this because he puts a greater value on the health of his body, which needs the bread for its sustenance.⁷¹

In the two examples of this passage, loving one thing more than another is not a matter of loving according to the proper means-end relationship. Consider the first example. Loving something

⁷¹ DDC Book I, XXV 26.

more than the health and safety of one's body does not, here, amount to loving one's body as a means of loving the better thing, i.e., having benevolence toward one's body as a means of loving something better. Rather, it amounts to *sacrificing* an aspect of one's health and safety—indeed, having what might be understood as a *hatred* of one's body, relative to one's love for the other thing⁷²—in order to obtain the more beloved thing. This does not mean, of course, that one fails to love one's body, as Augustine assures us. Rather, it just means that one loves something else more. The idea emerging from this example, then, is that loving one thing more than another is not necessarily related to loving the two objects in the correct means-end relationship; rather, loving one thing more than another amounts to preferring it over the other in cases of conflict. Put another way, it amounts to being more willing to pursue or benefit the more loved object than the less loved object. From this example I take it that if one loved one's body and some other thing *equally* then one would not necessarily be willing to sacrifice one's body for the thing. In a case of conflict, then, one would be no more willing to pursue the thing than to look after the health and safety of one's body.

The second example of passage (E) suggests the same picture of what it is to love one thing more than another, and thus implies the same notion of what it is to love two things equally. A miser loves money. Indeed, Augustine might suggest that he *enjoys* it, i.e., that he seeks to possess it or hold fast to it for its own sake. But, when his possession of money conflicts with the welfare of his body to some extent, to that extent he is willing to part with his money, preferring that which would sustain the welfare of his body (e.g., bread). This, according to Augustine, is an example of the miser loving his body more than money. Again, the idea of loving one thing more than another, here, is not a matter of loving the other as a means of loving the one: the miser does

⁷² As O'Donovan points out, this idea of relative "hatred" or "despising" of something that one loves less than something else is consistent with Augustine's language in certain passages. See O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine*, 63–64.

not love money as a means of loving his body.⁷³ If anything the relation is quite the opposite: the miser's final end is the possession of as much money as possible while the sustenance of his body is a mere necessary means to that end. Thus, in some sense, the miser loves (or uses) his body as a means of loving (or enjoying) money. Nevertheless, despite this inverted means-end relationship, Augustine thinks the miser still loves his body *more* than his money since he prefers the former over the latter in cases of conflict. Thus, it seems Augustine could not think, here, that loving one thing more than another is just a matter of which love is the end and which is the means, since, in this case, the object that is the means (the body) is loved more than the object that is the end (money). So, again, the picture of what it is to love one thing more than another reflected in this example is to be more willing to benefit the one thing (the body) than to pursue the other (money) in cases where one cannot do both. Thus, to love two things equally is to be no more willing to do one thing over the other in such cases.

A previously quoted line from DDQOT further suggests the reading of what it is to love one thing more than another that I find in the two examples from DDC. There Augustine says, "However, when God is loved more than the soul so that a man prefers to belong to him rather than to himself..."⁷⁴ Here to love God more than oneself is to prefer "to belong to him" than to oneself.⁷⁵ Thus, again, what it is to love one thing more than another is to exhibit greater willingness or motivation to pursue it over the other. As a result, it seems implied that to love two things equally is to be no more willing or motivated to pursue the one thing over the other.

Finally, that loving one thing more than another is not just a matter of means-end ordering also seems clear in the following line from passage (D): "Likewise, another human

⁷³ Indeed, this is probably a reasonable description of someone with a healthy view of money, unlike the miser.

⁷⁴ DDQOT 36.1. Op. Cit.

⁷⁵ Interestingly, we also see here the idea that love of self might involve a motivation to "belong to oneself" and not mere benevolence toward oneself. Whatever it means to "belong to oneself", the comment seems to broaden the picture of love for human beings (including the self) beyond that of DDC.

being should be loved more than our own bodies, because all these things are to be loved on account of God whereas another person can enjoy God together with us in a way in which the body cannot...” Here Augustine suggests that although both our own bodies and another human being are “to be loved on account of God”—i.e., they are to be loved as a means of loving God—another human being should be loved more than our own bodies. Thus, the idea of loving something according to the proper means-end relationship is *distinct*, here, from the idea of loving one thing more than another. The point is not that we are to love our bodies as a means of loving another person; rather, we are to prefer another person over our bodies if need be. We are to be willing to sacrifice our bodies in cases of conflict between the two loves. It seems, then, that Augustine does not simply mean that our loves should be arranged in the proper means-end relationship when he suggests that we love one thing more than another. Rather, he has in mind the idea of preferring one thing over another in cases of conflict, or of being more willing to pursue one thing than another in such cases. Thus, it also seems that, for Augustine, to love two people equally is to have no such preference in cases of conflict.

1.8 UNEQUAL BENEFICENCE

The following passage (F) comes immediately after Augustine’s claim that “all people should be loved equally”:

(F) But, you cannot do good to all people equally, so you must take particular thought for those who, as if by lot, happen to be particularly close to you in terms of place, time, or any other circumstances. Suppose that you had plenty of something which had to be given to someone in need of it but could not be given to two people, and you met two people, neither of whom had a greater need or a closer relationship to you than the other: you could do nothing more just than to choose by lot the person to whom you should give what could not be given to both. Analogously, since you cannot take thought for all men, you must settle (rather than by lot) in favor of the one who happens to be more closely associated with you in temporal matters.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ DDC Book I, XXVIII 29.

Here Augustine seems to be anticipating a point at which his readers might go wrong. From his claim that all people should be loved equally he thinks they might infer that we should *do good* equally to all, i.e., that equal benevolence implies equal beneficence. However, Augustine clearly thinks that we should *not* treat every person with equal beneficence. On the contrary, from this passage he thinks we owe beneficence preferentially to those that are “close” to us. First, he sensibly claims that we cannot do good to all people equally, given the limitations of individual human resources.⁷⁷ Then, in light of this limitation, he proposes that, in cases where we cannot benefit everyone equally, we preferentially distribute our resources so as to benefit those temporally, spatially, or circumstantially closest to us more than those who are more distant. I take it that Augustine’s reference here to those who are close to us in terms of “place, time, or any other circumstances,” or “in temporal matters,” is simply another way of referring to those with whom we have a relationship closer than that between two people who have never encountered each other. So, on Augustine’s view our “close” relations might include our clients, shopkeepers, bus drivers, colleagues, neighbors, friends, family members, or even the beggar at our gate.⁷⁸

Interestingly, however, Augustine seems to think that our choosing to benefit those closer to us over those more distant should not be an expression of preferential benevolence toward them. After all, this would compromise the norm of loving all equally. Rather, he thinks we should understand our acts of preferential beneficence as instances of choice according to

⁷⁷ The omnipotent God’s limitless love for all human beings seems to lurk in the background here. On Augustine’s picture, God *is* able both to love and benefit every human equally, and so God’s beneficence need not be limited by practical matters as human beneficence must be. On the other hand, despite the ability of Augustine’s God to benefit every human equally, it seems that he does not do so, according to his discretionary grace.

⁷⁸ Augustine makes a similar point elsewhere. For example, in DCD XIX.14 he writes, “In the first place, therefore, he [a man] must care for his own household; for the order of nature and of human society itself gives him readier access to them, and greater opportunity of caring for them.” I thank Oliver O’Donovan for his insightful comment that this set of people “close” to us is not limited, in Augustine’s view, to friends and family members (though it surely includes them).

random chance.⁷⁹ The example of the agent who must settle by chance whom to benefit is intended as an analogue for cases in which we must decide between potential beneficiaries with whom we have different relationships. Augustine’s admonition to “take particular thought for those who, *as if by lot*, happen to be particularly close to you...”⁸⁰ suggests that he views the differing closeness of these relations as a matter of chance. Yes, in our friendships and romantic relationships we choose some people over others, and thus in a sense these relationships reflect our deliberate choice and not mere random chance. However, ultimately, we choose these people from a subset of people with whom we have been randomly grouped—the people who live in our time period, the people who live where we live, the people who share our interests, etc. And, of course, most of our family members we do not choose at all. For these reasons, it seems, Augustine suggests that, ultimately, our close relations are a matter of contingent chance.

His point in all this, then, is that we must *act* preferentially toward our close relations, but only because of a role of the dice, so to speak—as a decision procedure—and not because of a preference or greater willingness to do so. Our *willingness* to act for the good of people must be equal toward all. Chance circumstance may rule our *actions*, but not our motivating *desires*.

1.9 DIFFERENT KINDS OF LOVE

My explanation of Augustine’s argument is now complete. In this section, then, I will begin to evaluate the argument by articulating the first of two responses to it. This first response might run as follows: perhaps we *should* love everyone equally with *one* kind of love, and with respect to this kind of love Augustine’s argument and conclusion would be correct. For example, perhaps Augustine is just talking about a generalized benevolence that we typically think we owe

⁷⁹ If there is such a thing as random chance for Augustine. Perhaps inscrutable divine providence would be the actual mechanism for Augustine. After all, “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD” (Proverbs 16.33).

⁸⁰ Emphasis mine.

to one and all, even to strangers. This sort of generalized benevolence might be characterized, by some, as part of what it is to respect someone, though there is also nothing wrong with calling it a kind of love. However, such generalized benevolence is not the *only* kind of love, the interlocutor might emphasize. It seems clear that we love our children and our friends with a *different* kind of love altogether. And perhaps Augustine was just not talking about *that* kind of love in his argument. The response strategy, here, is to restrict the scope of Augustine’s argument to a kind of love that more plausibly should be equal—e.g., general benevolence—thereby harmonizing it with our intuitions.

As a historical point, this view seems to go beyond Augustine’s view in DDC. There Augustine makes no mention of further kinds of love appropriate to those we are close to, such as children or friends, despite the fact that passages (D) and (F) seemed to offer every opportunity to do so. Moreover, there are reasons elsewhere to think this was *not* Augustine’s view in DDC. For example, in *De vera religione*, a work written roughly five years prior to DDC,⁸¹ Augustine rejects the idea that we should love any person—including friends or family members—in a special, distinct way reserved for those we are close to. He writes,

A human being is not to be loved by people even as brothers after the flesh are loved, or sons, or wives, or kinsfolk, or relatives, or fellow citizens... Let no one think that is inhuman. It is more inhuman to love someone because he is your son and not because he is a human, that is, not to love that in him which belongs to God, but to love that which belongs to yourself.⁸²

Here Augustine implicitly acknowledges that people typically do love in a special distinct way those they are close to, but he denies that such love is proper. Rather, he thinks those we are

⁸¹ *De vera religione* is typically dated around 389 or 390 CE; see Augustine, “Of True Religion (De Vera Religione),” in *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, trans. John H. S. Burleigh, vol. VI, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), 222 (Introduction). As noted above, DDC is typically dated around 395.

⁸² Augustine, *De vera religione*, 87-88. Translation adapted from *Ibid.*, 270. I will return to an expanded version of this quotation in Chapter Five, where I engage it in more depth. Importantly, there is some evidence (*Retractiones* Book I, 12.8) that Augustine later rejected this early radical view. See Saint Augustine, *The Retractions*, trans. Sister Mary Inez Bogan, vol. 60, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1968), 56.

close to are to be loved merely because they are human. Presumably, his idea, here, of what it is to love a person “because he is a human” is something like the kind of love he encourages in DDC, i.e., egalitarian benevolence that arises in response to the value of a person’s nature as human.

Despite the fact that the interlocutor’s response seems hard to attribute to the Augustine of DDC, it seems effective as far as it goes: it does seem plausible *both* to restrict the scope of Augustine’s argument to one kind of love that should be equal (“nature-love”) *and* to postulate further appropriate kinds of love beyond the scope of the argument. However, the response also leaves lingering questions. One implication of the response is that the proposed additional kinds of love allow for cases of unequal or preferential love. We might think of the response as making space outside of the scope of Augustine’s argument for such love. However, the mere fact that there could be further kinds of love beyond the scope of Augustine’s argument (as the interlocutor suggests) does not explain why, exactly, such kinds should be unequal or preferential. And given the plausibility of Augustine’s argument as applied to one kind of love (as the interlocutor herself grants), we might well wonder why it does not also apply to other kinds.

For example, suppose we grant that the love we have for a friend (“friend-love”) is different in kind from the love we have for our own children (“parental-love”), and that both are different in kind from the love we might have for a stranger (i.e., Augustine’s nature-love). Why, exactly, should we love our friend or our child more than a stranger? Why not think both friend- and parental-love should also be responses to the value people have as human beings, and that such love should be proportional to such value? In other words, why not think that Augustine’s argument simply captures the cases of friend-love and parental-love too?

Even if we can give some kind of explanation here as to why we should love our friends or children more than a stranger, we might still wonder why we should love our own children more than certain friends (e.g., new friends). Simply distinguishing love for close relatives from nature-love will not answer this question. Moreover, even if we can explain why we should love our own children more than certain friends, it might seem that Augustine's egalitarian challenge will reappear within each kind of love. For example, if friend-love is a distinct kind of love, Augustine's argument might challenge us to love all of our friends equally, which seems hard to countenance. Such equal love within kinds seems supported by the case of parental love. It is quite typical for parents to think they should love their children equally. But, if equality is demanded for the parental kind of love, why not for friend-love or any other distinct kind of love? Even if an interlocutor can answer Augustine's egalitarian challenge as applied to any two distinct kinds of love, then, the challenge seems poised to return *within* such kinds unless we tell a story about why it does not.

Thus, the interlocutor's response raises further questions that call for some kind of account of why we should love some people more than others. Simply noting that the love we have for our friends or our children is different in kind from nature-love does not yet give this account.

Perhaps we can go some way toward such an account by making use of Augustine's later views about the scales of utility and justice in DCD.⁸³ For example, Augustine could say that taking up an attitude of benevolence toward someone in response to his use-value (call this "use-love") or his justice-value (call this "justice-love"), would amount to having love for the person that is different in kind from nature-love. He could then claim that we should use-love more those who are more useful to us than those who are less so and justice-love more those who are

⁸³ To be clear, I am not attributing such a view to Augustine, even in his later years. Rather, here I am simply offering a distinct view inspired by Augustine's conceptual scheme.

more virtuous than those who are less so, even while maintaining an equality of nature-love for all people. Finally, then, if use-love and justice-love were the kinds of love we had for our close relatives (e.g., friends and children), it seems Augustine would have a ready way of explaining why we should love such people more than strangers, even while maintaining his thesis of equality about nature-love: our close relatives are more virtuous or useful to us than others.

However, this account of why we should love preferentially seems implausible. Indeed, it just seems false that our close relatives are typically more virtuous than other people we might possibly come to love. Often it is quite the opposite: we love our friends, family members, and romantic partners *despite* the fact that other objects of love might be more virtuous. But, if our close relatives are often not more virtuous than others we might love, how could their having greater virtue possibly demand greater love for them?

Perhaps our close relatives *are* more useful to us than others in the Augustinian sense that they typically satisfy certain of our needs and desires more effectively than others (e.g., desires for companionship, emotional support, sexual intimacy, etc.). However, even so, it still seems there are typically many other people who might be more useful to us in this way if we had a relevant relationship to them: there is always someone who could be a better companion, a stronger emotional support, or a more satisfying sexual partner, if only he were my friend or romantic partner. What seems to be doing the work, here, then, in making our close relatives more useful to us is the special *relationships* we have to them, not necessarily their utility as particular individuals. Perhaps, then, the relationships—or the Augustinian utility of the relationships—we have with our close relatives warrant the greater love we typically have for them, rather than their superior justice-value or use-value as particular individuals.

I think this story about the Augustinian use-value of relationships is quite promising as a way of explaining why we should love some people more than others. However, it obviously

needs much more development and is not without problems. For example, if our love for our close relatives is a response to the use-value of our relationships to them, it seems that such love runs the risk of being too selfish.⁸⁴ Thus, there is much more that needs to be said about such a view if we are to properly evaluate it. One task of my dissertation will be to articulate a view of this kind and thereby to explain why we should love some more than others. Fulfillment of this task, then, will address one of the two central aims of my dissertation. I will take up this task most directly in Chapters Six and Seven. I will turn, now, to a second possible response to Augustine's argument.

1.10 OBJECTION: LOVE IN PROPORTION TO VALUE

A second response to Augustine's argument is the objection that premise (1)—“The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has”—has obvious counter-examples. For example, it seems that a parent's preferential love for his own child over a new friend would be a straightforward counter-example to premise (1). Insofar as it seems appropriate for a parent to love his child more than a new friend, it seems there is no requirement that the degree of one's love be proportional to the value of the beloved object, since the child and the new friend are equally valuable as human beings. Rather, it seems appropriate for us to love some things more than others, even if we admit that the things we love more are no more valuable than the things we love less.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ I suspect that this sort of worry is driving Augustine's rejection of such a view in *De vera religione*, as quoted above.

⁸⁵ David Velleman makes a similar point when he states, “Loving some but not others entails valuing them differently but not attributing different values to them...” (Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” 372.) Certain comments by T.M. Scanlon on “valuing” and “value” suggest that he would also press an objection of this sort. For example, he says, “To claim that something is valuable (or that it is ‘of value’) is to claim that others also have reason to value it, as you do. We can, quite properly, value some things more than others without claiming that they are more valuable. So, for example, it is natural to say, and would be odd to deny, that I value my children; but it would be odd for me to put this by saying that they are valuable (except in the sense that everyone is). The reason behind this oddness is the one just mentioned: claiming that something is valuable involves claiming that its attributes merit being valued generally, and valuing one's own children above others, in the sense in which we all do this, lacks this impersonal quality and this dependence on what is merited or

Augustine might try to respond to this objection by contesting the idea that preferentially loving one's own children is appropriate, given that they are no more valuable than anyone else. Augustine might understand his opponent's argument as pitting a concrete case (preferential love of one's own children) against a principle (loving in proportion to value). However, if both the principle and the concrete case seem plausible, it is not clear which should win the battle. Indeed, it is a hallmark of the Rawlsian reflective equilibrium method in ethics—a method that has wide philosophical acceptance—that principles may sometimes bring us to change our views about concrete cases, just as concrete cases may sometimes bring us to change our principles.⁸⁶ And, while the concrete case seems plausible, Augustine would also think the principle in premise (1) seems plausible. After all, the principle is one way (though perhaps not the only way) of accounting for the fact that we can over- or under-value certain objects: in such cases our response might be out of proportion to what is called for by the value of the object.

Although this reply to the objection is not without merit, I find the objection more compelling: the intuition that preferential love for our own children is appropriate—indeed, that it is an attitude we *should* have—seems far clearer to me than does the truth of Augustine's premise (1). Indeed, I take it that the concrete case amounts to a counter-example that shows premise (1) to be false.

Nevertheless, even if the objection goes through and Augustine's argument fails, the exchange, here, raises an important question: what exactly is wrong with premise (1)? To show it false by counter-example is not yet to diagnose what is wrong with it. More specifically, if love need not be proportional in degree to the value of the beloved object, what exactly *is* the correct

called for by their attributes." T.M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 95. That Scanlon puts the point in terms of "valuing" and not "loving" is not crucial. Indeed, many contemporary philosophers take love to be a kind of valuing. For example, Niko Kolodny takes this view explicitly in Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship." Velleman also does.

⁸⁶ John Rawls, "Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics," *The Philosophical Review* 60, no. 2 (April 1951): 188–189. See also T.M. Scanlon, "Rawls on Justification," in *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, ed. Samuel Freeman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 139–67.

relationship between love and value? After all, it seems plausible that love should have *some* relationship to value. This question seems both philosophically important and difficult to answer. A second aim of my dissertation, then, will be to identify more clearly the problem with premise (1) of Augustine's argument and in the process to illuminate more clearly the proper relation between love and value.

1.11 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

In the foregoing discussion my aim has been to explain and engage the Augustinian claim in Book I of DDC that we should love all people equally. I suggested that Augustine's argument for the claim may be summarized as follows:

- (1) The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has.
- (2) Every person has equal value.
- (3) Therefore, we should love all people equally.

After explaining the argument, I engaged two responses to it as a way of beginning to evaluate it. First, I considered the claim that Augustine is talking about a kind of love—e.g., general benevolence—that has no bearing on the preferential loves with which we typically love our friends, romantic partners, and family members. As such, it seems open to an interlocutor to side-step any problematic implications of Augustine's conclusion by suggesting that only general benevolence need be equal and that there are further more intimate kinds of love outside the scope of the argument. While I granted that this strategy renders the argument unproblematic, I also suggested that it raises further questions. Specifically, it implies that the further more intimate kinds of love outside the scope of Augustine's argument call for unequal or preferential love without explaining exactly why they do so. Put another way, for all that the interlocutor has said, it is not yet clear *why* Augustine's argument does not simply apply to these other kinds of

love too. Thus, this first response left us wanting an account of why we should love some people more than others.

The second response was a possible counter-example to premise (1), namely, the case of parental love. Although reasonable parents would likely acknowledge that their children are no more valuable than any other children, they would typically think it appropriate to love their own children far more than they love any other children. If such a state of affairs is, in fact, appropriate, then the case would be a counter-example to premise (1): it would be a case in which the degree to which we love something need not be proportional to its value. I conceded that this objection seems effective. I take it to show that Augustine's premise (1) is false. However, the objection also raises the further question of what, exactly, is wrong with premise (1). Simply demonstrating its falsity via counter-example is not yet to diagnose the problem with it. Presumably, a diagnosis of the problem would illuminate the correct relation between love and value that premise (1) attempted to capture.

In the remainder of my dissertation, I will try to address the two questions raised by this preliminary evaluation of Augustine's argument. My dissertation thus has two aims. The first is to give an account of the proper relationship between love and value, and thus to show more clearly what is wrong with Augustine's argument. The second is to give an account of why, exactly, we should love some people more than others. With respect to this second aim, my basic claim will be that closer relationships demand preferential love insofar as closer relationships are more valuable than more distant ones. I will argue for this claim and directly address the two aims of the dissertation only in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. In Chapters Two, Three, and Four I will lay the philosophical groundwork for Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. Specifically, in Chapters Two and Three I will give an account of love itself, and in Chapter Four I will give an account of love's "reasons," or "proper grounds," as I will prefer to call them.

CHAPTER 2 – LOVE AS A TWOFOLD TENDENCY OF WILL

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Is love merely something we suffer, or is it related in some way to our agency? Does love merely have an object, or does it also have aims? The answer to these questions depends upon what kind of attitude love is. David Velleman has argued that love has no aims, and thus no systematic connection with what we do. As he puts it, “I venture to suggest that love is essentially an attitude toward the beloved himself but not toward any result at all.”⁸⁷ As the title of Velleman’s article suggests, he views love as a kind of “moral emotion” that does not necessarily bear on our action. That love is an emotion is, of course, also a popular view outside the philosophical world. On this popular view love is understood primarily as a certain euphoric feeling about the beloved. The paradigm case of this attitude is being or falling “in love” with a romantic⁸⁸ partner.

⁸⁷ Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” 354.

⁸⁸ My use of ‘romantic’ is not meant to evoke directly the Romantic period of history or the notion of love owing to that period. Rather, I mean simply to evoke the ordinary contemporary English sense of the term, which, I take it, describes something related to love involving a sexual interest. Of course, insofar as this ordinary English concept has been influenced by notions from the Romantic period, there will be some complicated indirect connection between “romantic love” and “Romantic love.” Nevertheless, for my purposes, that connection is not important.

Thomas Aquinas would likely take issue with the picture of love sketched above—both with Velleman’s philosophical version and with the less refined popular account. While he would affirm that love is, in some sense, something that “happens to us,” and is thus what he would call a “passion,” he would also suggest that love for people is essentially tied to two aims—the good of the beloved and union with him—and so bears on our agency. Furthermore, he would likely claim that the kind of emotion often popularly associated with love is not constitutive of love, but rather is a typical effect of love under certain circumstances.

My aim in this and the next chapter will be to flesh out and defend a broadly Thomist view of love like this. Specifically, my aim will be to defend a general account of human love—love by people and for people. Examples of the attitude I have in mind include love for our romantic partners, our friends, our family members, and even strangers. In Chapter Two I will offer an account of the attitudes that partially constitute love. In Chapter Three I will offer an account of love’s constitutive causes, or operative grounds, as I will call them. As a whole, the account will be part of my larger effort to lay the philosophical groundwork for addressing the two aims of the dissertation. While I take my account of love to be broadly Thomist, I follow Aquinas more closely at certain points than at others.

In Chapter Two, I will begin with Aquinas’s view that love consists of a twofold orientation, or tendency, of the will toward the good of the beloved and toward union with him—a twofold conditional tendency to intend or desire particular aspects of the beloved’s good and union with him, under appropriate circumstances. I will reject the most plausible alternative views, namely that love itself is a kind of occurrent desire,⁸⁹ intention,⁹⁰ or emotion.⁹¹ I reject the

⁸⁹ Harry Frankfurt and Eleonore Stump hold that love consists of certain desires. See Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, chap. 2. and Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*, chap. 5.

⁹⁰ Niko Kolodny characterizes the motivational aspects of love as “standing intentions.” See Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 151.

⁹¹ As noted, from the title of his famous paper David Velleman seems to view love as a kind of emotion, though he does not elaborate the sense in which he thinks it is. See Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion.”

views that love is occurrent desire or emotion on identical grounds: both views make love to consist, at least in part, in transient attitudes that are incompatible with our sense that love may persist even when affect and occurrent motivation do not. Instead, with Aquinas, I will claim that a range of desires and emotions are typical downstream *effects* of love that do not constitute love itself. I also reject the view that love consists of intentions since intentions aim only at ends whereas certain aspects of love's two targets could not be our ends. For example, love might include a motivating attitude toward a friend's promotion (as part of her good) or toward union with a deceased family member, even though we might be unable to effect such states of affairs. Given that aspects of love's two targets could not be our ends, it seems better to think of love as a possible *source* of intentions, rather than as a kind of intention itself.

Without further delay, then, I will turn to Aquinas's view that love is a twofold motivational tendency toward the good of the beloved and union with him.

2.2 AQUINAS ON APPETITES AND "COMPLACENCY"

According to Aquinas, "Love is something pertaining to the appetite; since good is the object of both."⁹² Here, by 'appetite' Aquinas means a tendency toward activity. Appetites exhibited by human beings include the "sensory"⁹³ and the "rational" appetites, both of which operate in response to features of the world represented as good.⁹⁴ The sensory appetite is the tendency toward activity shared by all animals with the capacity for perception and is something

⁹² *Summa Theologica* (ST) I-II 26.1. Unless otherwise noted translations of the ST will be adapted from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 5 vols. (New York: Ave Maria Press, 1981).

⁹³ The traditional way of translating *appetitus sensitivus* is "sensitive appetite." However, I will employ "sensory appetite" since I think it better captures the meaning of the term.

⁹⁴ He also thinks there is something called a "natural" appetite, which exists in objects that have a characteristic sort of activity but do not have, in themselves, a capacity for representing features of the world. Such appetites operate in certain inanimate objects, including the objects involved in the nonconscious biological sustenance of the human body (e.g., digestion, blood circulation, etc.). I set aside discussion of this natural appetite, and the corresponding "natural love," for simplicity.

like instinct. He calls it the “sensory” appetite because it operates in response to sensory representations of goodness. We apprehend with our senses certain things that appear good to us—especially in a bodily, or pleasure-making sense—and our sensory appetite inclines us toward them. So, for example, when a person is tempted by a piece of chocolate cake, Aquinas would likely say that the sensory appetite is at least the first appetite engaged by the visual or olfactory apprehension of the cake.

The “rational” appetite responds not to the mere sensory apprehension of an object, but rather to the rational apprehension of an object with the intellect—a capacity that Aquinas thinks animals do not have. He also refers to the rational appetite as the “will.”⁹⁵ According to Aquinas, the object of the will is some state of affairs that is understood (by the intellect) as falling under the universal GOOD. In contrast, the object of the sensory appetite is grasped merely as a particular good.⁹⁶ Importantly, Aquinas thinks humans always act from the inclinations of the will and never merely from the inclinations of the sensory appetite. So, for example, when we are tempted by the piece of chocolate cake and set about eating it, while our sensory faculties first apprehended it, and while our sensory appetite likely first inclined toward it, if we act to eat it then, according to Aquinas, it is also the case that our rational faculties judged the cake to be good (either on the basis of the sensory evidence, or some piece of reasoning), that our will inclined toward it, and that this rational inclination was what produced our action.⁹⁷ Thus, we

⁹⁵ ST I-II 26.1.

⁹⁶ We must be careful here since Aquinas’s account is quite subtle. It seems to be his view that the higher animals with whom we share a sensory appetite are capable of apprehending universals, but that they are not capable of apprehending them *as such*. So, for example, the sensory appetite of a sheep is repelled by all individuals of the kind wolf, and so there is a sense in which a sheep understands the wolf as a member of a feared kind. However, Aquinas denies that the sheep grasps the kind “wolf” itself, as a kind. Here I follow the interpretation of Paul Hoffman. See Paul Hoffman, “Reasons, Causes, and Inclinations,” in *Emotion and Cognitive Life in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Martin Pickavé and Lisa Shapiro (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 164–165.

⁹⁷ As Hoffman puts it, passions like sensory love “cannot move or incline the will directly because the passions themselves are not the direct object of the will; they move or incline the will indirectly by impeding reason—either by distracting it or by focusing its attention upon the object of the passion.” See *Ibid.*, 163.

might say that, on Aquinas's picture, any activity inspired by the sensory appetite is filtered through the will, since the will is the only thing that can bring about human action.

Love, then, on Aquinas's view—whether “sensory love” or “rational love”—is a certain condition of the appetite which he calls the appetite's “very complacency in good.”⁹⁸ By ‘complacency,’ Aquinas means something like an orientation of the appetite toward the thing apprehended as good.⁹⁹ The lover apprehends something as good, fitting, or appropriate to her, and then her appetite responds by orienting toward the object—the “appetible object,” as Aquinas sometimes calls it. The orientation of the sensory appetite toward an object Aquinas calls “sensory love,” while the orientation of the rational appetite toward an object he calls “rational love.”

He also refers to love as “the principle of movement towards the end loved.”¹⁰⁰ Here, by ‘end’ Aquinas simply means the good that is loved. The sort of “movement” that Aquinas has in mind is the activity of the appetite that is initiated by its orientation toward the beloved object. This activity seems to include both a desire for the object,¹⁰¹ and, in the case of the will, any resulting action. Thus, as the principle—i.e., the origin or cause—of such movement, love, on Aquinas's view, is distinct from such movement. However, importantly, Aquinas also thinks there is a sense in which love *itself* may be described as a certain movement of the will. He writes, “Although love does not denote the movement of the appetite in tending towards the appetible object, yet it denotes that movement whereby the appetite is changed by the appetible object, so as to have complacency therein.”¹⁰² Thus, since love denotes the change in the appetite

⁹⁸ ST I-II 26.1.

⁹⁹ He also describes “complacency” as a sort of “adaptation” of the appetite to the beloved object (ST I-II 26.2), and as “connaturalness” (i.e., a sharing of nature) between lover and beloved in the case of natural love (ST I-II 26.1).

¹⁰⁰ ST I-II 26.1.

¹⁰¹ ST I-II 26.2.

¹⁰² ST I-II 26.2, ad 3.

wrought by the beloved object—i.e., the appetite’s orientation toward it—love itself is also described as a kind of “movement” of the will. Furthermore, since the beloved object acts upon the appetite in bringing about the change or movement that is love Aquinas calls love a passion.¹⁰³

According to Aquinas, at the most general level there are two kinds of love: “love of concupiscence” and “love of friendship.” As he puts it in ST I-II 26.4, “...the movement of love has a twofold tendency: towards the good which a person wishes to someone,—to herself or to another, and towards that to which she wishes some good.”¹⁰⁴ His aim here seems to be to distinguish the kind of love that we typically have for inanimate objects, such as wine, from the kind of love we may have for people. He calls the first the “love of concupiscence” and the second the “love of friendship.” That he has this distinction in mind seems evident from the *sed contra* for ST I-II 26.4, which suggests (following Aristotle’s example¹⁰⁵) that we do not have friendship with wine, and thus that the love we have for wine must be different from the love we have for friends.¹⁰⁶ According to Aquinas, the distinction between our love of concupiscence for things like wine and our love of friendship for people consists in the fact that when we love wine we love it as an instrumental good whereas when we love people we typically love them as final goods. Put another way, Aquinas thinks that, in the best cases of love, when we love a person we typically love him because of who he is—for himself—and not something further he can get us, such as pleasure or some other benefit. In contrast, when we love something like wine we love it

¹⁰³ ST I-II 26.2. Strictly speaking, sensory love is a passion, while rational love is a passion “in a wider and extended sense.”

¹⁰⁴ ST I-II 26.4.

¹⁰⁵ *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.2.

¹⁰⁶ Of course, the *sed contra* does not always reflect Aquinas’s own view. However, in this case it seems to. He confirms the point in his discussion of charity at ST II-II 23.1. He takes charity to be both a kind of love and a kind of friendship. His discussion there suggests that we do not have such love for inanimate objects like wine, or even for animals such as horses. Rather, such love is typical of love for people. His point seems secure for inanimate objects. However, one might question his view that we cannot have friendship of some kind with animals (e.g., dogs).

only because it is a means to some further good (e.g., our pleasure). As he puts it in the quotation at the beginning of this paragraph, when we love an inanimate object with the love of concupiscence, we love it as a good that we wish (or will) *for* someone that we love with a love of friendship. So, I might love wine with the love of concupiscence as a good for myself, whom I love with the love of friendship. Importantly, we could also love a person merely with the love of concupiscence, though it seems Aquinas thinks such cases are not typical. In such a case we would love the person in an exclusively self-serving way, viewing him as an instrument of our pleasure or use. In such cases I am tempted to say that we would treat the person as a thing, “objectifying” him. Certain cases of lust come to mind as examples of such love.¹⁰⁷ In any case, Aquinas’s central claim in the passage quoted above is that the “movement” that constitutes love—i.e., the orientation of the appetite toward the beloved—comes in the two kinds described.

This picture is complicated by the fact that Aquinas seems to think that both kinds of love are instantiated when we have the love of friendship for a person. In that case, we love the *person* with the love of friendship and the *good of the person* with the love of concupiscence. If this is correct, Aquinas thinks that when we love someone as a friend—i.e., for who he is, not what he can get us—the appetite is oriented in two directions and we actually exhibit two distinct loves. This seems to be the sense of Aquinas’s claim (noted above) that “the movement of love [i.e., the movement that constitutes love] has a twofold tendency.” The view I am attributing to Aquinas, here, is confirmed in his discussion of charity, which he takes to be both a kind of love and a kind of friendship. There he writes, “According to the Philosopher (*Ethic.* viii. 2, 3), not every love has the character of friendship, but that love which is together with benevolence, when, to wit, we love someone so as to wish good to him.”¹⁰⁸ Here he offers another

¹⁰⁷ Some might hesitate to call such cases love at all. However, it also seems reasonable to think of them as Aquinas does—cases of defective love.

¹⁰⁸ ST II-II 23.1.

distinguishing mark of the love of friendship: it is accompanied by benevolence, which may be understood as an orientation of the will toward the good of the beloved friend, i.e., a love of concupiscence. Thus, it seems Aquinas thinks that if we have love of friendship for someone, then we also experience the love of concupiscence for that person's good. Similarly, Aquinas's view seems to imply that whenever we have love of concupiscence for something, we will also experience a love of friendship. As noted above, if I love wine or another person with the love of concupiscence, then I apprehend that object as an instrumental good for myself, whom I love with the love of friendship. Thus, Aquinas's view suggests that the two kinds of love always come in pairs, though the objects of each are typically different for any given case.¹⁰⁹

In the remainder of the chapter, then, I will defend what I take to be Aquinas's view that love is a "twofold" orientation or tendency of the appetite¹¹⁰—toward the beloved himself and toward his good. Because my aim is to give an account of love *by* and *for* human beings, and since it does not necessarily seem natural for contemporary English speakers to think of Aquinas's love of concupiscence for a person as genuine love, my focus will be on Aquinas's love of friendship. Thus, I will speak (less precisely than Aquinas) of love as having one object (the beloved person) and two "targets" toward which the appetite is oriented (the beloved, or "union" with the beloved as I will suggest shortly, and his good). Furthermore, my focus will be love in the rational appetite—i.e., the will—though I will also make use of Aquinas's notions of

¹⁰⁹ Aquinas's view of charity provides further evidence of this point. In II-II 27.2 Aquinas argues that goodwill toward a person (i.e., benevolence or love of concupiscence for the good of the person) is not the same as love. He writes, "...love, considered as an act of charity, includes goodwill, but such dilection or love adds union of affections," which (as I will explain shortly) is an orientation of the will toward the beloved person himself. By "act" of charity, Aquinas does not mean an outward action inspired by charity, but rather the movement or complacency of the appetite wrought by the appetible object, i.e., love itself. Thus, his point here is that the kind of love he calls charity consists of two orientations of the will—toward the beloved himself, and toward his good.

¹¹⁰ It may seem odd to say that love is a "tendency" of an appetite, since I have claimed that the appetite itself is a tendency. In other words, it seems I would have love be a tendency of a tendency, which might seem strange. However, this is, in fact, what I mean. Love is a kind of specification of the appetite. The appetite is a tendency toward the good in general while love is a more specific tendency toward an instantiation of the good. Thus, love is a specific orientation, inclination, or tendency of the more general tendency which is the appetite.

the sensory appetite and sensory love at certain points. In due course I will say more clearly what I mean by an “orientation” or “tendency” of the appetite. However, first I will clarify the two targets of love and their relation to each other.

2.3 FIRST TARGET: THE GOOD OF THE BELOVED

One target toward which love orients the lover is the good of, or for, the beloved person. Thus, I will say that love partially consists in a tendency to realize the beloved’s good. This good might include general over-arching outcomes in the beloved’s life—such as his health and happiness—as well as particular specifications of such outcomes, such as proper mental and physical development, sufficient financial resources, quality healthcare, close friendships, success at work, a vibrant religious life, or a preponderance of certain positive emotions, such as joy or contentment.

Eleonore Stump has argued that, on Aquinas’s view, this first of love’s tendencies (which she thinks are desires) is toward what is *in fact* the good of the beloved and not merely toward what the lover *takes* the beloved’s good to be. According to Stump, then, Aquinas would think that a lover who tends toward what she *thinks* is a person’s good but that is not *in fact* his good could not really love the person, even if all the other conditions of love were met. For example, she writes,

If what a person desires as good for another is not in fact the beloved’s good by [an] objective measure, then, to one degree or another, the lover does not love him, whatever she may believe about herself. A parent who desires to beat her child because she supposes that beating is a good for the child is wrong in that supposition; and her desire to beat her child does not therefore count as a desire of love, whatever the parent may believe of herself.¹¹¹

Importantly, Stump qualifies her position by claiming that if a lover makes a mistake about the means to a genuine good for a person, then the lover may still count as loving the person. For

¹¹¹ Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*, 94.

example, if a mother desires a certain drug for her child on the mistaken belief that it will bring about his health when in fact it will harm him, according to Stump her desire may still count toward loving her child. What is necessary for genuine love, says Stump, is that the lover tend toward an end that is partly constitutive of the beloved's objective good, such as health.¹¹²

However, Stump's proposal seems problematic for several reasons. First, the example of the parent that beats her child "because she supposes that beating is a good for the child" seems highly implausible. Stump's idea seems to be that such a parent thinks that being beaten *itself* is a final end that partially constitutes the good of the child. But, this kind of case seems extremely implausible. To see the implausibility, contrast the case with two others that seem far more plausible: a parent that beats her child because she mistakenly views the beating as a means to some genuinely good end for the child (e.g., discipline), and a parent that beats her child because she enjoys the sense of power that beating the child gives her. In the first of these cases, of course, there is no real difference from the harmful drug case—both are cases of taking a mistaken means to a genuinely good end, and so the relevant tendency in that case could count as love on Stump's view.¹¹³ In the second case, the inclination to beat the child would not count as love, but it would fail to do so not because of a mistake about which ends partially constitute the child's good, but rather because the child's good shows up nowhere in the parent's motivation. Rather, her motive is her own corrupt pleasure. Contrasted with these two more plausible cases—neither of which make Stump's point that a tendency toward things mistakenly viewed as part of a person's good could not count toward love—Stump's beating case seems very strange: who, in their right mind, would ever think that being beaten was a final end partially constitutive of a person's good? Given the implausibility of the case, Stump's view seems unsupported.

¹¹² Ibid., 94–95.

¹¹³ Indeed, she says as much in her footnote 62.

Nevertheless, despite its implausibility, the case raises a further problem for Stump's view: if she is willing to grant that mistakes about the *means* to the beloved's genuine good are compatible with love, why not also think that mistakes about the final ends constituting the beloved's good are, at least in principle, also compatible with love? For example, while it seems almost impossible to imagine, if a parent really did think that a child's being beaten was partially constitutive of his good—not as a means to some further end, but as a final end—and so beat him for that reason, I see no reason to doubt that the parent might genuinely love her child. Of course, the behavior would still be terrible and something we would want to put a stop to. But, it does seem possible that it could express a mistaken sort of love. Another more plausible example will suggest my point more strongly. Suppose a parent is convinced that a high degree of material comfort is part of his child's good and so he sets about providing such comfort for her. However, suppose further that such comfort is actually corrupting for the child in various ways and is not part of her objective good. In this case, although the parent would be mistaken in his view of the human good, and thus would actually be harming his child, it seems obvious to me that the parent's activity could still count as loving. After all, he is acting toward the child in a way that he thinks accomplishes her genuine good, despite the fact that he is mistaken about the content of that good. Thus, it seems best to think that mistakes even about the final ends constituting the beloved's good are compatible with love.

The upshot of this discussion, then, is that Stump's view seems incorrect. She seems correct that love *does* target the beloved's objective good—after all, we go for what is *really* good for the ones we love, not what merely seems good for them. Nevertheless, as the example of the parent that desires great material comfort for his child suggests, it is also clear that genuine

love may be consistent with mistakes about what that objective good consists in, as well as mistakes about the means to that good.¹¹⁴

2.4 SECOND TARGET: UNION WITH THE BELOVED

Love's second tendency, according to Aquinas, is "towards that to which [the lover] wishes some good," i.e., toward the beloved person himself. Aquinas's idea here seems to be that the lover's appetite is oriented toward a certain relation to the beloved, which he calls "real union."¹¹⁵ This real union—or simply "union," as I will call it—is a target of love that is distinct from love itself. If conditions are right, then union will be an effect of love. In describing real union Aquinas suggests that it involves the "presence" of the beloved¹¹⁶ and he says that the lover and beloved seek "...to live together, to speak together, and be united together in other like things."¹¹⁷ From these textual hints we can sketch a picture of the beloved's union with the lover that has several elements.¹¹⁸ I take it that each of the elements contributes to making two people

¹¹⁴ My verdict here leaves open the question of whether Stump has the right interpretation of Aquinas. While I cannot engage the interpretive point in depth here, let it suffice to say that I think she also reads Aquinas incorrectly on this point. In his discussion of the will it seems very clear that although the will inclines toward the good as its object, Aquinas thinks this claim is consistent with errors about what that good consists in. As he puts it, "...in order that the will tend to anything, it is requisite, not that this be good in very truth, but that it be apprehended as good. Wherefore the Philosopher says (Phys. ii. 3) that *the end is a good, or an apparent good*" (ST I-II, 8.1, emphasis original). Consider further the following passage: "...sometimes the will tends to something which is apprehended as good, and yet is not really good..." (ST I-II, 13.5 ad 2). Insofar as rational love is simply an orientation of the will toward some good, it seems Aquinas would endorse not Stump's view but rather the kind of view I have supported. Obviously, to show this clearly would require much more discussion, so I set the question aside.

¹¹⁵ ST I-II, 28.1. That Aquinas has in mind a certain relation to the beloved is evident from his discussion of the final or ultimate end of human beings, happiness. He suggests that happiness as the final human end may be understood in two ways. In the primary sense it is the "attainment or possession" of God, i.e., standing in a certain relationship of union with God. This, Aquinas says, is the "very essence of happiness." However, in a second and somewhat derivative sense, *God himself* may also be understood as the happiness of humans since God is its cause (ST I-II 3.1). Thus, when Aquinas says that love inclines toward the beloved person himself, he also means that love inclines toward a certain union with the beloved.

¹¹⁶ ST I-II, 28.1.

¹¹⁷ ST I-II, 28.1, ad 2.

¹¹⁸ My account below is informed by Eleonore Stump's insightful account of union in Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*, chap. 6. Her treatment of attentiveness and awareness was particularly helpful to me.

—lover and beloved—into a kind of “unity” or, as Robert Nozick might put it, a “we,”¹¹⁹ rather than merely two individuals.¹²⁰

First, union includes a pattern of mutual sharing of certain aspects of one’s mental life with the other, such as thoughts or feelings that matter to oneself. Thus, the lover seeks to share such aspects of her mental life with the beloved, and she seeks that the beloved reciprocally share with her. By referring to a “pattern” of mutual sharing, I do not mean that two people constantly share the relevant aspects of their mental lives with each other. Rather, I mean that two people have moments when they share things with each other, followed by (typically longer) periods when they do not. The point is that there are moments of such sharing in the ongoing interaction between the people. The *history* of such activity is part of the pattern.

Of course, mutual sharing comes in many different kinds. In some unions, lover and beloved might share thoughts about a mutually valued hobby and not much more. In others, they might share thoughts about personal relationships or work activity but they might not express feelings to one another. In still others they might express some of their feelings about certain topics to one another, but share little about their political or religious views. Moreover, the mode of sharing or expression is not limited to verbal communication. Insofar as physical affection can be a means of communication, it too can be an expression of one’s thoughts and feelings. In particular, acts of affection often communicate one’s thoughts and feelings *about the loved one*. For example, when we blow a kiss to someone, it communicates our attitude toward him. Depending on the relational context, it might tell him that we love him (or at least care about him), and that we want to be physically affectionate toward him, despite being separated in some way (e.g., being on the train as it pulls away from the station). In each of these cases, the mutual

¹¹⁹ Robert Nozick, “Love’s Bond,” in *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1989), 70ff.

¹²⁰ I take it as obvious that the two parties to a union *also* remain distinct individuals. In my view, ink has needlessly been spilled in the literature over this issue.

sharing—and so the union—would be different according to the subject matter, mode of communication, and freedom with which the two were willing to share. Typically, different kinds of sharing are appropriate to different kinds of relationships.

Second, union includes a pattern of mutual attentiveness. Mutual attentiveness is a state in which the lover is attentive to, or focuses attention on, the beloved, and the beloved is likewise attentive to the lover. Such attention involves both a persistent perception of the other and an effort to understand her. When one is attentive to another, one typically looks at him or listens to him, and one tries to grasp how he is. As for the case of mutual sharing, when I refer to a “pattern” of mutual attentiveness, I mean that there are moments of attentiveness in the ongoing interaction between two people and not that the two are constantly attentive to each other. The history of mutual attentiveness is also part of the pattern. In some unions, physical touch and affection are modes of attentiveness to the other. Just as being attentive typically involves visual and aural perception of the other, it can also involve perception of the other through touch. Sexual activity is a particularly focused and intense example of mutual attentiveness that (typically) involves physical touch.

The examples of the previous paragraph suggest that mutual attentiveness, like mutual sharing, comes in different kinds. Love for a young child might incline one to a mutual attentiveness instantiated in snuggling and reading a book together before bed. Love for an adult friend would typically incline toward mutual attentiveness of a different sort, perhaps including conversation and a hug before parting. Similarly, the mutual attentiveness sought out of love for one’s parent is different from that sought out of love for one’s romantic partner. Like different modes of mutual sharing, different modes of mutual attentiveness are appropriate to different kinds of relationships. Within the bounds of what is appropriate to various relationships, modes of mutual attentiveness also vary quite appropriately by personality and preference. For example,

some people might be more physically affectionate than others, and so their modes of attentiveness to those they love—their children, their friends, their romantic partners—would likely reflect this fact.

Third, in addition to mutual sharing and mutual attentiveness, the union toward which a lover tends includes a certain mutual knowledge or understanding, i.e., a state in which the lover knows the beloved and the beloved knows the lover. Such knowledge typically includes (among other things) knowledge of a person’s values, her likes and dislikes, her aims and goals, aspects of her history, as well as her current state of mind and body. Two people achieve this aspect of union when they “get” or understand each other in such ways. The sort of mutual knowledge toward which a lover tends might also have a physical aspect to it. This point is most evident in unions involving sexual intimacy. As suggested by traditional translations of certain biblical passages, to have sexual relations with someone can be, in part, to *know* him in a particular way.¹²¹ It can be to have a kind of knowledge of his body and physicality. This sort of sexual knowledge might be one aspect of the knowledge toward which a lover tends in tending toward union with the beloved, though, again, only in certain kinds of love.

Fourth, union includes mutual love. Of course, the lover already loves the beloved—this is what it is to be a lover. So, in practice, what the lover tends toward in tending toward union is that her love be requited—that the beloved love her in return. Thus, if union between lover and beloved is achieved, both parties also have a tendency toward the good of the other. Moreover, as a relationship between lover and beloved emerges and matures, and as the lover becomes increasingly committed to the beloved, part of the union that the lover seeks with the beloved includes the beloved’s reciprocal commitment to the lover. In Chapter Three (Section 3.3) I will argue that this sort of mutual commitment sought by the lover is a kind of mutual love in which

¹²¹ For example, the King James Version (KJV) of Genesis 4.1 states, “And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain.” Similarly, after the angel has announced to Mary that she will bear a child, she responds by saying, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” (Luke 1.34, KJV).

love's two tendencies are particularly firm or fixed. Given that I think such commitment is a kind of love, I do not view reciprocal commitment as an element of union wholly distinct from the reciprocal love toward which the lover tends.

Fifth and finally, the union toward which a lover tends includes a kind of mutual awareness. For example, suppose the lover sits alone in one room while the beloved sits alone in another. Each room has a hidden video camera and microphone focused on the person and a screen that allows each to see and hear the other by video. However, neither person is aware that she, herself, has a camera focused on her, or that the other person can see and hear her. In this case, there could be a kind of mutual attentiveness between lover and beloved—each might persistently perceive the other and try to understand how it is with the other—but it would not be the union toward which a lover tends. What is missing, here, is an *awareness* that the beloved is attentive to the lover. In addition to an awareness of their mutual attentiveness, the lover seeks a state in which each party is aware that the other is willing to share relevant aspects of her mental life, in which each party is aware that the each knows the other in relevant ways, and in which each party is aware of the other's love or commitment to her.

Given this account of union, we may understand joint activities engaged in by lover and beloved as having at least three relations to union. First, we may understand joint activity as an *instantiation* of union. In ideal cases, when we cook a meal, or go for a walk, work on a project, celebrate, or have a conversation with someone we love, we are attentive to each other, we share part of our mental life with each other, and we are mutually aware of these facts. Thus, such activity is an instantiation of these aspects of union. Joint activity that instantiates union may also be understood as an expression of love and commitment, insofar as union is one of love's targets. Similarly, joint activity that serves the good of the beloved—e.g., helping him move to a new apartment—can also be understood as an expression of love, and of love's tendency toward the

beloved's good in particular. But, insofar as mutual love partially constitutes union, such joint activity may also be understood, in the second place, as an *expression* of union, since it is an expression of the mutual love that partially constitutes union. Third, we may understand joint activity such as conversation as a means to knowledge of the other, and thus as a *means* to union. We share our thoughts or feelings, we describe what we have been doing, we talk about our aims and goals, we tell stories about our past, and in so doing we learn about each other and gain the knowledge that is partially constitutive of union.

2.5 EXCURSUS: AQUINAS ON “UNION OF AFFECTION”

Before leaving the topic of union, a final point of historical interpretation is in order. Specifically, to avoid confusion it is important to distinguish the “real union” I have described above from what Aquinas calls the “union of affection.” He says of the union of affection that “love itself is this union or bond.”¹²² Thus, the term ‘union of affection’ seems to be another way in which Aquinas talks about love itself. To understand this “union of affection” we must say slightly more about how he thinks love comes about. (I will treat this topic in further depth in Chapter Three.) As noted above, according to Aquinas love arises in the appetite in response to features of the world apprehended as good. Indeed, Aquinas views the apprehended good as a kind of cause of love—i.e., that in response to which love arises or is sustained. As he puts it, “good is the cause of love, as being its object. But good is not the object of the appetite, except as apprehended. And therefore love demands some apprehension of the good that is loved.”¹²³ In context, it is clear that Aquinas thinks a person must apprehend the object as good *in a particular sense* if she is to love it. Specifically, the respect in which the beloved is apprehended as good

¹²² ST I-II, 28.1.

¹²³ ST I-II, 27.2.

must also be a respect in which the beloved “fits with” or is “like” the lover,¹²⁴ such that the lover views the beloved as “one” with her.

The likeness or oneness that Aquinas has in mind, here, may be of two sorts. First, it may be that the lover recognizes in the beloved a valuable feature that she has in common with him—e.g., moral virtue, wit, family origin, or a history of interaction—and thus that she recognizes the beloved as like her, or one with her, in this respect.¹²⁵ Second, it may be that the lover recognizes in the beloved a valuable feature that she would like to have. Aquinas describes this as the apprehension of a likeness or oneness of “potentiality,” since the lover seeks what the beloved has, and thus seeks to possess it in actuality, or in “act.” As Aquinas puts it, “potentiality bears a *resemblance* to its act; since act is contained, in a manner, in the potentiality itself.”¹²⁶ According to Aquinas, then, we might say that love is sustained in response to (or depends upon) a recognized *capacity* for real union with the beloved, either because he has some good feature that the lover also has, or because he has some good feature that the lover would like to have.¹²⁷ In response to this recognized capacity for real union, the lover’s appetite orients toward real union with the beloved. Put another way, the lover recognizes the beloved as “another self”—a mirror of either who the lover actually is, or who the lover would like to be—and sets about integrating the beloved with the self to some degree, via real union with him. Hence love’s tendency toward real union.

Now, the orientation of the appetite toward the beloved’s capacity for real union is what Aquinas calls the “union of affection.”¹²⁸ Evidently, he views it as a kind of union in itself.

¹²⁴ See ST I-II, 27.3.

¹²⁵ In Aquinas’s language, the two share a single Aristotelian “form”, and so are “one in that form.” See ST I-II, 27.3.

¹²⁶ ST I-II, 27.3, emphasis mine.

¹²⁷ I will take up whether this account is adequate in Chapter Three.

¹²⁸ See ST I-II, 28.1 and II-II, 27.2.

Obviously, then, “union of affection” is just another way of talking about the “complacency” of the appetite in good, or about love itself—the orientation of the appetite toward an object apprehended as good.

2.6 THE RELATION BETWEEN LOVE’S TARGETS

That love tends toward two targets—the good of the beloved and union with him—raises the question of the relationship between them. Under many circumstances, union with the beloved is simply part of the beloved’s good toward which the lover tends.¹²⁹ For example, a loving father’s union with his child is typically part of the child’s good toward which he tends. However, there are also circumstances in which union with the beloved is not part of the good of the beloved, in which case the two targets conflict. Shakespeare’s *Pericles* provides a dramatic example. Pericles and his pregnant wife, Thaisa, are sailing for Tyre so that Pericles may inherit the throne of Tyre. However, a storm whips up and the tumult sends Thaisa into labor. Although her daughter, Marina, is delivered safely at sea, Thaisa dies in childbirth. Distraught, Pericles heads for the nearest coastline out of fear that his newborn might not survive the remainder of the trip to Tyre without nursing. Once ashore, Pericles leaves Marina with Cleon, a friend, whom he charges with raising his daughter until he can return for her.¹³⁰ Here, Pericles’s union with Marina is incompatible with her good: if he seeks union with her she will die. In Pericles’s case, the incompatibility of Marina’s good and union with her is only temporary: Pericles can eventually return for her. However, it is also easy to imagine cases in which union is permanently incompatible with the good of the beloved, such as when a lover must give her life for the beloved’s sake. Such sacrifices are a common element of tragic drama.

¹²⁹ Stump makes this point. See Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*, 96.

¹³⁰ William Shakespeare, “Pericles,” in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, The Shakespeare Head Press, Oxford (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1994), Act III, Scene 3.

From cases in which love's targets conflict it is evident that, in genuine love, the beloved's good has a certain priority over union with him. It seems patently unloving for a person to insist on realizing union with another despite the fact that such union is not part of the beloved's good. For example, it would be unloving for Pericles to insist that Marina remain with him on the ship despite the fact that she would die.

Importantly, the temporary or permanent incompatibility of union and the beloved's good need not imply that the lover ceases to *tend* toward both targets, and thus that the lover ceases to love the beloved. For example, Pericles may still tend toward union with Marina, even though such union is temporarily blocked. Thus, lovers may still love in such cases. It is just that the impossibility of realizing one of love's targets (union) will make them cases of frustrated love, to one degree or another.

Finally, the fact that the lover typically views union as part of the beloved's good does not mean we can collapse love's two tendencies into one tendency toward the good of the beloved. Why not? Because the lover must view union with the beloved not only as part of the beloved's good but also as a distinct target toward which she tends. If this were not the case, i.e., if the lover only viewed union with the beloved as the realization of part of the beloved's good, it seems the lover's tendency toward union with the beloved would be instrumental: the lover would tend toward union only as a means to, or part of, the beloved's good. But, this would be odd since it seems essential to love that the lover tends toward union as a good in its own right. Put another way, the lover tends toward union also as a good *for herself*—not just for the beloved—and as good *because of what it is*—not just because of what it might achieve (i.e., the beloved's good).¹³¹ My point, then, is that the two tendencies of love are distinct and essential constituents of love. The targets of these tendencies are both final goods at which the lover aims

¹³¹ Robert Adams makes a similar point. See Robert M. Adams, "Pure Love," in *The Virtue of Faith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 190.

—goods that she views as good because of what they are and not merely because of some further thing they achieve. That they are so is unchanged by the fact that the lover typically understands union with the beloved as *also* part of the beloved’s good.

2.7 LOVE IS NOT OCCURRENT DESIRE

Thus far, I have explained and tried to defend Aquinas’s view of the two targets toward which love tends: the good of the beloved and union with him. In this section I will begin to shift my focus to the nature of the specific tendencies or attitudes that a lover has toward these targets, which attitudes I take to partially constitute love.

A natural suggestion here would be to understand love as two *desires*—one for the good of the beloved, and one for union with the beloved.¹³² As noted above, Stump takes this view, which she attributes to Aquinas.¹³³ However, it seems quite common to love someone and yet fail to experience persistent desires of this sort. David Velleman raises an objection in this vein, as follows:

Certainly, love for my children leads me to promote their interests almost daily; yet when I think of other people I love—parents, brothers, friends, former teachers and students—I do not think of myself as an agent of their interests. I would of course do them a favor if asked, but in the absence of some such occasion for benefiting them, I have no continuing or recurring desire to do so.¹³⁴

¹³² Such a view would be consistent with certain views of romantic love in the psychological literature. For example, Acevedo et al. offer the following claims as part of their interpretation of a recent fMRI study of the neural correlates of long-term romantic love: “Recruitment of the mesolimbic dopamine system, which mediates reward and motivation, is consistent with notions of romantic love as a ‘desire for union with another’.” Bianca P. Acevedo et al., “Neural Correlates of Long-Term Intense Romantic Love,” *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 7, no. 2 (2012): 154. As noted in the introduction, Harry Frankfurt also holds that love consists of a complex of desires. See Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, esp. ch. 2. However, it seems Frankfurt does not have in mind an attitude that is affective in any way. Rather, he seems to have in mind “volitional desire”, whereby all that is meant is an attitude that motivates action. No affective qualities are implied.

¹³³ Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*, Chapter 5. I doubt very strongly that Aquinas holds such a view, though it depends, of course, on exactly what Stump means by ‘desire’, which she does not explain. As noted above, according to Aquinas human love is, strictly speaking, a kind of orientation of the appetite toward the beloved object. As Aquinas sees it, desire (*cupiditas* or *desiderium*) may result from this orientation of the appetite, but it is a further downstream effect of love and not part of what constitutes love itself. See ST I-II 26.1, I-II 26.1 ad 2, 26.2, and 26.2 ad 3.

¹³⁴ Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” 353.

Before interpreting Velleman's objection, it is worth pausing and reflecting briefly on the notion of "desire", since it is often used in different ways. First, desires are typically motivational—they are generally understood as precursors and movers to action. Second, the notion "desire" may or may not imply some affect that accompanies its motivational character. For example, I might say that I "want," one day, to buy a house without implying that I experience some sort of affect or feeling toward that end. Such desires without affect are sometimes called "volitional desires" or "volitions." However, if I say that I want the piece of chocolate cake in front of me, or that I desire someone sexually, there is typically a certain affect associated with the basic motivational attitude I am referring to. Third, we can distinguish "occurrent" desires from "dispositional" or "standing" desires. Occurrent desires are desires that one *experiences* in some way, i.e., that are in the foreground of one's mental life. Dispositional or standing desires are desires that are typically latent, but that become occurrent under the right conditions (e.g., an occasion for benefiting someone you love). Thus, we might say that such desires are *dispositions* to desire in an occurrent sense. There may be both occurrent and standing volitional desires, and occurrent and standing affective desires: the two distinctions are orthogonal to each other.¹³⁵

Now, in the objection above I interpret Velleman as using the word 'desire' to refer to an occurrent desire, i.e., a desire that a person *experiences* as motivational. The desire does not seem to be a dispositional or standing desire, since his talk of a "recurring desire" would not make sense if that were his meaning. Whether he has in mind an affective or volitional desire does not seem clear and is likely unimportant to the objection.

Velleman's target here is an account on which love is (or "entails," as he puts it) a desire to *benefit* the beloved, which is different from the account I am entertaining, according to which love is, in part, a desire for *the good* of the beloved. Nevertheless, the basic worry remains the

¹³⁵ The notion of "desire" is very complicated and there is obviously much more that could be said. However, sustained discussion here would take me too far afield, so I set the issue aside.

same: insofar as there are many cases in which we fail to experience persistent desires of the relevant sort—either to benefit someone, or for her good—and yet in which we persistently love the person, it seems false that love partially consists in such desires. We might raise a parallel objection to the idea that love partially consists in an occurrent desire for union with the beloved: there are many cases in which we consistently love someone, and yet do not experience a consistent desire for union with him. Incidentally, Velleman’s objection seems to apply equally well to the view that love is a kind of occurrent emotion: insofar as we often consistently love people without consistently feeling any particular emotion, it seems love could not be a particular occurrent emotion.¹³⁶

2.8 LOVE IS NOT STANDING INTENTION

In response to this objection, a Thomist might shift to the view that love partially consists in two standing desires, or perhaps two standing intentions, rather than two occurrent desires. I will consider first the idea that love might consist in two standing intentions and return to the idea of love as standing desires in the next section. By ‘standing intention’ I mean an intention that is something like a policy or plan. On this picture, the objects of the standing intentions—the beloved’s good, and union with the beloved—would be understood as the lover’s *ends*. Standing intentions aimed at general ends like these do not issue in action until particular circumstances arise such that the general standing intentions are given particular content. For example, when your partner is out of town we may suppose that you continue to love him, and so that your general standing intention toward union with him would remain in place. However, since circumstances preclude spending time together (or even communicating, let us suppose), the standing intention would not necessarily issue in any particular action; rather, it might simply

¹³⁶ Interestingly, this point seems particularly worrying for Velleman since he, himself, holds the view that love is a “moral emotion”. However, it is not clear what he means by “emotion” from the paper, and so it is not clear that this objection would really cause problems for his view.

stand ready to produce action at some other time. When your partner returned and circumstances allowed, your general standing intention toward union with him might well be expressed through a more particular intention to do something together (e.g., to see a movie or to share a meal), followed by the relevant action. We can imagine parallel cases for the standing intention toward the good of the beloved: such a general intention does not issue in action unless circumstances arise in which beneficence is necessary. So, unless your partner needs something that you can provide, your standing intention toward her good will simply stand ready to produce action at another time. Niko Kolodny holds a view in the neighborhood of this proposal, whereby love partially consists of a standing intention to act in the beloved's interest, and a standing intention to act in the interests of the relationship between lover and beloved.¹³⁷

This kind of account would avoid Velleman's objection above, since standing intentions are not occurrent in the way that Velleman's notion of "desire" seems to suggest. Thus, if we do not constantly experience a desire for the good of and union with the people we love, that fact need not indicate that we lack the standing intentions of love. Of course, such an account would also be consistent with the idea that we *do* sometimes experience occurrent desires for the good of, or union with, the beloved—in general or particular ways. We might, then, speak of desires as possible but not necessary *effects* of the two general standing intentions that partially constitute love.¹³⁸

However, the account of love as standing intentions also seems problematic. The main problem centers around the idea that I cannot intend things that seem impossible for me to effect. For example, it might be part of my beloved's good to obtain a promotion at work, and yet there be nothing I could do to bring the promotion about. Nevertheless, my love for her involves some

¹³⁷ See Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship," 151.

¹³⁸ As noted above, Aquinas seems to think of the relation between love and desire in this way. See ST I-II 26.2 and 26.2 ad 3.

motivational tendency or attitude toward the promotion, since it is part of her good. Or, suppose someone I love is sick and there is nothing I can do to help her recover. Nevertheless, my love for her involves some motivational attitude toward her recovery. In such cases, our attitude could not be a standing intention, since the outcomes partially constituting her good—promotion or recovery—could not be our ends.

There are, of course, parallel cases in which aspects of union with the beloved are impossible to effect. For example, suppose my spouse of many years has severe dementia. Although I can still sit with her and experience her physical presence, she is no longer capable of union with me, since she cannot know me or be attentive to me in the ways partially constitutive of union. Nevertheless, if I love her I will still have some motivational attitude toward union with her. In this case, aspects of union with the beloved would be impossible for the lover to effect, and so it seems love could not partially consist in a standing intention toward those aspects of union with her, and so toward union in general.

Love for someone who has died is the most extreme case in this vein. Realizing union with a deceased person might seem entirely impossible, as might furthering his good in any way. Given Aquinas's view that love is a twofold tendency, and given that love for dead people seems possible—even for those who think realizing love's targets with respect to the deceased is impossible—it seems love cannot consist of standing intentions toward the good of and union with the beloved.

2.9 LOVE AS TWOFOLD TENDENCY OF WILL

In light of these objections, I claim with Aquinas that love partially consists neither in two occurrent desires nor in two standing intentions, but rather in an orientation or tendency of

the will¹³⁹ toward love's two targets.¹⁴⁰ More specifically, I take this tendency of will to be the source of a range of different attitudes sometimes associated with love, including occurrent desires, intentions, and emotions (the last of which which I will discuss in the next section). Thus, love has something of the character of a standing desire insofar as it gives rise to specific occurrent desires. But, it also has something of the character of a standing intention, since it also gives rise to specific intentions. In the end, then, it seems that love is neither standing desires nor standing intentions but a more basic orientation or tendency of the will distinct from them both.¹⁴¹

By calling love a “tendency” I mean to appropriate Aquinas's sense of this notion whereby to claim that something has a tendency is to claim that it performs some characteristic activity unless it is interfered with.¹⁴² So, to say that love is a tendency of the will is to say that love is a condition of the will such that, in the right circumstances, the will desires or intends in

¹³⁹ Strictly speaking, I take it that love could also be an orientation or tendency of the sensory appetite, though the account would have to be slightly different in that case. For example, I take it that the sensory appetite is not capable of intending things as the will is. Thus, for simplicity I will set aside the sensory appetite for the time being, though I will return to it in Chapter Three.

¹⁴⁰ Aquinas seems to hold the view that the lover's tendency toward the two targets is a kind of wish. See ST I-II 26.4. The verb there translated “wish”—*velle*—may be variously translated “wish”, “want”, or “will”. On Michael Sherwin's reading, this verb as used by Aquinas picks out the will's most primal activity. See Michael S. Sherwin, *By Knowledge & By Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 31. Although it is not clear that in ST I-II 26.4 by “*velle*” Aquinas means to include objects of willing that are impossible to achieve (as the view I advocate does), such a reading of Aquinas certainly seems plausible. For example, in ST I-II 13.5 ad 1 Aquinas contrasts the complete act of the will, which must be in respect of an object that is possible to achieve (i.e., a genuine end), with the incomplete act of the will, which he describes as follows: “But the incomplete act of the will is in respect of the impossible; and by some is called ‘velleity,’ because, to wit, one would will [*vellet*] such a thing, were it possible.” My idea, then, is that Aquinas holds the view that to love is to wish (*velle*) for two general objects, certain particular aspects of which may or may not be possible for the lover to bring about. As is evident from ST I-II 26.4, Aquinas attributes his view of love as wishes, ultimately, to Aristotle (*Rhetoric* ii.4).

¹⁴¹ This idea might seem frustrating to some readers, since I have not analyzed love in terms of particular attitudes that are part of our standard repertoire of psychological concepts. By calling love a “source” of intentions, desires, and emotions, you might say I've only *located* love with respect to these more familiar attitudes. However, this result does not necessarily suggest that my account is problematic. Indeed, I think instead that it suggests that the standard English repertoire of psychological concepts is inadequate for my task, and that the wider repertoire available to the medievals (or at least to Aquinas) is better suited to the job.

¹⁴² Here I draw on Peter Geach's reading of Aquinas's notion of a “tendency” in Peter Geach, “Aquinas,” in *Three Philosophers: Aristotle, Aquinas, Frege*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and Peter Geach (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1961), 101–109.

particular ways unless it is interfered with.¹⁴³ Importantly, the notion of something's having a tendency is not that it has a mere potentiality. As Peter Geach puts it, "A piece of soft wax in London has the potentiality of assuming any number of shapes, but it has no particular *tendency* to take, e.g., the shape of a Birmingham man's thumbprint."¹⁴⁴ Tendencies are more active than mere potentialities: they describe what a thing *does* in the absence of interference, not merely something that might *happen* to a thing under certain circumstances.¹⁴⁵

It will help to describe the two tendencies partially constitutive of love in more detail, including the conditions under which the relevant activity occurs. Consider first the tendency toward the beloved's good. This tendency amounts to a conditional tendency as follows: if (1) circumstances arise in which some aspect of the beloved's good is lacking or threatened, and (2) it seems possible for the lover to remedy the situation, and (3) it seems appropriate for the lover to do so, then the lover will gain a particular intention to do so. If condition (1) holds but condition (2) or, in some cases, condition (3), fails, then the lover will gain a particular desire to do so, but not an intention. This formulation requires further explanation.

First, according to (1), if the lover is to intend or desire some particular aspect of the beloved's good, it must be that the thing is either lacking or threatened. If there is no lack or threat, then the lover's general orientation toward the good of the beloved will simply stand in the background of the lover's mental life, ready to produce particular intentions or desires at another time. Second, according to (2), if the lover is to intend some particular aspect of the beloved's good, the lover must think it possible for her to effect it. If she does *not* think it

¹⁴³ What might interfere with the loving tendency of the will? Perhaps strong desires alien to the love, such as those associated with drug addiction or a powerful temptation.

¹⁴⁴ Geach, "Aquinas," 104, emphasis mine.

¹⁴⁵ This distinction between tendencies (which are active) and mere potentialities (which may be passive) also accounts for my preference for "tendency" over "disposition." It seems to me that "disposition" is ambiguous between an active sense resembling "tendency" and a passive sense resembling mere "potentiality." Windows have a disposition to break (or, perhaps more correctly, to *be* broken) under certain conditions, but they do not have an active tendency to do so.

possible for her to effect it, then her love will not give rise to an intention to do so; rather, it will simply produce a particular desire for the thing.

Finally, if we suppose that conditions (1) and (2) hold, then according to (3), if effecting the relevant aspect of the beloved's good seems all-things-considered appropriate to the lover, then she will intend it. However, if the lover does not deem it all-things-considered appropriate, then she may or may not intend it, depending on whether she suffers from weakness of will. I take the following two examples to be typical illustrations of what I have in mind here. Suppose it is genuinely part of your beloved's good that he obtain a promotion, and that the only way you could effect this promotion would be by blackmailing his boss. If you thought blackmailing his boss was *not*, all things considered, appropriate, then it seems likely that you would not intend to bring about the promotion. Rather, you would merely desire your beloved's promotion. Similarly, suppose your friend is at odds with his mother and that it would be a genuine aspect of his good to be reconciled to her. Suppose further that you could step in and smooth things over for them. Nevertheless, it might seem inappropriate for you to step in: you might think your friend should really patch things up himself.¹⁴⁶ In that case, despite your love for him, and despite the fact that you *could* effect the reconciliation, you likely *would* not intend or do it since you think it is inappropriate. Instead, your love for him would simply give rise to a particular desire for their reconciliation.

However, despite what I take to be the typical character of these examples, it seems quite possible that a lover might nevertheless intend the blackmail or intend the reconciliatory

¹⁴⁶ You might think this because it would be better for him—i.e., part of his good—if he patched things up himself. In that case, it would not be that some separate norm of appropriateness kept you from intervening, but rather that intervening would just not be part of his good. In that case, condition (2) would rule out your action: you would not really be able to bring about the beloved's good under the circumstances—or, at least, not his complete good. However, it could also be that you think he should patch things up himself because your intervening would be poking your nose too far into your friend's business—whether or not doing so is good for him. In that case, a distinct norm of appropriateness would keep you from intervening, i.e., condition (3) would rule out your action. I am thinking of the case according to the latter construal, rather than according to the former.

intervention even in the face of her judgments that such acts would be inappropriate. Such might be the case if the lover were weak of will.¹⁴⁷ Thus, condition (3) does not imply that if the relevant act does *not* seem all-things-considered appropriate to the lover that she will thereby fail to intend it, though this seems to me to be the typical case.

Importantly, I take the all-things-considered appropriateness criterion here to be subjective. In other words, I am not claiming that the intentions of love are contingent on the objective (e.g., moral) appropriateness of some act. Indeed, I think love can be at odds with objective norms of appropriateness, such as morality. For example, in some cases love might well drive someone to judge that blackmailing a boss is appropriate. And, it might well be that you find effecting your friend's reconciliation completely appropriate, and that your love motivates you to do it, even if such an act would not, in fact, be appropriate.

Love's tendency toward union with the beloved has a form that is parallel to the tendency toward his good. The orientation of the will toward union amounts to the following conditional tendency: if (1) an opportunity to effect or preserve some aspect of union with the beloved arises, and (2) it seems possible for the lover to act in the relevant way, and (3) it seems appropriate for the lover to do so, then the lover will gain a particular intention to do so. If condition (1) holds but condition (2) or, in some cases, condition (3) fails, then the lover will gain a particular desire to do so, but not an intention. If no opportunity arises (i.e., if condition (1) fails) then the general tendency toward union will simply remain in the background.

The appropriateness condition on intending some aspect of the beloved's good, or union with the beloved, suggests a typical way to distinguish kinds of love, namely, by the particular ends that it would be appropriate for a lover to intend and act for. These ends, and so kinds of love, typically vary with different kinds of relationships. So, while it might be inappropriate for you to step in and resolve your friend's familial conflict as an expression of your love, it might

¹⁴⁷ I owe this observation to Gavin Lawrence.

be perfectly appropriate for you to do something quite similar for your young child (say, in a conflict with his sister). This is because the portion of your young child's good that it is appropriate for you to make your end is much broader than that of your friend, given that your friend is an autonomous adult while your child is not. This is one way to distinguish parental love from love for a friend. Similarly, the particular end of intimate physical and sexual activity—indicative of a romantic relationship—distinguishes romantic love from other kinds of love, such as love for one's own children, one's own parents, or a mere friend or colleague. This end of intimate physical and sexual activity is a specification of love's general tendency toward union with the beloved and gives particular romantic content to that tendency.¹⁴⁸

To complete the explanation of love's two tendencies, consider again the case of love for a person who has died. According to my account, the lover would have a twofold orientation of the will: toward union with the beloved and toward the good of the beloved. In this case, the lover *might* think some sort of union with the beloved was still possible, or that his good was still possible to effect in some way. For example, the lover might think putting flowers at the beloved's grave was a way of preserving union with him, or that taking care of his surviving children was a way that she could further his good. In that case, the lover might intend such acts. However, as noted above, if the lover took it to be impossible to effect union or the good of the beloved in any way, then her love would not give rise to any intentions. However, her love might well give rise to certain particular desires from time to time. If the lover was somehow reminded of the deceased beloved, her love might produce a particular desire for particular aspects of union with him—to have a conversation with him, to embrace him, etc. Similarly, the general tendency of will toward the deceased beloved's good might sometimes give rise to certain particular desires. For example, if the deceased beloved were a parent, and if his still living child

¹⁴⁸ This approach to distinguishing kinds of love fits with traditional Greek distinctions between *philia*—love between friends—*eros*—typically, a love with sexual aims—and *storge*—a love born of familiarity, typified by parental love. See C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harvest/HBJ, 1960).

were getting married, one might desire that he could be alive to see the event because it would be part of his good. On this picture, then, particular intentions and desires may arise as a result of love's general tendencies of the will, but such particular intentions and desires do not, themselves, constitute love. Rather, it is the general orientation or tendency of the will toward the good of and union with the beloved that partially constitutes love.

2.10 LOVE AND EMOTION

As noted above, Velleman's objection to the view that love is a kind of occurrent desire seems to apply also to the view that love is a kind of occurrent emotion: it seems we often consistently love people without persistently experiencing any *particular* feeling or feelings.¹⁴⁹ Thus, I reject the view that love, itself, is a particular emotion, or collection of emotions.¹⁵⁰

Nevertheless, love does seem importantly associated with emotion. If a lover consistently failed to feel any emotion in connection with her love for someone, we would either want an explanation of the failure or we would question whether she really loved the person. Thus, in my view, in addition to particular intentions and desires, the two tendencies of love also give rise, under certain conditions, to particular emotions we typically associate with love. For example, when my daughter whom I love is very sick, I feel anxious. When my spouse whom I love is sad, I frequently feel sad too. Or when my friend moves away, I might feel lonely. Conversely, when

¹⁴⁹ The philosophy of emotions exhibits one of the most divergent range of views in the discipline of philosophy. For example, I concede that there might well be an account of emotion according to which the account of love I have just given—i.e., love as tendencies of the will—entails that love is an emotion. Indeed, given that Aquinas calls sensory love a passion and rational love a passion “in a wider and extended sense” (ST I-II, 26.2), one might be tempted to think he simply views both kinds of love as emotions. However, it is far from obvious that our concept of “emotion” is the same as Aquinas's concept of “passion.” Indeed, Thomas Dixon has pointed out that there are reasons for denying it. See Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). In any case, in order to make the discussion tractable, here I make the perhaps flat-footed assumption that emotions are affective and felt (or at least experienced) in some way.

¹⁵⁰ This sort of view seems consistent with recent views of love in social psychology. For example, Aron and Aron have suggested that romantic love is not an emotion. Rather, “romantic love is a goal-directed state that leads to varied emotions.” Arthur Aron et al., “Reward, Motivation, and Emotion Systems Associated with Early-Stage Intense Romantic Love,” *Journal of Neurophysiology* 94 (2005): 328.

my daughter recovers from her sickness I might feel relieved; when my spouse is happy again, I might feel content; or when my friend comes for a visit, I might feel joy. These emotions are natural deliverances of love in situations where the targets of love's tendencies—the beloved's good, and union with the beloved—are either frustrated or realized in some aspect and degree. In light of these cases, it might seem promising to suggest that love partially consists in a tendency toward the range of emotions I have just indicated.¹⁵¹ Indeed, Kolodny holds this kind of view.¹⁵²

Such a view seems plausible as far as it goes. However, it seems very difficult to spell out the relevant tendency to emotion in any great detail. For example, must one *always* feel sad or lonely when union with the beloved is thwarted in some way? It seems quite plausible that one might feel sad or lonely for a period if a dear friend moved away. But after a while one adjusts and one's emotions subside, despite the fact that one still loves the friend. In short, it seems relatively easy to imagine exceptions and counter-examples to the sort of tendency I have suggested, and difficult to come up with a tendency that fares any better. This result seems attributable, in part, to the fact that the affective make-up of different people varies quite widely—from relatively passionate to relatively stoic—and so it seems the emotions associated with love vary accordingly.

Given the possibility of such variation, I propose the more moderate preliminary view that certain emotions are typical but contingent effects of love under certain circumstances, perhaps those resembling (but not limited to) the circumstances sketched above. Of course, this proposal is far from a complete account of the relation between love and emotion. Nevertheless, it at least locates emotion relative to the account of love I am defending here.

¹⁵¹ On some views a tendency toward certain feelings might just be an emotion. Thus, again, it should be emphasized that I am greatly simplifying the view of emotion in play in order to make the discussion tractable.

¹⁵² However, Kolodny uses the language of “disposition” rather than “tendency.” See Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 151–152.

2.11 CASES LACKING ONE OF LOVE'S TENDENCIES?

I will now turn to an objection to my account of love. Velleman has raised a second objection to a desire-account of love that might seem also to threaten my view that love consists of a twofold tendency of the will. He suggests that “troublemaking relations” are examples of people you cannot stand to be with, yet whom you might well love. He writes, “This meddling aunt, cranky grandfather, smothering parent, or overcompetitive sibling is dearly loved, loved freely and with feeling: one just has no desire for his or her company.”¹⁵³ To aim the objection more clearly at my view, suppose an opportunity for union with some such troublemaking relation arises, such as a family holiday gathering. Suppose further that the behavior of this relation is such that it is either impossible or inappropriate for me to attend the gathering. On my view, we could understand why I would not *intend* to be with the relative, despite my love for him: it would be impossible or inappropriate to act in that way. Nevertheless, according to my view, if I loved him I would still have a desire to be with him, and perhaps also a desire that his behavior be different, thereby making it possible or appropriate to attend. (It seems likely I would also have a conflicting desire *not* to attend the gathering.) This, according to Velleman, would be where my view goes wrong: I might love the troublesome relation and yet fail to have any desire whatsoever (even a conflicted one) to attend the gathering. If so, the objection seems to suggest that there are cases of love in which we do not exhibit any tendency of will toward union with the beloved.

Could there be cases of love like this? I don't think so. Velleman's case of the troublesome relative does not seem to fit the bill. If I do not even have a conflicted desire to be with the relative under the circumstances described above, it is hard to see what would make this a case of love. Perhaps the idea is that I might still have a tendency of will toward the good of the

¹⁵³ Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” 353.

relative, and that this would be enough for the case to count as love. However, in that case I seem at best more like a distant benefactor of the relative than someone who loves him.

Perhaps the New Testament picture of love for one's neighbor could be the model for a kind of love lacking any tendency toward union.¹⁵⁴ The parable of the Good Samaritan, who helps an injured Jew on the road to Jericho, is typically taken as a paradigm of love for neighbors.¹⁵⁵ In that case it might seem that the Samaritan merely had a tendency toward the good of the Jew and not toward union with him.

However, I think it is a mistake to understand love for neighbors as lacking any tendency toward union. Love for neighbors tends toward a union characterized by living at least part of one's life in the society of at least some neighbors. Such a union involves being around and interacting with one's neighbors. If the Good Samaritan had lacked a tendency toward this sort of union, he likely would not have been in a position to help his injured fellow traveler in the way that he did. I take it that the central point of the parable is that even strangers (or, in the case of the Jew and the Samaritan, traditional enemies) may be neighbors. If one wished only for the company of those one knew, or those with whom one had a special relationship of some sort—even if one had the opportunity to live part of life among strangers—then, on my view, one would fail to love one's neighbors. Granted, the union aimed at in the case of the Good Samaritan is very thin. Indeed, the Samaritan's neighborly love for the Jew did not even include a tendency toward union with and the good of *that particular Jew* prior to encountering him, though he did have particular desires and intentions to interact with and help that Jew once he came across him. Nevertheless, the Samaritan seems to have had a tendency toward the good of and union with his neighbors in general, of whom the Jew was one. Obviously, much more

¹⁵⁴ E.g., Matthew 22.39, Mark 12.31, Luke 10.27, Galatians 5.14, and James 2.8. Love of neighbor has its origin in the Hebrew Bible at Leviticus 19.18.

¹⁵⁵ Luke 10.29-37.

should be said in spelling out the view of love for neighbors that I have gestured at here.¹⁵⁶

However, the point for my present purposes is that love for a neighbor *does* partially consist in a tendency toward a kind of union with one's neighbor. Thus, love for neighbors does not seem to be a case of love lacking a tendency toward union, and so it does not pose a problem for my view.

The difficulty of imagining a case of love that lacks any tendency toward union seems exceeded by the difficulty of imagining a case of love that lacks any tendency toward the beloved's good. Return, for a moment, to the case of Pericles, who must temporarily forego union with his infant daughter Marina for the sake of her survival. Here, Pericles's tendency of will toward Marina's good issued in a particular intention to bring her to shore and to leave her in the company of a friend who could care for her. However, suppose, instead, that Pericles's love for Marina was such that he was only concerned for his union with her, and that he cared nothing for her good, i.e., that he had no tendency of will toward her good. In that case, Pericles might not have made for shore—thereby threatening Marina's life—and if he did make for shore it would have been *solely* because tending to Marina's needs would have been a means to future union with her. But, tending toward the good of the beloved as a merely instrumental target seems contrary to love: genuine lovers tend toward the good of those they love as a *final* good, something worth realizing because of what it is and not merely because of what else it might achieve. Could Pericles genuinely be understood to love Marina in such a case? I don't think so. And I don't think cases in which one lacks any tendency toward the good of a neighbor or a troublesome relative fare any better. Thus, I take it that tendencies of will toward the good of the beloved and union with him are partially constitutive of love.

¹⁵⁶ Indeed, I hope to say much more in future work.

2.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have defended part of a broadly Thomist account of human love—love for humans, by humans. Specifically, I have argued that such love partially consists of two tendencies of the will—one toward the good of the beloved and one toward union with him. I claimed that union includes five elements: patterns of mutual sharing and attentiveness between lover and beloved, mutual knowledge or understanding of lover and beloved, mutual love between lover and beloved, and mutual awareness of these activities and states. I claimed that the desires, intentions, and emotions often associated with love are best thought of as downstream effects of love. On my account, then, love is a *source* of such attitudes and is distinct from them.

In light of this account we can see more clearly the sense in which love is an active attitude related to our agency. Love is the origin of great swaths of human action. It is the source of the desires and intentions that move us to the service and presence of those we care about. Indeed, if we include self-love, for some of us love may be at the root of most things we do—our work, our leisure, our social life, and our solitude. Love, then, plays a crucial role in human agency.

In this chapter I gestured at the causes of love in my explanation of Aquinas’s notion of “union of affection” (Section 2.5). In Chapter Three I will continue my account of love by offering a more thorough explanation and defense of love’s constitutive causes, or operative grounds, as I will call them. Together, Chapters Two and Three will amount to my complete account of human love, which will serve as part of the philosophical groundwork necessary for achieving the two aims of the dissertation: to point out the central problem with Augustine’s argument that we should love all people equally, and to give an account of why we should love some people more than others.

CHAPTER 3 – THE OPERATIVE GROUNDS OF LOVE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Two I began an account of human love: love for humans, by humans. In that chapter I argued that love partially consists of a twofold orientation or tendency of the will. However, the presence of this attitude is, itself, not sufficient for love. For example, if one believed that it was one's duty to seek union with a person and his good (where possible and appropriate), one might gain the two tendencies on that basis. Nevertheless, these tendencies would not amount to love because of their source in, or dependence upon, a sense of duty. This example suggests that the two tendencies of love must have a particular source or dependence if they are to count as love. In this chapter I will complete my account of love by explaining and defending the view that the two tendencies of love—if they are to partially constitute love—must depend upon the lover's apprehension of the beloved as good in a particular sense—i.e., as apt or fitting for the lover, given the lover's values and sensibility.

This view that the attitudes of love depend upon a kind of apprehended value in the beloved puts me at odds with those who claim, on the contrary, that the value of the beloved

depends upon the attitude of love, and that love in fact generates or *bestows* value on the beloved.¹⁵⁷ Thus, in this chapter I will reject such “bestowal” views, arguing that the intuitions that such views are meant to explain are in fact better explained by my view that love depends upon apprehended value. In the penultimate section of the chapter (Section 3.6) I will briefly discuss the nature of love’s dependence upon apprehended value, i.e., whether it is rational or merely causal. Although I will not defend a specific view of this dependence, inspired by Aquinas I will speculate that the dependence may be merely causal in some cases and rational in others.

3.2 LOVE’S OPERATIVE GROUNDS: OBJECTS APPREHENDED AS GOOD

As explained in Chapter Two (Section 2.5), Aquinas claims that the cause of love—i.e., that in response to which love arises or is sustained—is an object apprehended by the lover as good *in a particular sense*. I suggested that, on Aquinas’s account, the particular goodness recognized by the lover amounts to a capacity for union with the beloved, either because he has some good feature that the lover also has, or because he has some good feature that the lover would like to have.

While Aquinas’s account seems correct as far as it goes, it may need to be supplemented by the possibility that love could be sustained by a feature that the lover simply finds pleasing in some way, and not necessarily a feature that she has or would like to have. So, for example, someone’s love for a person might, in part, be a response to her intellectual ability or athletic talent. However, it might also be the case that the lover himself does not share such abilities or talents and does not necessarily desire them either. Nevertheless, he appreciates them in the beloved, and so he loves her. Aquinas might reply that the lover must either possess or want such

¹⁵⁷ Irving Singer and especially Harry Frankfurt hold such a view. See Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, 38–39. and Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love, Vol. 1: Plato to Luther*, Irving Singer Library (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 3–22.

qualities in some degree if he is to be able to appreciate them in the way necessary for love. And Aquinas might be correct about this. However, I would like to leave open the possibility that a lover might appreciate certain qualities in a person that she neither possesses nor would like to possess, and that her love might be sustained in response to such qualities. Even here, though, Aquinas seems right that there must be a certain fit—a certain “oneness” or “aptness”—between what the lover personally appreciates and the features of the beloved if love is to be sustained.

Given this particular sense in which the lover must apprehend the beloved as good if she is to love him, it is possible to apprehend someone as good in a *different* sense without loving him. For example, if I have little regard for morality, I may apprehend that someone is morally virtuous, and thus good in a moral sense, without loving him. On the view I am suggesting here, my failure to love him would be due to the fact that I do not personally appreciate the respect in which he is good, perhaps because I neither have that quality nor wish to have it. Thus I would not view him as *one* with me, or *apt* for me, in the relevant sense. In the same way one might acknowledge that someone is very attractive in certain respects, and yet one might not actually be attracted to him or stirred to love him since he is not really one’s “type.” Thus, a lover’s love depends upon, or is sustained by, her apprehension of a person as both good and apt with respect to the particular qualities, values, and sensibility of the lover. If the tendencies of love depend on something else—e.g., a sense of duty—then they will not amount to love.

Importantly, this sort of dependence of love on a lover’s apprehension of the beloved as good in the relevant sense does not demand that love *arise* in response to the apprehension of the beloved as good. Indeed, the dependence I have described could, conceptually speaking, come about as a result of drinking a potion or taking a pill. So, for example, on my view it is quite possible that Ron might eat some chocolates laced with a powerful love potion and thereby genuinely come to love Romilda.¹⁵⁸ As long as the potion produced in him an apprehension of

¹⁵⁸ I am a shameless Harry Potter fan.

Romilda as good in the relevant sense (e.g., a belief or perception that she is so), a tendency of will toward her good, a tendency of will toward union with her, and the right sort of dependence of these tendencies upon the apprehension, I would affirm that he loved her. Nevertheless, despite the conceptual possibility of love potions and pills, I take it that the tendencies of love typically arise in response to the apprehension of someone as good in the relevant sense.

It will be helpful to have a term by which to refer to that upon which the two tendencies of love depend, as described above. One option would be to follow Aquinas (or his translators) in using the term ‘cause’ to refer to it. However, this term seems to bias our view in favor of a mechanistic dependence something like the dependence of one pool ball on another for its motion. As I will suggest in Section 3.6, while there might be some cases of love that exhibit a relatively mechanistic dependence upon a cause in this way, there also seem to be others in which the dependence looks more rational—i.e., more like dependence upon a reason.¹⁵⁹ Given these two possibilities (and possible confusions stemming from the polyvalent term ‘reason’), it seems that referring to that upon which the two tendencies of love depend as a “reason” is not a good option either. Thus, I will use the more neutral term ‘operative ground’ to capture that upon which the two tendencies of love actually depend. If we set aside the possibility of potions and pills, we can refer to the operative ground of love as that in response to which love arises or is sustained. According to my account so far, then, the operative ground of love must be a lover’s apprehension of the beloved as good and apt in the sense described above. I will sharpen this idea of an operative ground of love when I contrast it with the idea of a “proper ground” of love in Chapter Four.

The occasion of love’s arising in response to an operative ground is another point at which a lover might experience emotion. In particular, for some kinds of love (e.g., romantic

¹⁵⁹ Of course, dependence upon a reason might also be causal. However, we should not assume such a view from the outset.

love) it is quite common to feel a certain delight or euphoria in association with the coming about of love. However, it seems obvious that such emotion is not a feature of all kinds of love, or even of all cases of romantic love. There are many cases in which love can arise with little or no emotional fanfare—indeed, without the lover even recognizing that love has come about. For example, we often become friends with people that we are simply thrown together with by the circumstances of life. In my experience, the love I have for such friends typically comes about without my feeling much at all, or even my knowledge that it has come about. To be sure, as the friendship progresses I feel things—joy at my friend’s success, worry at my friend’s sickness, sadness at my friend’s moving away, etc.—but these emotions are not associated with the genesis of love. Rather, as described in Chapter Two (Section 2.10), they are associated more closely with whether the two targets of love’s tendencies are actualized, after love is already established. Given that delight or euphoria is not consistently associated with the genesis of love, it seems clear that such emotion is not partially constitutive of love. Rather, as for the emotions associated with whether the targets of love’s tendencies are actualized, the emotions associated with the genesis of love are best characterized as contingent effects of love that arise under certain circumstances—circumstances that are perhaps typical (though maybe not universal) in cases of romantic love.

3.3 LOVE AND COMMITMENT

With the notion of an operative ground of love now in hand, I am in a position to clarify the relationship between love and commitment that I alluded to in my account of union in Chapter Two (Section 2.4). My view is that the notions of love and commitment partially overlap.¹⁶⁰ In cases of new love—say, in a budding friendship or romantic relationship—love and

¹⁶⁰ I take some of my inspiration for this claim from Beverley Fehr. See Beverley Fehr, “Prototype Analysis of the Concepts of Love and Commitment,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 55, no. 4 (1988): 557–79.

commitment seem distinct. I might well love someone without being committed to her. I am stirred toward the good of the new friend or romantic partner and toward union with her, but something could happen and I could fairly easily let go of my tendencies toward these two targets. Perhaps I move to a different city. Perhaps she does something distasteful. Perhaps I become too busy to pursue a relationship. Perhaps I meet a different romantic partner that I prefer. In these cases, although I loved the person with a new, immature sort of love, the attitude fades in the face of inhospitable circumstances: I no longer seek her good or union with her in the ways indicative of friendship or romantic relationships. From such cases, it seems clear that I may love the person without being committed to her.

However, if circumstances are more hospitable and the relationship develops, then the tendencies of love seem more difficult to drop. If I move to a different city, then I still keep in touch with her. If she does something distasteful, then I might forgive her and continue loving. If I become too busy for the relationship then I might put it on hold for a season, but I would return to it when the business subsided. If I met another person that was romantically attractive to me, then I might purpose *not* to spend time with that person, lest it tempt me away from my current partner. In these cases, I would exhibit a commitment to the person I love.

The main difference between the committed and uncommitted cases, it seems to me, is that the attitudes constituting love in the committed cases are more fixed than those in the uncommitted cases. In these cases, commitment to a person still involves a tendency toward a person's good and toward union with her, but one that is more fixed or firm than those constituting new, immature love. In the committed cases, then, there would be no distinction between a commitment to a person and love for her: the commitment *would just be* a particularly fixed or firm kind of love for her. Insofar as love has its operative ground in something that the lover finds good about the beloved, in the committed cases the lover's commitment would have

the same operative ground insofar as commitment just is a fixed, firm kind of love. I will call this kind of commitment—a commitment consisting of firm tendencies toward the good of the other and union with her that is operatively grounded on an apprehension of the other as good—a *loving commitment*. As indicated in the discussion of union in Chapter Two (Section 2.4), I view mutual loving commitment as part of the union targeted by mature forms of love.

It seems possible that, over time, a loving commitment to a friend or romantic partner can take on an additional operative ground—namely, one’s sense of duty to the person. I take it as obvious that as a friendship or romantic relationship develops, the two parties incur special obligations or duties to the other, according to the kind of relationship it is. In particular, it seems that they incur duties to further the good of the other in special ways that go beyond what we owe to just anyone on the street. For example, you may have a duty to let your friend sleep on your couch for a few weeks if he gets evicted. But, it seems this is not something that you necessarily owe to a stranger. Friends and romantic partners may also incur duties to seek union with the other, depending on the kind and maturity of the relationship. In any case, my point is that a person’s apprehension of these duties may become a second operative ground for her tendencies toward the good of, and union with, the beloved person.

When a commitment becomes operatively grounded in this second way—i.e., grounded on a sense of one’s duty to the other—it is further possible for love to fade while commitment to the person remains, operatively grounded on a sense of duty. In such cases, a person no longer views the other as good in the sense that might operatively ground friendship or romantic love, and so love is undermined.¹⁶¹ However, the person remains committed to the good of the other

¹⁶¹ This issue is at least part of why Aristotle views character friendships (i.e., mutual love arising in response to the virtuous character of the other) as superior to friendships of use or pleasure (i.e., mutual love arising in response to the useful or pleasing characteristics of the other). If we find someone merely useful or pleasing and love him in response to those traits, he or we may well change and no longer find the other good in that way, in which case the mutual love and friendship disappears. But, if someone loves another for the sake of her character, Aristotle thinks the arrangement is more stable, since he thinks character is stable and fixed. Of course, the character friend also finds the good character of her friend pleasing and useful, but that is not the (or the only) ground of the friendship. See *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.3.

(and perhaps also to union with him) from a sense of duty or obligation owing to their history of relationship. I will refer to commitments like this—commitments consisting of firm tendencies toward the good of the other (and perhaps union with him) that are operatively grounded on an apprehension of one’s duty to the other—as *dutiful commitments*.¹⁶²

Friendships rarely end up with mere dutiful commitments since they typically dissolve if love for the other fades. However, marriages and family relationships sometimes do run on dutiful commitment. In family relationships, our sense of duty to the other family member is often operatively grounded on the “mere” familial relationship—i.e., the relationship constituted by mere blood or adoptive relation.¹⁶³ For example, a parent’s sense of duty to his newborn child (assuming he has it) is typically operatively grounded only on the fact that he is her parent. Of course, our sense of duty to a family member can grow and strengthen as a familial relationship matures, just as it does for friendships and romantic relationships. Nevertheless, there is often at least a kernel of duty that remains operatively grounded on the mere familial relationship, regardless of how the familial friendship develops. This is especially evident in cases where family members no longer love each other, but feel bound to each other out of a sense of duty owing to their mere familial tie. As noted above, marriages sometimes exhibit similar commitment despite a lack of mutual love. Loveless marriages may end up in such a situation, rather than simply dissolving, to the extent that the two partners view their marriage vows as constitutive of something like a familial tie.

Whether the tendencies toward the good of the beloved and union with him that I characterized in Chapter Two amount to love, commitment, or both depends, then, both on how fixed or firm they are and on the kind of operative ground they have. The two tendencies may

¹⁶² In the case where one’s commitment has both kinds of operative grounds, it may be that one has both a loving and dutiful commitment to the other, or just one or the other with two operative grounds. Either way of putting it is fine for my purposes.

¹⁶³ I will give a more developed account of familial relationships in Chapter Six, section 6.4.

amount to love despite being rather superficial and transient; new, immature cases of love for a friend or romantic partner are like that. In such cases, the tendencies do not amount to a commitment to the beloved. Once, however, the two tendencies become more entrenched they begin to constitute a loving commitment to the person. In these cases, love and commitment are identical. At some point, the lover might begin to have a sense of duty or obligation to the friend or romantic partner, in which case the two firm tendencies would take on this sense of duty as an additional operative ground. At that point the two tendencies would still constitute both love and commitment and they would exhibit two operative grounds. Lastly, as noted it is possible for the two firm tendencies to outlast love (or, more generally, to occur in the absence of love) insofar as they become operatively grounded on a sense of duty alone. Certain loveless yet dutiful family relationships and marriages are examples of that phenomenon. In that case, the two firm tendencies would constitute a dutiful commitment to the other and would be distinct from love.

3.4 OBJECTION: LOVE AS BESTOWAL

According to the account I have endorsed in Sections 3.2 and 3.3, love is a response to an evaluation or an appraisal of a particular sort—i.e., an apprehension of a person’s goodness, in the sense described above. However, some philosophers have thought that love is not so much a response to a positive appraisal of some aspect of the beloved’s value as it is a *bestowal* of value upon the beloved.¹⁶⁴ On a strict bestowal view, love is not produced and sustained in response to encountered value; rather, love *gives* value to the beloved object. Thus, according to such a view, Aquinas’s account of love gets the relationship between love and value backward. Harry Frankfurt endorses a bestowal view in the following passage:

It is true that the beloved invariably *is*, indeed, valuable to the lover. However, perceiving that value is not at all an indispensable *formative* or *grounding* condition of the love. It

¹⁶⁴ I take the language of “appraisal” and “bestowal” from Irving Singer’s canonical statement of the distinction between them. See Singer, *The Nature of Love, Vol. 1: Plato to Luther*, 3–22.

need not be a perception of value in what he loves that moves the lover to love it. The truly essential relationship between love and the value of the beloved goes in the opposite direction. It is not necessarily as a *result* of recognizing their value and of being captivated by it that we love things. Rather, what we love necessarily *acquires* value for us *because* we love it. The lover does invariably and necessarily perceive the beloved as valuable, but the value he sees it to possess is a value that derives from and that depends upon his love.¹⁶⁵

Frankfurt seems willing to grant that love *sometimes* arises in response to the lover's apprehension of the inherent value of the beloved.¹⁶⁶ However, his central point in the passage above is that love *need* not arise or be sustained in this way. Rather, what is essential to love, thinks Frankfurt, is that some perceived value of the beloved *derives from* the lover's love for him.

How, according to Frankfurt, does love ever arise in those cases where it does not do so in response to the lover's apprehension of the beloved's value?¹⁶⁷ His basic answer seems to be that in such cases love is brought about by natural causes.¹⁶⁸ He takes parental love for children to be such a case:

I can declare with unequivocal confidence that I do not love my children because I am aware of some value that inheres in them independent of my love for them. The fact is that I loved them even before they were born—before I had any especially relevant

¹⁶⁵ Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, 38–39. I take Frankfurt as my primary opponent instead of Irving Singer since Singer holds a kind of bestowal view that is not clearly in conflict with my view. While Singer surely holds that love bestows value on the beloved, and thus that some of the beloved's perceived value is dependent on the lover's love, he also holds that love requires a kind of appraisal. For example, he writes, "In the history of philosophy bestowal and appraisal have often been confused with one another, perhaps because they are both types of valuation. Love is related to both; they interweave in it. Unless we appraised we could not bestow a value that goes beyond appraisal; and without bestowal there would be no love... The objective beauty and goodness of his beloved will delight the lover, just as her deficiencies will distress him. In her, as in every other human being, these are important properties. How is the lover to know what they are without a system of appraisals?... none of this would be possible without objective appraisals." Singer, *The Nature of Love, Vol. 1: Plato to Luther*, 9, with apologies for Singer's sexist use of pronouns. Elsewhere Singer puts it even more bluntly: "In bestowal there will always be a concomitant appraisal... Apart from appraisal, no love would exist—we wouldn't even notice what the other is like." Irving Singer, *Philosophy of Love: A Partial Summing Up* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 52. Thus, it seems Singer would not necessarily contest Aquinas's idea that love is a response to apprehended value, i.e., a response to a kind of appraisal. It is just that Singer would want to add the idea of bestowal to Aquinas's account. Frankfurt, on the other hand, seems to me a genuine opponent of Aquinas's view.

¹⁶⁶ See Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, 38.

¹⁶⁷ I set potions and pills aside for the moment.

¹⁶⁸ Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, 38.

information about their personal characteristics or their particular merits and virtue...It is not because I have noticed their value, then, that I love my children as I do...It is really the other way around...As for why it is that human beings do tend generally to love their children, the explanation presumably lies in the evolutionary pressures of natural selection.¹⁶⁹

Frankfurt's idea, here, is that his love for his children could not have arisen in response to his apprehension of a value inherent in them and independent of his love since he loved them before they were born, when he had no information about the particular characteristics or virtues that might make them valuable. Rather, he holds that certain natural, causal pressures—perhaps related to natural selection—produced in him his love for his children, and this love then brought him to see special value in his children. I take it that Frankfurt views the case of parental love for children as a counter-example to the Thomist “appraisal” view of love’s operative grounds that I endorse.

Of course, it seems correct that Frankfurt’s love for his children did not arise in response to his prior apprehension of their special beauty, wit, charm, or virtues of character. Thus, he seems right to deny that love for one’s own children arises in response to a prior apprehension of the value of such qualities. However, this does not rule out the idea that his love for his children arose in response to a prior apprehension of their special and love-independent value to him. Indeed, it strikes me that my recognition of the importance of my children being *my* children was instrumental in the formation of my love for them. But, this recognition is simply the apprehension of the value of my parental relationship to them. Thus, we might say that the parental relationship—a relational property of my children—is a feature that I apprehended the value of, and in response to which I came to love my children. Of course, I never would have articulated my coming to love them in this way, since I never thought these thoughts. Nevertheless, it seems clear to me that my love was an implicit response to my apprehension of

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 39–40.

the fact that they are *my* children, i.e., to the fact of the parent-child relation between us, and to the importance of this fact.

But, what of Frankfurt's claim that my love for my children arose out of mere natural causes—perhaps a certain brain chemistry brought about via evolutionary pressures? While some brain chemistry is surely involved in any case of love, if we set aside potions and pills¹⁷⁰ it seems cases of parental love must also involve a prior apprehension of *something* about the child; if not, it seems doubtful that love would arise. After all, if, unbeknownst to me, my sexual partner became pregnant and had a child, it seems highly unlikely that I would love that child. Mere biology or chemistry is not enough here: at a minimum love requires that I know of the child. Moreover, it seems that my apprehension of the parental relationship I have to the child is necessary in producing parental love.¹⁷¹ This apprehension is what accounts for the fact that I love *that* child with parental love and not any number of other children in the nursery. Finally, it seems equally clear that I must find the parental relationship I have to her to be *important* or *valuable* in some sense, if love is to arise. If I knew that the child was mine but thought that fact made no difference in the way I was to relate to her, or in the attitudes I was to have toward her, then, again, it seems unlikely I would have parental love for her. Of course, for most of us, the importance of a parental relationship is obvious and something we take for granted, and thus it is not something we even give thought to.¹⁷² However, sadly, this attitude is not universal. Thus, it seems some apprehension of the value or importance of my parental relationship to my child—however implicit or non-self-aware it might be—is necessary if I am to love her with parental love. For this reason, I take Frankfurt's easy reference to “natural causes” and “evolutionary

¹⁷⁰ Which seems legitimate here, since Frankfurt wants to talk about real cases.

¹⁷¹ I assume this parental relationship could come about in any number of ways, including ordinary biological means (i.e., sexual reproduction) and adoption.

¹⁷² Here might be the *real* influence of evolutionary biology on parental love: most of us seem wired to value our own children in response to our apprehended (valuable) parental relationship to them.

pressures” to paper over important aspects of the typical psychology of parental love for children. Indeed, I take this psychology to vindicate my view that love is sustained in response to an apprehension of some aspect of the value of the beloved.

3.5 OBJECTION: BESTOWAL EXPLAINS INFLATED APPRAISALS

It is sometimes claimed that bestowal views of love are better able to account for the fact that we often see far more value in the people we love than they actually objectively possess. For example, Irving Singer writes, “...loving a friend means more than...enjoying his noble character; it also means...treating him in a way that is incommensurate with his actual goodness, assuming a virtue though he have it not.”¹⁷³ The tendency to view a romantic partner as “perfect,” or a newborn grandchild as “the most beautiful baby in the world,” are further examples of this phenomenon. Singer’s point is that these cases are best accounted for by the idea that love is a bestowal of value on the beloved: in loving the person we bestow more value on him than he actually possesses, and thus he seems more perfect, beautiful, or noble than he objectively is. Bestowal also seems to explain well the fact that the value to us of a beloved person seems to increase over time. On the bestowal view, this fact is the result of our ongoing bestowal of value over time.

However, I think Singer’s explanation of such cases is too simplistic. In truth, these phenomena likely have a range of different explanations. In some such cases—perhaps especially cases of early-stage romantic love—something like Freudian overvaluation and transference are likely in play: the lover attributes to the beloved a host of excellences that he does not, in fact, possess—excellences that may be idealized versions of qualities possessed by important figures from the lover’s past (e.g., parents).¹⁷⁴ But, we need not view such attribution of excellences as

¹⁷³ Singer, *The Nature of Love, Vol. 1: Plato to Luther*, 90.

¹⁷⁴ I am inspired here by Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” 350.

the bestowal of value. Why not think love is, in such cases, a response to a mistaken apprehension of value in the beloved? On this sort of reading, the case fits perfectly with my view: love still depends on the apprehension of the beloved's value; it is just that the apprehension is mistaken in this case. Moreover, even if such overvaluation and transference are best characterized as a kind of bestowal of value, it seems incorrect to suggest that love consists in such phenomena. For one thing, in most cases the fog of overvaluation and transference eventually clears and the lover takes on a more accurate assessment of the beloved and his qualities. However, the clearing of the fog does not entail that love also comes to an end. Rather, love may simply enter a more mature phase. Furthermore, not all cases of love seem accompanied by overvaluation and transference. Thus, at least on the basis of phenomena like overvaluation and transference, it seems a mistake to identify love with the kind of bestowal of value that Singer has in mind.

In other cases, our seeming tendency to attribute more value to a person we love than he actually possesses seems explained by the fact that, in an important sense, the person actually *becomes* more objectively valuable to us once we have a healthy relationship with him.¹⁷⁵ It seems patently obvious that healthy instances of friendships, familial relationships, and romantic relationships are incredibly valuable for human beings. Not only are they one of the most significant final ends or goods at which a typical person aims in her life, but they also typically bring with them a whole host of further goods, and so they have substantial instrumental value too. Such benefits include help in times of need, many kinds of pleasure, valuable self-knowledge, and a reduction in the stresses, anxieties, and burdens of life. I take it that closer instances of such healthy relationships typically have greater value for the participants. Relative to a healthy but distant friendship, a healthy close friendship is one in which we can typically

¹⁷⁵ I will elaborate on the claims I make in this paragraph about the value of relationships in Chapter Six.

expect more help if we need it, greater social pleasures, and greater reductions in the stress and strain of life.

Moreover, the value of healthy relationships is objective. By this I mean that a given instance of such a relationship would bear the same value for any two similarly situated people, and that the value of the relationship is something about which people might make a mistake. So, a healthy parent-child relationship has substantial value for its participants regardless of who those participants are. And I might well underestimate or overestimate the value of such a relationship in my practical life. Of course, there is room in this account for different “valuing” responses to a relationship of a given value. But, this need not suggest that the value of a relationship is a subjective bestowal of the participants. Thus, in some cases where it seems we attribute more value to a person we love than he actually possesses, our heightened sense of the beloved’s value need not indicate that we have bestowed value on him. Rather, it is that the genuine, objective value of the relationship we have to him—partly in virtue of which we find *him* valuable—now comes into play in our assessment of him, however implicitly.

In some cases, it might be that we mistakenly attribute the objective value of this relationship to certain of the beloved’s qualities, contributing to our tendency to view the beloved’s qualities with an inflated sense of value. Hence the grandparent’s claim that his granddaughter is “the most beautiful baby in the world.” Or, as Niko Kolodny has remarked, it might be that the value of the relationship gives us special reason to appreciate the excellences of the beloved.¹⁷⁶ On this story, it would not be that one bestows incommensurate value on the beloved’s qualities; rather, it would be that one’s special relationship to the beloved brings one to appreciate the genuine value of his qualities “to a greater degree than one would appreciate comparable qualities in a stranger.”¹⁷⁷ The objective value of a relationship between lover and

¹⁷⁶ Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 154–155.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 155.

beloved could also explain the tendency to view someone we love as increasingly valuable over time. As noted above, typically the closer someone is to us, the more objectively important and valuable that person and the relationship are to us. Thus, in cases like this, our increasing sense of the value of a beloved person might be grounded in the fact that the person *is* becoming objectively more valuable to us over time, in virtue of the increasing value of our relationship to him.

Thus, I think there are several plausible ways to explain the increased value we perceive in our loved ones, each of which are consistent with the sort of “appraisal” view of love I advocate. Therefore, I see no reason to advert to a Singer- or Frankfurt-style bestowal view of love to account for that phenomenon.

3.6 LOVE’S DEPENDENCE ON APPREHENDED GOODNESS

In this chapter I have been defending the view that it is partially constitutive of love that love’s two tendencies be sustained by, or depend upon, the lover’s apprehension of a person as good in a certain way. However, we might still wonder about the exact nature of this dependence. In this section I will speculate briefly on this question, though I will not settle it.

For some cases, it is tempting to think the dependence of love’s tendencies upon the apprehension of a person as good is merely causal. On this story, one might apprehend an attractive feature of the beloved and this apprehension (e.g., a perception or a belief) would then be the mere efficient cause of love’s two tendencies. This causal story seems to fit cases in which we “fall in love” with someone, i.e., certain visceral cases of romantic love. In these cases we typically experience a certain lack of control in our feelings and motivations to act. Indeed, even the language of “falling in love” suggests something that is happening to us causally, rather than something we are doing. Niko Kolodny seems to think the affective and motivational attitudes of

love are always causally dependent on a certain kind of belief in this way. For example, he claims, “Love...partly *consists* in the belief that some relationship renders it appropriate, and the emotions and motivations of love are *causally sustained* by this belief...”¹⁷⁸ On Kolodny’s story, the belief that a person has a certain valuable feature—namely, a kind of relationship to the lover—is the efficient cause of love’s dispositions to feel and act.

This causal story has a certain resemblance to Aquinas’s account of sensory love.¹⁷⁹ Recall from Chapter Two (Section 2.2) that the sensory appetite is the appetite that responds to objects apprehended as attractive to our senses. When we apprehend such an object—e.g., a piece of chocolate cake—the sensory appetite orients toward it in a kind of “sensory love.”¹⁸⁰ Certain of our sexual inclinations also seem to fit the category Aquinas has in mind here. When we apprehend (with our senses) an attractive potential sexual partner, the kind of inclinations toward the person we are liable to experience often seem causally, or at least instinctively, generated. Such inclinations may account for a portion of our experience of “falling in love.”

However, recall also that Aquinas claims that humans have a further appetite—the will—that responds not to the mere sensory apprehension of an object, but rather to the rational apprehension of an object with the intellect. As noted, the orientation of the will toward an object understood as good (in the relevant sense) amounts to “rational love.” On Aquinas’s view, then, rational love for a person seems to be a kind of response to practical reasons: we understand that the person is good, and on that basis our will becomes oriented toward him in the way

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 146. Emphasis original.

¹⁷⁹ Strictly speaking, Aquinas would likely reject my suggestion that inclinations of the sensitive appetite could be merely causally (i.e., mechanistically) generated, since, as Paul Hoffman puts it, “for Aquinas all causation presupposes a final cause, hence he would deny that there are any purely mechanistic causes...” See Hoffman, “Reasons, Causes, and Inclinations,” 165. Thus, Aquinas should be understood as “inspiring” the sort of view I am suggesting here and not as actually holding it.

¹⁸⁰ In this case, a love of concupiscence for the cake, and a love of friendship for oneself, as Aquinas would put it.

constitutive of love.¹⁸¹ Thus, it seems Aquinas thinks that in certain cases the dependence of love's tendencies upon the apprehension of the beloved as good is a *rational* sort of dependence, i.e., that the tendencies depend upon a reason. In such cases, we might say that Aquinas thinks we reason our way to love, in some sense.

Is Aquinas's story about rational love plausible? Do we sometimes reason our way to love? One worry about such an account might be that reasoning seems too intellectual and deliberate for love. In the practical realm, reasoning often evokes a picture of explicit deliberation in which we weigh various considerations, determine which ones are decisive, and then decide on a course of action. This picture is obviously foreign to love: we do not decide to love someone via explicit deliberation. Indeed, it is typically thought that love is something that just hits us without our trying. Or, at the very least, in most cases one day we just find ourselves loving someone, without any sense of having guided or controlled a deliberative process of acquiring the attitude.¹⁸² However, notice also that not all instances of practical reasoning involve explicit deliberation. Indeed, I suspect that the vast majority of practical reasoning does not.¹⁸³ Many of us go through our days operating mostly out of routines and habit, determining what to do at any given moment in a way that we are not necessarily conscious of. Nevertheless, if you asked me why I was brushing my teeth or getting on the bus, I might well give you a reason for my activity. If so, then some sort of implicit practical reasoning might lie behind my activity.

¹⁸¹ In some cases, the process of coming to understand the person as attractive could be informed by our sensory love and the sensory apprehension that produced it. If this is correct then it seems that something like a view expressed in Plato's *Symposium* could be correct, whereby we "ascend" from sensory love to rational love. See *Symposium* 210a-211d.

¹⁸² Samuel Scheffler makes a similar point about valuing, which seems apt in this context since love is frequently taken as a species of valuing. He writes, "Often, the process of coming to value something happens quite gradually, without any conscious awareness on our part, and we simply find at some point that we do in fact value the thing... Sometimes, far from deciding to value things, we find it difficult even to recognize or acknowledge that we value them." Samuel Scheffler, "Valuing," in *Equality and Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 39.

¹⁸³ While I hope that this claim is not terribly controversial, I realize that it depends upon an account of practical reasoning that I have not and will not give here.

But, if practical reasoning can be implicit in this way, it is at least not obvious that it is too intellectual or deliberate as a route to love.

Summing up, in this section I have gestured at two possible ways in which the tendencies of love might depend upon the apprehension of a person as good. First, the apprehension might serve as a merely efficient cause of love. Second, the content of the apprehension might serve as a practical reason that brings one to adopt love's two tendencies—albeit typically in an implicit way. Importantly, while I find the suggestion quite plausible that there are two possible ways in which love's tendencies depend upon the apprehension of a person as good—causally (or instinctively) and rationally—my account of love does not rely upon this suggestion. As long as some one of the modes of dependence remains plausible, my view will be viable. However, if it is correct that love's tendencies admit of two modes of dependence, then we have a further way of distinguishing kinds of love: according to the relevant mode of dependence, or the faculty by which love arises (sensory or rational).

3.7 CONCLUSION

In Chapter Three I completed my account of human love by offering a view of love's operative grounds, i.e., those features upon which love's two tendencies must depend if they are to constitute love. I have argued that love's operative grounds must be features apprehended by the lover as good in a particular sense. Specifically, the lover must recognize in the beloved a capacity for union with the lover, either because he has some good feature that the lover also has, because he has some good feature that the lover would like to have, or because the lover simply finds the beloved pleasing in some respect. Typically, the operative ground of love will be that in response to which love arises or is sustained.

In light of this account of love's operative ground I clarified the notion of "commitment" that I employed in Chapter Two when explaining my account of "union". I claimed, here, that there are two kinds of commitment. The first—what I called a "loving commitment"—is simply a kind of love in which love's two tendencies of will are particularly firm or fixed. The second—what I called a "dutiful commitment"—exhibits the two tendencies characteristic of love, but the operative ground of these tendencies is an apprehension of one's duty to pursue the good of and union with the other, and *not* an apprehension of the beloved as good in the relevant sense. For this reason, a dutiful commitment is not a kind of love.

In defense of my view of love's operative ground, I replied to two objections mounted by those who hold a bestowal view of love. According to the bestowal view, love does not depend on the prior apprehension of value in the beloved; rather, the apprehension of value depends on love insofar as love *bestows* value on the beloved that he did not previously have. The first objection held that my appraisal view cannot be correct since it fails in the case of parental love for children: such love seems not to depend on any features of personality or character that might make one find the child antecedently valuable. In reply I argued that, in fact, parental love *is* typically a response to antecedent value, namely the value of the parent-child relationship in virtue of which the child is objectively valuable to the parent. The second objection held that the bestowal view best explains the lover's commonly inflated appraisals of the beloved's traits: the lover bestows value on the beloved and thereby gives him a value that is greater than his traits objectively reflect. In reply, I argued that my appraisal view is capable of a less simplistic and thus more plausible explanation of the relevant phenomena.

Finally, in the penultimate section of the chapter I speculated on the nature of the dependence of love's two tendencies on the apprehension of the beloved as good. Inspired by Thomas Aquinas, I considered two possible kinds of such dependence: merely causal

dependence and rational dependence. I suggested that certain cases of what Aquinas might call “sensory love”—e.g., sexual love—might be examples in which the dependence is merely causal. However, I also suggested that there might be cases in which the lover’s apprehension of the beloved as good serves as a kind of practical reason, on the basis of which the lover adopts love’s two tendencies of will. Aquinas would call such cases, “rational love.”

In the next chapter—Chapter Four—I will continue to lay the philosophical groundwork necessary for addressing the two aims of my dissertation by offering an account of love’s *proper* grounds—those valuable features that love *properly* depends upon, or is *properly* sustained by. The proper grounds of love may be understood as those operative grounds of love that it would be proper for a lover to have.

CHAPTER 4 – THE PROPER GROUNDS OF LOVE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

We love people for reasons. Or, so some philosophers have recently thought.¹⁸⁴ In this context, a reason for love has sometimes been understood as that which renders love appropriate or fitting in certain cases.¹⁸⁵ There are several competing views of what these reasons for love are. One common view is that certain qualities of a person may serve as such reasons. According to this “quality theory”,¹⁸⁶ it might be a person’s physical beauty, winning personality, virtuous character, or prodigious talent that renders love for him appropriate.¹⁸⁷

However, the quality theory seems open to a range of pressing objections. For example, David Velleman has argued that people want to be loved “for themselves,” not merely for their

¹⁸⁴ For example, see Bennett Helm, *Love, Friendship, and the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship.”

¹⁸⁵ Importantly, this topic is different from the one Harry Frankfurt has in mind in Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*. There, Frankfurt’s concern is not the considerations that render love appropriate, but rather the reasons for action that an agent has once she loves someone. These are reasons “of” love and not reasons “for” love.

¹⁸⁶ I take this label for the view from Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship.”

¹⁸⁷ We might view Aristotle’s account of friendship—a kind of mutual love—as an example of a quality theory of the reasons for love insofar as the qualities of being useful, pleasurable, or virtuous each render a different corresponding kind of friendship appropriate.

superficial qualities.¹⁸⁸ As a result, Velleman takes the human capacity for valuation—his reading of the Kantian rational will—to be that which renders love appropriate.¹⁸⁹ This capacity, thinks Velleman, is what every human being truly *is*, and so to love someone for this capacity is to love him in the way he would want to be loved.

Niko Kolodny has also raised a number of objections to the quality theory.¹⁹⁰ One of these is that it cannot properly account for familial love. For example, it does not seem that the beauty, personality, or virtue of a baby is what renders a parent’s love for the baby appropriate.¹⁹¹ For that matter, Kolodny also rejects Velleman’s proposal that it might be the baby’s (potential) capacity for valuation that makes the parent’s love appropriate.¹⁹² Instead, Kolodny argues that the parental *relationship* does this.¹⁹³ Indeed, Kolodny holds that relationships are what render love appropriate in all cases in which it is.

In this chapter I will defend a pluralist view of love’s reasons, or “proper grounds,” as I will call them.¹⁹⁴ According to this view, the features suggested by the three theories just mentioned—i.e., the quality theory, Velleman’s Kantian theory, and Kolodny’s relationship theory—may *all* function as proper grounds of love. Thus, there is some truth to each theory. However, I will argue that none of the theories, by itself, gives a sufficient account of love’s proper grounds. After defending this pluralist view, I will suggest that what unifies love’s plural proper grounds is that each kind may support or sustain a healthy relationship in some way. Thus, love’s proper grounds are features that are good in this particular way.

¹⁸⁸ Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” 363.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 365–366.

¹⁹⁰ Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 139–142.

¹⁹¹ Harry Frankfurt makes this same point, as I noted in Chapter Three, Section 3.4.

¹⁹² Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 173–179.

¹⁹³ I made the same point in Chapter Three, Section 3.4, inspired by Kolodny’s view.

¹⁹⁴ I will explain shortly my preference for the term “proper ground of love” rather than “reason for love.”

4.2 LOVE AND ITS GROUNDS: TERMS AND ASSUMPTIONS

I begin with an explanation of certain key terms and assumptions that I will rely on throughout the chapter. First, as in Chapters Two and Three, I will focus my discussion on cases of love for people that typically occur in friendships, romantic relationships, and familial relationships.

Second, although the subject matter of this chapter is sometimes characterized as the “reasons” for love, I will set aside such talk since it can be confusing and distracting. For example, the term “reason for love” suggests to some that if one apprehended sufficient reasons for loving a person, then one would be making a rational mistake if one did not subsequently love the person. This question about the rationality of love is slightly adjacent to my aims here and might distract from them.¹⁹⁵ Thus, I will set aside talk of reasons and speak instead of “proper grounds” of love. The idea of a proper ground of love may be easily grasped when contrasted with the notion of an “operative ground” of love, introduced in Chapter Three (Section 3.2).

Consider, again, the notion of an “operative ground” of love. If we set aside the possibility of love potions and pills, we may understand an operative ground of love as that in response to which love arises or is sustained. Importantly, that in response to which love *arises* could be different from that in response to which love is *sustained*. Thus, we might speak of two kinds of operative grounds of love: producing operative grounds and sustaining operative grounds. Suppose Juliet’s love is awakened in response to Romeo’s wit.¹⁹⁶ Here, Romeo’s wit would be a *producing operative ground* of Juliet’s love, i.e., that in response to which love arises in Juliet, or that which explains the production of Juliet’s love. Now suppose the two lovers have

¹⁹⁵ For a sustained discussion of rational requirements to love, see Roger E. Lamb, “Love and Rationality,” in *Love Analyzed*, ed. Roger E. Lamb (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 23–47.

¹⁹⁶ The exchange between the two lovers toward the end of Act I, Scene V, may support this idea.

a long and satisfying relationship,¹⁹⁷ and that the importance of Romeo's wit fades over time for Juliet. Instead, Romeo's kindness becomes that which sustains Juliet's love for him. If Romeo's kindness suddenly vanished, Juliet's love would vanish along with it.¹⁹⁸ Not so Romeo's wit. Here, Romeo's kindness would be a *sustaining operative ground* of Juliet's love, i.e., that in response to which love is sustained in Juliet, or that which explains the continuation of Juliet's love. As the example illustrates, the producing and sustaining operative grounds of love may be different.

Now, a "proper ground" of love is that which makes love appropriate or fitting in cases where it is.¹⁹⁹ So, for example, if Kolodny were correct, Juliet's relationship to Romeo would be the proper ground of her love for him, i.e., that which renders it appropriate or fitting (on the assumption that it is). The appropriateness that proper grounds of love may bring about is a non-moral kind of goodness or correctness. There may be stronger and weaker forms of this appropriateness, corresponding to stronger and weaker kinds of proper grounds. In some cases, love's appropriateness might be fairly robust, similar to the appropriateness of being moved by a great piece of art. In this case, although it might not be irrational for someone to be unmoved by the art, if they were unmoved we might count it a significant loss (for them) and wonder whether they were really able to see the piece or understand it properly. In other cases, love's appropriateness might be weaker, like the appropriateness of someone's taste for chocolate ice-cream. Such a taste may not be robustly good—if she did not like the ice-cream we would not

¹⁹⁷ We must, of course, suspend our disbelief.

¹⁹⁸ Admittedly, the example here is crude and artificial: if their relationship was long and satisfying, it is hard to imagine that Juliet's love would vanish with the disappearance of Romeo's kindness. Nevertheless, this toy example helps us see the relevant distinctions.

¹⁹⁹ The rough analog of "proper ground" in reasons-talk might be "normative reason". The added phrase "in cases where it is" suggests that proper grounds are "prima facie" in some sense: if one of them is in place, then it does not necessarily follow that love is appropriate. There could be countervailing considerations that render it inappropriate. My point is that, for cases where love is appropriate, something makes it so, and that is what I want to put my finger on.

count it a loss on the same scale as being unmoved by great art—but there is nothing objectionable about her taste, and so it is appropriate in a weaker sense.

Importantly, if a proper ground of love is to do its appropriate-making work, it must also be an operative ground of love. Suppose someone held a justifiable belief but held it for reasons that did not actually justify the belief. Here, her belief would be appropriate in a certain sense—since justifiable—but it would not be *entirely* appropriate since she would hold it for the wrong reasons. Similarly, proper grounds of love must also be operative grounds if they are to render love fully appropriate. Suppose Kolodny is correct that relationships are the sole proper grounds of love. Now, returning to our example, suppose that Juliet loves Romeo, and that they have a relationship of the sort Kolodny has in mind. If the operative ground of Juliet’s love is not their relationship, but rather Romeo’s wit or kindness, then Juliet’s love for Romeo will not be fully appropriate. Of course, her love will still be appropriate in some attenuated sense, since a proper ground of love is cognitively “available” to her, i.e., their relationship is actually in place and she knows this. However, since the operative grounds of her love (i.e., qualities) are features that do not (we are temporarily supposing) properly ground love, then her love will not be entirely appropriate. Given the picture I have explained here, we can say that the proper grounds of love are those features to which love is *properly* a response, or those features upon which love properly depends.

As a final preliminary point, although I have given an account of love in Chapters Two and Three, I hope that my pluralist account of love’s proper grounds will be relatively neutral with respect to the particular attitudes that love consists in.²⁰⁰ My account will, however, assume that love is an attitude that has proper grounds.²⁰¹ This assumed view contrasts with the view

²⁰⁰ The unity I see in love’s plural proper grounds, which I argue for in Section 4.8, will not be neutral in this way. However, that aspect of my view may be understood as distinct from my point about pluralism, and hence as distinct from my claim that the three competing views of love’s proper grounds all fail.

²⁰¹ I will also assume that love has operative grounds, which I argued for in Chapter Three.

that love is “brute,”²⁰² according to which love has operative grounds but not proper grounds. On this brute view, love is not properly subject to evaluations of appropriateness; all we can do is give an explanatory account of how love came about or is, in fact, sustained. While I will not argue the point at length here, it seems to me that love *is* properly subject to evaluations of appropriateness. For example, we typically judge a stalker’s love for a movie star inappropriate, and a parent’s love for his child appropriate.²⁰³ So, it seems some features must render love appropriate or inappropriate in each case, and thus that love, in fact, has proper grounds.

With these preliminary remarks complete, I will turn to a consideration of the quality theory of love’s proper grounds. In the next section I will explain and try to motivate that theory.

4.3 EXPLAINING AND MOTIVATING THE QUALITY THEORY

The quality theory holds that qualities of the beloved are the sole kind of proper ground of love for him, i.e., the only kind of feature that might render love for him appropriate. So, for instance, a person’s wit, virtue, or talent might serve as proper grounds of love for him according to the quality theory.²⁰⁴ It is important to note that qualities are *not* the objects of love on this view. Rather, *people* are. The qualities are merely proper grounds of love.

A corollary of the quality theory is that certain bad qualities might serve as features that render love *inappropriate*. For example, certain vices or unattractive qualities might play this role, in the absence of countervailing good qualities. Now, in most cases, of course, there *are* countervailing good qualities that weigh against the negatives, so it is not as though the quality

²⁰² My choice of terms here is inspired by Jennifer Whiting’s term “brute friendship” in Jennifer Whiting, “Impersonal Friends,” *Monist* 74, no. 1 (January 1991): 7. She employs the same sort of distinction I make here, but applies it to friendship. On her Aristotelian view, friendship is something like mutual love.

²⁰³ I borrow examples here from Niko Kolodny. See Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 137.

²⁰⁴ I am not here interested in the view that any *particular* quality is a proper ground of love. Rather, I am interested in the view that the class of non-relational qualities I am gesturing at contains possible proper grounds of love. I am interested in this more abstract view since it is usually the one that is attacked by opponents.

theory necessarily condemns a person with negative traits to be properly unloved. Indeed, I take it that all of us are flawed in certain respects, and thus that it is *typically* the case that appropriate instances of love are so despite certain negative traits. Nevertheless, if someone is untrustworthy or dangerously violent, these qualities generally render friendship and romantic love for such a person inappropriate.²⁰⁵ I will say more about negative qualities and inappropriate cases of love in the penultimate section of the chapter.

The quality theory seems fairly intuitive, at least to many westerners. It fits with the “love-at-first-sight” tradition,²⁰⁶ and the producing operative grounds of our love in friendships and romantic relationships often seem to be the kind of qualities I have mentioned.²⁰⁷ This is, of course, an observation Aristotle made long ago.²⁰⁸ Now, if it is correct that qualities typically function as *operative grounds* of love in cases of love for friends and romantic partners, then there is some pressure to think that they also function as *proper grounds* of love in such cases.²⁰⁹ If not, it seems we are left affirming that love in friendships and romantic relationships is

²⁰⁵ Heroic cases in which nuns befriend hardened criminals might seem to undermine this point. One such case is featured in Sister Helen Prejean and Tim Robbins’s film (and Prejean’s book) *Dead Man Walking*. However, while these cases are interesting, and while I take them to be genuine cases of love, it seems to me that they are cases of friendship love only in an extended sense, since the relationships are highly constrained, taking place while the criminals are incarcerated and so can no longer pursue the behavior that landed them in prison. For example, I take it we are not talking about a case in which a nun and a criminal have coffee together “on the outside” and discuss the criminal’s next murder, as two ordinary friends might have coffee and discuss their plans for the next day.

²⁰⁶ For example, Montaigne, in “Of Friendship”: “At our first meeting...we found ourselves so taken with each other,...so bound together, that from that time on nothing was so close to us as each other.” I owe this quotation to Alan Soble, *The Structure of Love* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 31. Romeo’s love for Juliet is, of course, another classic (albeit stereotypical) example: “Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!/ For I ne’er saw true beauty till this night.” (William Shakespeare, “Romeo and Juliet,” in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, The Shakespeare Head Press, Oxford (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1994), l.v.50–51.) Dante’s love for Beatrice is another famous case in this tradition.

²⁰⁷ For an example of psychological research suggesting this point see Arthur Aron et al., “Experiences of Falling in Love,” *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 6 (1989): 251. This research also suggests that someone’s interest in us is often a feature to which we respond with romantic or friendship love.

²⁰⁸ See, for example, *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.2-3.

²⁰⁹ Kolodny makes a similar point when he claims, “What, in normal cases, causally sustains [love] is a good guide to the normative reasons for it.” Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 162.

typically not appropriate (since the operative grounds would not be proper grounds), which might seem surprising.

Nevertheless, surprise does not necessarily indicate falsehood. Indeed, it might well be that love for friends and romantic partners *is* systematically inappropriate in just this way. The charge of inappropriateness seems particularly applicable to the early stages of romantic love. As suggested in Chapter Three (Section 3.5), our view of the beloved is often far from clear-eyed in such instances—hence the proverb, “love is blind”—and so perhaps a gap between operative grounds of love and potential proper grounds of love *is* typical in those cases after all.

While early stage romantic love is often inappropriate in some sense, if we look more closely at this phenomenon it seems clear that the inappropriateness does not necessarily make trouble for the inference I wish to draw about the character of love’s proper grounds from the character of its typical operative grounds. As David Velleman has observed (with reference to Freud), and as I suggested in Chapter Three, the problem with early romantic love is that it is characterized by overvaluation and transference.²¹⁰ The lover tends to view the beloved as possessing excellences that he does not, in fact, possess, and to love the beloved in response to these falsely attributed qualities.²¹¹ On the Freudian story, these falsely attributed qualities, in turn, are the qualities of idealized versions of important figures from the lover’s past (e.g., parents), irrationally “transferred” onto the beloved. However, notice that the problem here is not necessarily that love is responding to the wrong kind of qualities. If the beloved really possessed the excellences attributed to him, it is not clear we would worry about inappropriateness in these cases. Rather, the problem seems to be one of mistaken world-to-mind attitudes (e.g., beliefs,

²¹⁰ Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” 350.

²¹¹ Velleman points out (349-350) that there is a still darker Freudian storyline on which the lover is not even really drawn to the beloved because of his falsely imagined excellences, but rather only because of the lover’s sub-conscious sexual drives, with respect to which the “beloved” is a mere instrument of satisfaction. However, this storyline does not seem plausible to me.

impressions, perceptions, etc.) about the qualities that the beloved possesses.²¹² By transference, the lover has come to a set of false views about the beloved's qualities, and her love is thereby inappropriate, since it has mistaken operative grounds. Thus, these cases should not necessarily make us doubt that the transferred excellences are really proper grounds of romantic love. After all, it is not that the lover is responding to the wrong thing, which would scuttle my inference; rather, it is just that the qualities that *would* properly ground love are not instantiated in the beloved, despite the lover's attribution to the contrary. Thus, there seems to be no reason here to reject the idea that typical operative grounds of love in cases of romantic love and friendship (i.e., qualities) may also serve as proper grounds of love in such cases.

Having motivated the quality theory of love's proper grounds, in the next four sections I will present objections to it by David Velleman and Niko Kolodny, along with the alternative view of love's proper grounds that each supports. I will address their objections on behalf of the quality theory, though I will not manage to deflect the full force of the objections. My aim, instead, will be to leave space for qualities as one of several kinds of proper grounds of love in a pluralist view. I will also suggest ways in which the views preferred by Velleman and Kolodny are incomplete, and thus require the pluralism that I advocate.

²¹² This point suggests that my account of love's operative grounds should be refined slightly. Speaking more precisely, operative grounds of love are contents of attitudes about the beloved with a world-to-mind direction of fit. So, where I claimed above that the producing operative ground of Juliet's love might be Romeo's wit, strictly speaking the ground would be the content of some world-to-mind attitude resulting from the apprehension of Romeo as witty. One important example of such attitudes here, of course, would be a belief that Romeo is witty. However, I wish to leave space in my account for the content of less elevated attitudes to be operative grounds of love too. (I am inspired here by Aquinas's distinction between sensitive and rational love, and the different world-to-mind attitudes that underlie these different kinds of love; see *Summa Theologica* I-II 26.1.) One upshot of this point is that lovers can be mistaken about the properties they attribute to the beloved—i.e., they can have mistaken attitudes about such properties—and thus operative grounds of love can be properties that the beloved does not possess. Because the possibility of mistaken attitudes about the beloved's properties will not be a major theme in this chapter, I will generally speak of the beloved's properties themselves as operative grounds of love, rather than the contents of attitudes about the beloved's properties, since it is a more convenient locution. And, of course, this locution is not far off since in cases where the property-attribution is correct the beloved's property itself (e.g., wit, kindness) is typically the basis for the relevant world-to-mind attitude. It is also important to note that, according to my view, the lover need not be aware that certain properties serve as operative grounds of her love in order for them to play that role. Similarly, if she is aware that her love has operative grounds, she need not be aware of exactly what they are. In these cases, the lover's world-to-mind attitudes about the beloved would be opaque to the lover to some extent.

4.4 DAVID VELLEMAN AGAINST THE QUALITY THEORY

Velleman rejects the quality theory in the following passage:

...these qualities fail to distinguish us completely, and they consequently feel like accidents rather than our essence. We are like the girl who wants to be loved but not for her yellow hair—and not, we should add, for her mind or her sense of humor, either—because she wants to be loved, as she puts it, “for myself alone.”²¹³

Velleman’s thought here is that the qualities in view on the quality theory are mere contingent accidents of me and thus do not characterize who I *really am* as a person. As a result, if the operative grounds of someone’s love for me were such qualities, she would fail to love me as I want to be loved—for who I really am. Therefore, Velleman thinks qualities cannot be the proper grounds of love, i.e., that to which love is properly a response.

Given this worry, Velleman takes the view that love is properly a response to the value of the Kantian rational will, and so that this will is the proper ground of love. Lest his proposal seem too austere, Velleman reminds us that this aspect of our nature, on Kant’s story, is the capacity “to be actuated by reasons” and “to have a good will,” and so he thinks this aspect of a human being is “that better side of a person which constitutes his true self.”²¹⁴ Further, he explains that this capacity is that by which we appreciate the value of ends—including the Kantian “end-in-itself” of humanity. Since he thinks love just is an activation of this capacity toward ends-in-themselves, he holds that what we love in another is her capacity to love. As Velleman cleverly puts it, “what our hearts respond to is another heart.”²¹⁵ Unlike mere contingent properties like wit, virtue, or talent, Velleman thinks the Kantian rational will, so understood, just is the essence of who we are as human beings. As a result, he thinks possession of this capacity is the property for which we want to be loved, since we want to be loved for

²¹³ Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” 363. Velleman here quotes Yeats’s poem “For Anne Gregory,” from *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (New York: Macmillan, 1956) 240.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 365.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

ourselves. Thus, on Velleman's view, this is the property to which love is properly a response, and so it is the sole proper ground of love.

Despite its seeming plausibility, it is not clear that Velleman's objection to the quality theory sticks. At least two responses seem in order. First, it is not clear that the qualities picked out by the quality theory fail to characterize who we really are. Ethical virtues seem the most obvious example here. On an Aristotelian picture, activity according to virtues such as courage, temperance, or justice is central to what a human being should be. Thus, on the Aristotelian picture, to love someone in response to character traits like that is to love him in response to the highest expression of his nature as a human being—part of his essence, and not mere accidents. Moreover, the Aristotelian picture is not just a restatement of Velleman's point in different language. Virtuous traits like courage, temperance, or justice are not the same as Velleman's Kantian "capacity for valuation"; rather, they are that capacity formed in a certain way—formed to express a particular set of correct values. Put another way, the virtues are not merely the *capacity* "to have a good will"; they are the *having* of the good will itself (or the Aristotelian equivalent). Virtues are weighty, substantial character traits on most any plausible view of human beings, so my point here seems important even if one rejects the Aristotelian picture.

A similar point may be made about talents or abilities. Many people identify strongly with certain of their talents or abilities. Athletes and academics are conspicuous examples here. This strong identification is evident in the fact that people often undergo crises of identity when they suddenly lose abilities that play an important role in their lives (e.g., the football player paralyzed in a car accident). Indeed, it does not seem too much to say that someone deeply invested in a certain activity that demands a particular talent or ability might quite properly come to view that quality as a central part of who and what she is. But, if we take some quality to be central to who we are in this way, to be loved (at least in part) in response to it hardly seems

unwelcome. Indeed, as Neil Delaney has argued, it seems plausible that someone who strongly identifies with one of her qualities in this way might well *want* to be loved (at least in part) in response to that quality.²¹⁶ Therefore, in cases where a talent or ability is central to who a person is, there seems nothing wrong with the idea that such a quality would be an operative ground of love.

Finally, it is not even clear to me that being loved in response to attractive physical traits (e.g., beautiful brown eyes) or aspects of one's personality (e.g., a sharp wit) is unwelcome. It seems quite appropriate and typical to desire that one's physical appearance be appreciated by a romantic partner, or that even relatively minor aspects of one's personality be appreciated by one's friends. Thus, I see no reason to reject the idea that we might want to be loved (in part) in response to such traits.

However, a second and somewhat more concessive reply to Velleman's complaint about the quality theory also seems in order: perhaps physical qualities or minor traits of personality make for weaker proper grounds of love than other features. While love in response to such qualities may not be objectionable, we might still think it fails to be robustly good in the sense that a parent's love for his child is. Surely Velleman is correct that in some cases we would not want to be loved *merely* for our qualities. For example, after 30 years of marriage you would likely want to be loved by your spouse for more than mere wit. This is so not because wit could never be a proper ground of love, but because, after 30 years, you would hope that your spouse could see more in you than your wit. This comment gestures at the idea that mature cases of love are typically over-determined by operative grounds, suggesting a plurality of proper grounds for love. I will return to this idea later in the chapter, but for now the point is to grant that long-term love that took a single quality as its operative ground would be shallow (and perhaps

²¹⁶ Neil Delaney, "Romantic Love and Loving Commitment: Articulating a Modern Ideal," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1996): 343–347.

impossible). This concession does not, however, imply that there is no place for qualities as proper grounds of love, but only that many cases of love will require more than one operative ground, or kind of operative ground, if they are to be loves that we might desire.

4.5 OBJECTIONS TO VELLEMAN'S VIEW

I will now offer a brief critical discussion of Velleman's Kantian alternative to the quality theory. Recall that he takes the capacity for valuation and love—his reading of the Kantian rational will—to be the proper ground of love. As a convenient shorthand, I will refer to this putative proper ground as the beloved's "humanity," since Velleman thinks it amounts to our essence as human beings and is a property that all human beings have.

As I see it, the main challenge for Velleman's proposal is whether there are ever cases in which the beloved's humanity actually serves as a producing or sustaining operative ground of love. If not, then it seems Velleman would be left suggesting that we always love on the wrong operative grounds, which seems implausible.²¹⁷ In Velleman's favor, it seems possible that the producing operative ground of a certain thin kind of love we might have for a stranger on the street (e.g., someone in need) would be the stranger's humanity. This might be the kind of love I called "love for neighbors" in Chapter Two (Section 2.11).

However, Velleman's view still seems to have difficulty explaining the majority of cases in which love is produced more selectively. Indeed, if Velleman's view is correct, we might well wonder why someone would come to love a particular romantic partner, a particular friend, or a particular family member rather than any number of other people, given that the particular partner, friend, and family member share the property of humanity with literally *every* other

²¹⁷ Of course, it is not impossible. If his view did imply that we always love on the wrong operative grounds, then the view would look something like Kant's view of moral motivation, according to which whether anyone has ever really acted from duty is irrelevant to the thought that this is the motive that confers moral value on an action. And Velleman might be quite pleased with this result.

human being. Of course, we may attribute some of the selectivity to contingent circumstance: you live in the same city, you attend the same school, and you work in the same office as some people and not others. Nevertheless, love is still selective from among those with whom we interact. Because of this selectivity, it seems hard to see how the producing operative ground of love could be a characteristic that all human beings share, as Velleman suggests it should be.

Velleman anticipates this issue and responds by claiming that there is a sense in which we love a person because of his particular qualities, namely insofar as we understand his qualities to be “an expression or symbol or reminder of his value as a person.”²¹⁸ Velleman further suggests that the value of the beloved’s humanity is “reflected in or refracted through” his personal qualities, that we respond to the value of his humanity “through” his qualities, and that such qualities function “as conduits rather than sources of value.”²¹⁹ Though somewhat obscure, the prevailing idea here seems to be that a person’s qualities serve as the medium by which we attend to, or comprehend, the value of the property of humanity to which love properly responds. Metaphorically, a person’s qualities are like a window through which we can see her value as a human being. Velleman then claims that contingencies of the human ability to express and perceive the value of humanity through qualities are such that we are not all equally able to attend to the value of any given person in the way that precipitates love.²²⁰ This then explains why I selectively love some people and not others: because of who I am and because of who you are, I may or may not be able to grasp your value as a human being in the way that brings about

²¹⁸ Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” 371.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Importantly, Velleman thinks we *are* all able to attend to the value of any given person in the way demanded by respect.

love. Metaphorically, some people's windows need cleaning, and some people just can't see through certain kinds of windows. So, we love some and not others.²²¹

While Velleman's solution here is creative, it seems highly implausible. First, it completely botches cases of parental love: do I really love my newborn child because her qualities and my capacities are such that I can see through her qualities to her value as a human being? The regularity with which parents love *their* newborn child and not some other child in the nursery suggests that this story about parental love is false. If it were true, I would expect parents to exhibit parental love for newborns *other* than their own very frequently, given that the qualities of most infants are very similar and so, presumably, any parent that could see through the qualities of her child to the child's humanity could also do so for most any child in the nursery. But, obviously, parents generally do not exhibit parental love for infants other than their own. Indeed, it seems implausible that *any* qualities—whether physical beauty, wit, virtue, or the property of humanity—are the producing operative grounds and proper grounds of parental love for a newborn child. Rather, as Kolodny has argued (and as I argued in Chapter Three and will reiterate shortly), the parental relationship seems to play this role.²²²

²²¹ There is another story Velleman tells in his paper that might seem like it could help him respond to the selectivity problem, namely the story about human dignity. On Velleman's Kantian view, the value of humanity is such that a human being does not have a price, but rather a dignity. While price allows for comparison between valuable objects, dignity does not. Dignity is a singular sort of value that precludes the possibility of comparing the value of one dignity-bearing thing to another. While this is an interesting aspect of Velleman's (and Kant's) account, I do not think it is necessarily relevant to the selectivity problem since selectivity need not imply comparison. In other words, it seems to me possible that we could select certain people as friends or lovers (and not others) without making explicit comparisons between people.

²²² One might try to attribute the production of parental love for an infant to mere hormones or biological instinct. This claim might be at the root of two different objections. First, it might seem that if parental love for infants is attributable to mere instinct, then it is not properly subject to any sort of normative evaluation, positive or negative, including evaluations of appropriateness or fittingness. Rather, it is a kind of "brute" love that only has an explanation. However, this seems false: surely we think it is fitting for a parent to love his infant. Second, if parental love is merely instinctive, it might seem false that the parental relationship is the operative or proper ground of love. However, as I argued in Section 3.4, this instinctual account would still not explain why we love the particular infant we do, rather than another in the nursery. Suppose a new parent looked out over all the babies in the nursery without knowing which one was his child. In this case he would not experience a surge of parental love for a particular child until it was pointed out to him which of the babies was his. Indeed, he would likely experience parental love for a child that was not his if he was mistakenly told it was his. This suggests that it is the parental relationship (as the content of the parent's world-to-mind attitude) that is the operative (and I would say proper) ground of love.

Second, even if we restrict ourselves to cases of romantic love and friendship love, Velleman's story still seems implausible. When I am taken with someone's character or personality and the love of friendship arises in me, it certainly *seems* like I am responding to her character or personality. What I would never have said about such cases is that I am *seeing through* such qualities and responding to the value of the person's humanity. I might say that I am appreciating the qualities as aspects of the value of the person, i.e., as things that *make* her good in some respect. I might even say that I appreciate some of her qualities as *universally* good when instantiated in humans, i.e., properties of which we might say, "It is good for *the* human to have X." However, in saying these things, I am still appreciating the instantiated qualities themselves; I am not looking past them to some other property and value of humanity. To say that it is not really *these* qualities that are operative grounds of love—rather, the property of mere humanity—seems to add an unnecessary and implausible layer to the story.

Thus, while I see a possible role for Velleman's property of humanity as that which properly grounds a thin kind of love we should have toward any fellow human being—love for neighbors—I reject his view that mere humanity is the *sole* proper ground of love. I will turn now to a discussion of Kolodny's view of the proper grounds of love, and in particular his rejection of the quality theory. The aim of this discussion will be to draw a conclusion similar to the one I drew for Velleman's view, namely that Kolodny's monistic view of love's proper grounds is incomplete.

4.6 NIKO KOLODNY AGAINST THE QUALITY THEORY

As noted above, one reason Kolodny rejects the quality theory is that he thinks it fails to capture cases of familial love. Again, one obvious case it fails to capture is that of parental love for newborn infants: the qualities of an infant seem not to be the proper grounds of parental love

for her. Kolodny thinks this problem holds quite generally for familial love: the qualities of our family members are simply not what render our love for them appropriate. As he puts it, “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.”²²³ Recall that Kolodny’s notion of a “reason” for love is the same as my notion of a proper ground of love. His point, then, is that *relationships*—being someone’s parent, sibling, or child, etc.—are the proper grounds of familial love. Indeed, Kolodny makes the still more general claim that relationships are the sole proper grounds in *all* cases of love, including romantic and friendship love.²²⁴

But, what does Kolodny mean by “relationship”? He has in mind paradigm cases like friendships, romantic relationships, and familial relationships.²²⁵ He takes these relationships generally (though not always) to have several identifying characteristics. First, properly love-grounding relationships are *ongoing*, i.e., “they persist over time.” Second, such relationships hold between *particular* people. Third, they are *historical*, i.e., dependent on facts about the past: “Sarah is my mother only if she raised me, gave birth to me, or supplied the egg from which I developed.”²²⁶

In addition to pointing out these typical marks of all properly love-grounding relationships, Kolodny distinguishes two broad kinds of such relationships: “attitude-dependent” and “attitude-independent.”²²⁷ Romantic relationships and friendships are paradigm cases of attitude-dependent relationships. As the label suggests, whether an attitude-dependent

²²³ Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 139.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 135–136.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 149.

relationship obtains depends on whether a certain pattern of attitudes between people obtains. Chief among these attitudes is mutual concern for the wellbeing of the other person and of the relationship itself. Kolodny suggests that certain patterns of mutual activity (e.g., social, sexual, etc.) also partially constitute attitude-dependent relationships.

In contrast, attitude-*independent* relationships may obtain without any pattern of mutual attitudes or activity. According to Kolodny, familial relationships are the paradigm cases of attitude-independent relationships. For example, on Kolodny's view, that Amy is my sister does not depend on whether either of us are concerned about each other's wellbeing, or whether we communicate or spend time together. Rather, it simply depends on "a biological tie, or a fact about our upbringing."²²⁸ Of course, attitude-independent relationships often do involve patterns of mutual concern and activity. The point is simply that such patterns are not necessary for the relationships to obtain, or for them to function as proper grounds of love, according to Kolodny.²²⁹

Kolodny seems right that familial relationships are an important proper ground in cases of familial love. Indeed, the parental relationship might well be the *only* proper ground of parental love for a newborn. It also seems that relationships are proper grounds of love in many mature cases of romantic and friendship love: the history of mutual activity and benevolent attitudes that I have with my spouse and close friends does seem to be at least part of what renders my ongoing love for them appropriate. However, these concessions do not rule out the possibility that qualities may also serve as proper grounds of love in some cases. In the next section I will offer reasons for thinking that a pluralist account that includes qualities among love's proper grounds is better than Kolodny's relationship view.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ I explore and develop Kolodny's view of relationships in further depth in Chapter Six.

4.7 PROBLEMS WITH THE RELATIONSHIP VIEW

One problem with Kolodny's view is that it cannot account for the fact that the appropriateness of love often seems over-determined. In other words, often there are properly *many* operative grounds for a particular case of love. This seems especially true of mature, well-developed love in attitude-dependent relationships. Suppose a spouse has been happily married to her partner for 30 years. As noted above, in that case it would seem strange if her love was sustained by, or responsive to, just one thing, even if it were their relationship. Rather, in addition to the relationship we would expect there to be many features to which the spouse's love responds, such as the partner's kindness, trustworthy character, or abilities as a parent. Indeed, this diversity of sustaining operative grounds might well account for the stability of such cases of love. If certain qualities fade with time (e.g., intellectual powers, physical attractiveness, etc.), other sustaining operative grounds can compensate. Thus, mature cases of love seem over-determined by sustaining operative grounds in this way. But, as argued above in support of the quality theory, if we affirm such a range of possible *operative* grounds of love, there is pressure to affirm them as *proper* grounds as well. Otherwise, such mature cases of romantic love will seem inappropriate to some extent, insofar as they would be responsive to the wrong features. I take it that we could tell a similar story for a case of mature friendship.

Moreover, even the appropriateness of love in attitude-*independent* relationships—e.g., cases of familial love—seems to be over-determined in this way. Consider the case of a parent's love for his child. As noted above, when the child is an infant, Kolodny seems right that the proper ground of parental love is the mere fact of the parent's attitude-independent relationship to the child. However, in good circumstances, as the child matures the parent would come to appreciate particular characteristics the child has and these would begin to function as further sustaining operative grounds of his love for the child. Again, it seems best to think of these

further operative grounds also as *proper* grounds of love; otherwise we will be left affirming that there is, under these circumstances, a certain inappropriateness in parents' love for their children. The sort of over-determination I propose would account for the fact that healthy parent-child relationships can develop into rich friendships as the child becomes an adult. The development of the friendship parallels the addition of new sustaining operative grounds of love (that are also proper grounds) as the parent and child discover new good things about each other, beyond their mere familial relation.²³⁰ Insofar as Kolodny's narrower view of love's proper grounds does not allow for the sort of over-determination I describe here, it seems to fall short. Obviously, the pluralist view that I advocate easily accounts for such over-determination.

Second, certain cases of relational tension seem well explained by a pluralist account of love's proper grounds, and difficult to explain on Kolodny's view.²³¹ Consider a child's ambivalent attitude toward an abusive or untrustworthy parent. This ambivalence seems plausibly explained by the presence of two kinds of features that pull the child's attitude in different directions. On the one hand, the child has an attitude-independent relationship with his parent that serves as a proper ground of love for the parent. On the other hand, the parent has some bad qualities—i.e., being violent, or untrustworthy—which render love for her *inappropriate*. So, if the child loves the parent, this love is undermined to some extent, or at least strained, by the parent's character qualities that would—in a situation without a parental relationship—render love for her inappropriate. It seems Kolodny's relationship view of love's proper grounds is unable to account for the ambivalence of the child's attitude in such a case.

²³⁰ Kolodny would likely object that the non-relational properties are not really functioning as proper grounds of love when a parent appreciates the qualities of his child. He would suggest, rather, that one *effect* of love is a tendency to this sort of appreciation of non-relational qualities, and that this tendency has nothing to do with rendering love appropriate. See Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship," 139. I obviously disagree.

²³¹ I have drawn inspiration for this argument and these cases from Thomas Aquinas. See the *Summa Theologica*, II-II Q26, especially articles 6-10.

Kolodny might reply by suggesting that the significance of the qualities I have cited—being violent or untrustworthy—is that they represent patterns of behavior that undermine the appropriate-making *relationship* between parent and child, and thereby undermine the appropriateness of the child’s love. However, this sort of story seems unavailable to Kolodny in the familial case since, according to Kolodny, the sort of relationships that properly ground familial love are supposed to be attitude-*independent*, i.e., *not* dependent on patterns of attitudes and behavior. Thus, it is not clear that Kolodny can say that the child’s proper grounds for loving the violent and untrustworthy parent have been undermined in any way. Moreover, if we shift to a case where the parent is violent and untrustworthy toward the child’s *sister*—not the child himself—then it still seems the child’s proper grounds for loving the parent might plausibly be undermined, even though the parent treats him well. Why? Because the parent’s qualities play some role in rendering the child’s love appropriate or inappropriate.

Finally, Kolodny’s view comes with what seems to me the significant cost of dismissing early-stage romantic attitudes as forms of love. As noted earlier with regard to the quality theory, the pluralist about love’s proper grounds can tell a straightforward story about new love for a romantic partner: you recognize a good quality in a person (e.g., his kindness, her wit) and a kind of appropriate love is stirred in you. Kolodny rejects this picture, however, insisting that until you have a relationship of some sort, you do not really love the person at all.²³² As a result, he would characterize early-stage romantic attitudes as mere “attraction” and not love.²³³ However, this claim seems costly to me. For example, with one fell swoop it dismisses the “love at first

²³² Strictly speaking, Kolodny thinks the attitude is not love until the lover *believes* that she has a relationship of the relevant sort. See Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 139–140, 146.

²³³ If Kolodny conceded that romantic love typically begins in response to good qualities—i.e., if he conceded that qualities are typically the producing operative grounds of such love—he could hold that the initial romantic attitude is genuine love, but just of an inappropriate sort, since the relevant appropriate-making relationship would not yet be in place. However, this would leave him claiming that we typically and systematically respond to the wrong features in cases of new romantic love. As I argued above, there does not seem to be any reason to posit *this* sort of systematic inappropriateness about early romantic love. Perhaps for this reason, Kolodny does not take this position.

sight” tradition, which has a fair history in western culture. I readily concede that early romantic attitudes are *immature* forms of love at best (though, in the right context, no less appropriate for this), and that they grow and develop in various ways—including the gaining of Kolodny-style relational operative grounds as they mature. Nevertheless, to deny that they are cases of love at all seems a significant theoretical cost.

4.8 PROPER GROUNDS OF LOVE AS RELATIONALLY-CONDUCTIVE

In the foregoing sections of this chapter I addressed objections to the quality theory of love’s proper grounds mounted by Velleman and Kolodny. I tried to show that their objections do not undermine the idea that qualities could be proper grounds of love, though I conceded that qualities could not be the *only* kind of such proper grounds. Additionally, I suggested ways in which the positive views of love’s proper grounds proffered by Velleman and Kolodny are insufficient. With these arguments, then, I rest my case for a pluralist view of love’s proper grounds. However, before concluding the chapter, in this section I will speculate briefly on what might be a kind of unifying structure for the pluralist view. Put another way, I will reflect briefly on why love can have the different kinds of proper grounds that I have argued it can have. The arguments above should be understood as entirely distinct from my speculations here: if the latter fail, that need not bear on the former.

The basis for my speculation is the idea that love for a person is an attitude that draws us into and sustains a properly love-grounding relationship with that person.²³⁴ We can begin to see this by noticing that union, as described in Chapter Two, just is a kind of properly love-grounding relationship, and that union is one of love’s targets. Thus, as I will put it metaphorically in Chapter Seven, love is a kind of “glue” that draws us into relationships and

²³⁴ For now, Kolodny’s account of such relationships will do. I will revisit his account and develop it somewhat in Chapter Six.

holds them together.²³⁵ To properly support this idea that love is a kind of glue for relationships I will need a fully developed account of properly love-grounding relationships, and I will need to substantiate my claim that union just is one kind of such relationships. Since I will not provide this account or substantiation here, I will put off fully defending the idea until Chapters Six and Seven. Here I will simply assume it is correct and speculate on that basis.

Given, then, the idea that love draws us into and sustains properly love-grounding relationships, my speculation is that proper grounds of love are features of the beloved that would support such a relationship with him. To give this speculation a useful shorthand, I will say that proper grounds of love are *relationally-conducive* features of the beloved. My unifying claim, then, is that the features that may serve as proper grounds of love (as argued above) are all relationally-conducive features of the beloved. Indeed, I take it that a feature's being relationally-conducive is necessary and sufficient for its being a possible proper ground of love.

Since, as I will argue in Chapter Six, properly love-grounding relationships are incredibly valuable for human beings, if my speculation here is correct then we can see one important sense in which love's plural proper grounds are good: they are features that are conducive to, or supportive of, valuable relationships, and so they, themselves, are also good. Of course qualities like courage, wit, and talent are also good in a sense distinct from the value of relationships, and from the value of humanity. For example, virtues like courage are typically thought to make one a good person; the value of properly love-grounding relationships is typically not thought of in these terms. Thus, if my speculation is correct, there is both a unity and a plurality to the kinds of value reflected in proper grounds of love. In contrast, those features which cannot serve as proper grounds of love—e.g., the quality of cruelty—are bad: cruelty makes for bad people and bad relationships. Thus, my pluralist view of love's proper grounds follows Aquinas's view that

²³⁵ After beginning to use this metaphor of "glue", I noticed that Robert Nozick has coincidentally used the same language to describe infatuation, which he takes to be a precursor to romantic love. See Nozick, "Love's Bond," 78.

“the good” is the “proper cause of love.”²³⁶ A feature may serve as a proper ground of love only insofar as it is good.

To see whether my speculation can bear any weight, it will be helpful to consider each kind of proper ground of love that I have included in my pluralist view. Consider first traits of character. If my speculation is correct, the reason they may serve as proper grounds of love is that they are relationally-conducive. For example, it seems clear that the trait of trustworthiness is relationally-conducive.²³⁷ In relationships we depend upon each other. In particular, we must trust that those with whom we have relationships are telling us the truth when they communicate, and that they are being faithful to the relationship with their actions. If someone is lying to me, or secretly sabotaging my interests, it will be nearly impossible to have a healthy relationship with her. Thus, if I am to have such a relationship, it is essential that she be trustworthy in these ways. The trait of kindness also seems important for healthy relationships, though in slightly different ways. While kindness might not be quite as necessary for healthy relationships as trustworthiness, without kindness a relationship will be much more difficult and unpleasant than it should be. The friend with a tendency toward biting and unjustified criticism should not long be a friend. For similar reasons, a wide range of virtuous character traits—courage, temperance, wisdom, justice, generosity, loyalty, etc.—are also relationally-conducive features and thus may serve as proper grounds of love.

²³⁶ ST I-II 27.1.

²³⁷ Aristotle made something like this point: Friends cannot “admit each other to friendship or be friends till each has been found lovable and been trusted by each.” Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross, J. L. Ackrill, and J. O. Urmson, Oxford World’s Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), VIII.3.

Healthy existing relationships are also relationally-conducive features of a person.²³⁸ For example, the fact that you have had a strong healthy friendship with someone in the past indicates quite clearly that an ongoing friendship of the same sort with her is possible in the future. Indeed, there is good reason to think the past friendship itself will make the future continuing relationship closer and better in certain respects. The knowledge you have gained of your friend's particular aims and goals over the course of the past friendship—e.g., that he wants to become a doctor, or to start a business, or to raise a family, or to lose weight, or to become more generous—will tend to help you better serve these aims appropriately in the future of the friendship. Similarly, your history of activity together will tend to make future activity richer and more enjoyable. Thus, a history of good friendship is a feature that supports an ongoing friendship, and so it is, on my account, a proper ground of love. We can make similar arguments that past healthy romantic relationships and familial relationships are relationally-conducive, and thus may also serve as proper grounds of love.

Even a person's mere humanity—the proper ground of love proposed by Velleman—seems relationally conducive in a relevant sense. As suggested above, I take it that a person's mere humanity is the proper ground for a thin kind of love that we ought to have for any fellow human being—what I have called “love for neighbors.” Such love might manifest in a willingness to help a foreigner find her way in one's city, to open a door for a delivery person, or to provide emergency aid to an injured stranger. To be sure, the sort of societal relations that such love draws us into are nowhere near as substantial as close friendships, romantic relationships, or familial relationships. Indeed, they are as thin as the corresponding love for one's fellow human

²³⁸ One might worry, here, that relationships are not really features *of a person*. However, it seems to me that they are. A relationship essentially involves the two participants. Without both people there is no relationship. This essential connection between a person and her close relationships suggests to me that it is perfectly intelligible to think of a relationship as a feature of a person. I also think that our close relationships partially constitute our identities in certain ways, which would allow for a stronger sense in which a close relationship is a feature of a person. However, this point requires more argument that I will not give here. In any case, the point is one that others have made. For example, see Nozick, “Love's Bond,” 71ff.

being. Nevertheless, it seems to me they still amount to a kind of union or relationship,²³⁹ and that a person's humanity is conducive to such a relationship. Such social relations are not obviously possible with objects that lack the property of humanity.

Other properties that sometimes function as *operative* grounds of love seem to fit my model less well. For example, as noted above, love often arises in response to physical characteristics (e.g., green eyes, red hair) and it seems hard to claim that such properties are relationally-conducive in any robust sense, or objectively more so than certain different properties (e.g., brown eyes or blond hair). Indeed, love is sometimes stirred in response to idiosyncratic qualities that others might find downright unattractive. (Consider Descartes's self-reported attraction to cross-eyed women.)²⁴⁰ And yet, as discussed above, there seems to be nothing wrong with loving on such operative grounds, and so, in this weaker sense, such properties may render love appropriate and function as proper grounds of love. Thus, we have a set of features that my speculative account seems not to capture: I hold that they are proper grounds of love, but they seem not to be relationally-conducive.

However, I think my speculation can yet be harmonized with these cases if we employ part of Aristotle's account of love and friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. According to Aristotle, there are three kinds of love, reciprocal instances of which partially constitute three corresponding kinds of friendship.²⁴¹ Each kind of love is distinguished by (what I would call) its operative ground. In one kind, the operative ground is something the lover finds pleasant or appealing about the beloved. My thought, then, is that qualities like red hair or crossed eyes are *appealing* to some lovers, and as appealing they are also relationally-conducive in some way.

²³⁹ Aristotle's idea of friendship between citizens lurks in the background here. See *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII.

²⁴⁰ René Descartes, *Descartes: Philosophical Letters*, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 224–225. I thank Calvin Normore for this example.

²⁴¹ *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.2.

The pedestrian idea here is that relationships just go better when you find the other person pleasant or appealing. Indeed, if you find a person unpleasant it is hard to see how you could have a healthy, functioning friendship or romantic relationship. Of course, I can concede, here, that other features may be *more* important to the well-functioning of a healthy relationship (e.g., virtue, or a history of relationship). Nevertheless, that you find someone pleasant does support the possibility of a healthy relationship with that person. Therefore, love in response to such qualities would fit with my picture whereby love's proper grounds are relationally-conducive features.

One might worry, here, that whether something is pleasant is either entirely or at least partially subjective, and thus that we still cannot say that such properties are genuinely relationally-conducive, since whether something is relationally-conducive is an objective matter. I grant that whether something is pleasant is at least partially subjective. However, it seems a bit quick to say that this entails there is no sense in which pleasant features, *qua* pleasant, are genuinely relationally-conducive. There does seem to be an objective fact of the matter about whether something is pleasant to someone. This is just a fact about the given person's psychology. Thus, perhaps we should say that properties like red hair or crossed eyes are genuinely relationally-conducive *to* some people, or *for* some people, since such properties may not be pleasant to, or for, all. Nevertheless, it still seems that the at least partially subjective and relativized sense of 'relationally-conducive' indicated by the use of these prepositions ("to" and "for") is a genuine sense of the notion, and thus that pleasant properties yet fit with my picture of love's proper grounds as relationally-conducive.

A deeper worry might be that some people find thoroughly bad qualities pleasing. Consider the girlfriend of a biker who finds her man's cruel, violent streak pleasing, and loves him romantically on that operative ground. Is his cruel and violent character thereby a

relationally-conducive feature and a proper ground of love? On balance, I think not. Here we should say that the overwhelming tendency of such a trait to undermine *healthy* romantic relationships completely drowns out any relationally-conducive value of the fact that she finds the trait pleasing, and thus that the trait is not a proper ground of love (merely an operative ground), and that the case of love is inappropriate due to his violent streak.²⁴² In short, cruel, violent character is not relationally-conducive, despite the sad fact that some people might find it pleasing. This kind of case reminds us that the sense of appropriateness attributable to cases of love with merely pleasant qualities as operative grounds is quite weak, and may be outweighed by features that render love inappropriate in a more substantive sense.

What are the bad features that render love inappropriate? Working from my positive model, I speculate that they are features that undermine healthy relationships. For example, that someone is violent or untrustworthy renders romantic or friendship love for her inappropriate. Why? Because such qualities undermine the possibility of healthy instances of the concomitant relationships. This is not necessarily so for a quality like vulgarity. In many cases, minor vulgarity—though perhaps unpleasant and bad in some sense—will not render love inappropriate since the vulgarity does not necessarily undermine the possibility of a healthy friendship or romantic relationship. If a case of vulgarity were such that it *did* undermine the possibility of such relationships, then I would be inclined to think it did, in fact, render the relevant forms of love inappropriate.

4.9 CONCLUSION

It has been my central aim in this chapter to defend what I have called a pluralist account of the proper grounds of love. According to this account, a wide range of features may function

²⁴² There may yet be a kind of love she could have for him—perhaps with his humanity as its operative ground—that would be appropriate. However, her romantic love, with his cruelty and violence as its operative ground, surely seems inappropriate.

as proper grounds of love, i.e., features that render love appropriate in certain cases. I began by motivating the quality theory—the simple view that qualities such as wit, talent, or virtue may function as proper grounds of love. I proceeded by addressing certain objections to the quality theory mounted by David Velleman and Niko Kolodny, and by raising problems for each of their alternative views. One result of this discussion was that while it seems qualities cannot be the *only* kind of proper ground of love, nothing Velleman or Kolodny have said suggests that qualities could not be one of several kinds of such grounds. Indeed, I argued that a view on which there is a plurality of proper grounds of love has more explanatory power than any of the other three theories alone. I speculated that what unifies these plural proper grounds of love is that each is a feature that supports or sustains a relevant relationship with the beloved.

The central upshot of this chapter, then, is that there seem to be several kinds of proper grounds of love, including personal qualities (e.g., beauty, virtue, talent, etc.), the property of mere humanity, and certain relationships. Indeed, I wish to leave open the possibility that there are still further kinds of proper grounds that I have not discussed. If I am right, where most contemporary theories of love’s proper grounds have gone wrong is in their monism about the kinds of such grounds.

This central upshot of the chapter has important implications for Augustine’s argument in Chapter One. Specifically, I think it can help us to see just what is wrong with premise (1) of Augustine’s argument—“The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has.” The aim of Chapter Five will be to draw out that point and to clarify my criticism of Augustine’s argument.

CHAPTER 5 – A PROBLEM WITH AUGUSTINE’S ARGUMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One, I explained the following argument from Augustine’s *De doctrina christiana*:

- (1) The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has.
- (2) Every person has equal value.
- (3) Therefore, we should love all people equally.

After engaging two responses to the argument, I there concluded that although the argument does not succeed—premise (1) seems to have clear counterexamples—it seems difficult to say exactly what is wrong with it. As a result, the following important question emerged: if the degree to which we love something need not be proportional to the value it has, what, exactly, *is* the correct relation between love and value? The failure of Augustine’s argument also raised a second, perhaps related question: if love need not be equal, why, exactly, should we love some people more than others?

Thus far in the dissertation I have deferred answers to these questions in order to lay the groundwork necessary to answer them properly. Specifically, in Chapters Two and Three I gave an account of love and in Chapter Four I gave a pluralistic account of love's proper grounds—those features in response to which love properly arises or is sustained. With these accounts in hand, I am now, finally, in a position to address the two questions raised in Chapter One, which has been the central aim of the dissertation.

In Chapter Five, then, I will try to point out more clearly what is wrong with Augustine's argument and thereby begin to articulate the proper relation between love and value. My thesis will be that Augustine's premise (1) assumes too narrow a view of the kind of value to which love for people is properly a response. The premise seems to assume that love should be a response *only* to the value of a person as such when, in fact, as argued in Chapter Four, love may also quite properly be a response to the value of certain qualities of a person (e.g., wit, talent, virtue, etc.), or to the value of certain relationships (e.g., friendships and familial or romantic relationships). While this problem with premise (1) illuminates something of the proper connection between love and value, it leaves open the question of whether love should be *proportional* to value, as Augustine suggests in premise (1), even if we broaden the kinds of value in view. I will leave discussion of this aspect of the relation between love and value for subsequent chapters (Six and Seven). Let us begin, then, by considering what is wrong with Augustine's argument.

5.2 LOVE AND KINDS OF VALUE

Recall from Chapter One that premise (1) of Augustine's argument—"the degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has"—assumes that love is properly a response to the value possessed by an object as such, i.e., the value it possesses

according to its nature. So, according to Augustine, love for a human being should be a response to the value she possesses as a human being. It is because of this assumption that Augustine thinks that we should love things to a greater degree that possess such nature-value in greater degree (e.g., God more than people) and that we should love equally things that possess it to an equal degree (e.g., we should love all people equally).

However, if my argument in Chapter Four is correct, it should now be clear that love is properly a response to a range of kinds of value, not merely to the value an object possesses according to its nature. Recall that in Chapter Four I gave an account of love's proper grounds—those features the apprehension of which properly produces or sustains love, or, less precisely, those features to which love is properly a response. There I argued that love for a person may properly be a response to certain of his qualities (such as beauty, virtue, wit, or talent), to a relationship that the lover bears to him (such as a friendship, or a familial or romantic relationship), or to his mere humanity (as in the case of love for a stranger). Furthermore, I suggested, following Aquinas, that these features are only proper grounds of love insofar as they are valuable. Thus, the picture emerging from Chapter Four was that love may properly be a response to a range of different kinds of value.

To be sure, the case in which love is a response to the value of a person's mere humanity fits well with Augustine's assumption. To love in response to that value amounts to the same thing as loving in response to the value the person possesses by nature. But, the other cases—love as a response to valuable qualities or relationships—seem not to fit Augustine's picture. In those cases, love is properly a response to instantiations of value that do not necessarily constitute the value of the person as such. That a person exhibits the valuable qualities of beauty, virtue, wit, or talent to a greater degree than another person does not make the first more valuable *as a person* than the second. Similarly, the value of a special relationship that your

beloved has to you does not make him more valuable *as a person* than anyone else. Thus, if love may properly be a response to such valuable features as qualities and relationships, it seems Augustine is wrong to assume (in premise [1]) that love should be a response only to the value of a person as such.

The way I have put the point so far suggests that love need not be a response to value possessed by a person, but rather that it may be a response to value inhering in qualities or relationships. However, it may strike some that this way of putting it is not quite right. For example, it might be suggested that a person's good qualities or valuable relationship to someone are features in virtue of which the person himself is made valuable in some sense. For example, to say that a person is beautiful or virtuous might be understood as saying that he has a certain aesthetic value or character value. Similarly, to say that one person has a valuable relationship to you might be understood as saying that she has a certain relational value to you. On this view, each feature that I argued may serve as a proper ground of love would be understood as a feature in virtue of which the relevant person is made valuable in some distinct and corresponding sense of value. This way of putting things would be similar to Augustine's distinction—which I explained in Chapter One—between the value scales of nature, utility, and justice. These scales of value identify three different kinds of value that an object may have. For example, a person may have a certain nature-value simply in virtue of being human, a certain use-value in virtue of his ability to satisfy the needs and desires of other humans (e.g., as a servant may), and a certain justice- or character-value owing to his virtue (e.g., whether courage, temperance, wisdom, justice, etc.). Thus, according to Augustine, people may possess a range of different kinds of value, not merely the value owing to their human nature.

On this different construal, the problem I am suggesting with Augustine's argument would be that Augustine assumes love should only be a response to the nature-value of a person

when in fact it may quite properly be a response to someone's use-value or character-value. Moreover, on this construal, there would also be a problem with Augustine's premise (2), which claims that every person has equal value. Indeed, it seems quite obvious that some people are more useful than others and that some are more virtuous than others, and thus that not everyone possesses equal value of every kind. I take it that this alternative way of putting things voices essentially the same objection to Augustine's argument noted at first, and thus I take no issue with it. Either formulation will do for my purposes. The basic problem is that Augustine takes too narrow a view of the kinds of value to which love may properly be a response, whether we understand that value to inhere in qualities, relationships, or people.

5.3 AN AUGUSTINIAN REPLY: SELFISH LOVE

A proponent of Augustine's argument would doubtless reply to the objection I have raised. The following passage from *De vera religione* (partially quoted in Section 1.9) suggests a basic shape for such a reply:

If a person were to love another not as himself but as a beast of burden, or as the baths, or as a gaudy or garrulous bird, that is for some temporal pleasure or advantage he hoped to derive, he must serve not a person but, what is much worse, a foul and detestable vice, in that he does not love the person as a person ought to be loved... A human being is not to be loved by people even as brothers after the flesh are loved, or sons, or wives, or kinsfolk, or relatives, or fellow citizens... Let no one think that is inhuman. It is more inhuman to love someone because he is your son and not because he is a human, that is, not to love that in him which belongs to God, but to love that which belongs to yourself. What marvel if he who loves his private advantage and not the commonweal does not obtain a kingdom?²⁴³

As it pertains to my objection, Augustine's basic idea in this passage is that when we love in response to qualities such as beauty, wit, or talent, or in response to friendships, familial relationships, romantic relationships, or even common citizenship, our love is essentially seeking after "temporal pleasure," or our own "private advantage." In the language of Chapter One,

²⁴³ Augustine, *De vera religione*, 87-88. Translation adapted from Augustine, "Of True Religion (De Vera Religione)," 270.

Augustine would call all such loves instances of use-love, i.e., love in response to use-value, since it is essentially aimed at satisfying certain needs or desires of the lover. Moreover, Augustine would likely suggest that our loving beneficence—i.e., the activity deriving from our tendency of will toward the good of the beloved—would be ill-motivated. If we love someone, then we should seek his good not because it serves our own interests to do so, but rather because we care about the welfare of the beloved itself. Part of Augustine’s point, then, might be that use-love infects our beneficence with the wrong motives. In that case we “serve not a man but... a foul and detestable vice,” since our motive is not to serve the other person but rather to serve ourselves. As a result, the sort of use-love I deem appropriate in my objection—i.e., love that is a response to qualities and relationships—hardly seems noble or appropriate. Instead, Augustine might say, we should love a person in virtue of his human nature and thereby avoid the selfishness of use-love.²⁴⁴

5.4 COUNTER-REPLIES

Augustine seems correct that pleasure and personal advantage typically figure in our assessment of the value of operative grounds of love like beauty, wit, virtue, talent, and special relationships. When such features serve as operative grounds of love, more often than not they do bring us pleasure or advantage, this fact figures in our assessment that the features are valuable, this fact is part of what our love is a response to, and thus our love is self-regarding to some extent. The beauty, wit, or talent of our romantic partner brings us pleasure and so we find the quality to be good. Similarly, our friendship or spousal relationship is both pleasurable and advantageous to us, and so we find it to be good.

²⁴⁴ I am indebted to Bonnie Kent for the basic shape of this reply, and for pointing me to *De vera religione* as a source of this view. Importantly, although Augustine articulated this kind of view in *De vera religione*—one of his early works (389-390 CE)—it seems that he abandoned it toward the end of his writing career. Specifically, it seems that he retracted the view that we should not love family members in virtue of their familial relationships to us. See his *Retractiones* Book I, 12.8.

However, at least with respect to the relevant pleasures, it seems Augustine's picture is somewhat distorted. My worry is that Augustine puts too much distance between the pleasure and the quality or relationship in which we find such pleasure. It is not as though the lover is on a general hunt for pleasure and finds the beloved's qualities or her relationship to him merely to be a convenient means of securing such pleasure. In other words, in most cases where pleasurable qualities or relationships are operative grounds of love, it is not as though the lover is simply *using* the beloved (and his qualities and their relationship) for pleasure, viewing the qualities and the relationship as mere instrumental goods.²⁴⁵ Indeed, the qualities, the relationship, and the pleasure a lover takes in them seem more bound up together than this picture allows. It seems rather that the pleasure contributes to the lover's assessment that the quality or relationship is non-instrumentally good, i.e., good because of what it is and not because of what it gets for the lover. While pleasure surely figures in the lover's assessment of the qualities and relationship, the lover is typically focused on the qualities and the relationship themselves and not the resulting pleasure.

Moreover, what is so wrong with pleasure or advantage being at the root of love? As I suggested in Chapter Four, in many cases the beloved typically *wants* the lover to take pleasure in him. Consider, first, the case of taking pleasure in certain qualities of the beloved. What beautiful, witty, or talented person hopes his romantic partner or friend takes no pleasure in these good qualities? Of course, there are limits to this desire: as noted in Chapter Four, if, after 30 years of marriage, all your spouse could see in you was your wit you might think her love was shallow. But, such cases are atypical. As suggested in Chapter Four, cases of committed long-term love typically exhibit many operative grounds, only some of which are pleasurable qualities like beauty, wit, or talent. Thus, I see no reason to worry if qualities like beauty, wit, or talent are part of the story.

²⁴⁵ I do not deny that there could be such cases, just that they are necessary or typical.

The case of seeking the pleasures or advantages of relationships also need not raise worries. Again, what friend, lover, or family-member would take offense at the fact that someone who loves him does so, in part, in virtue of how enjoyable they find their relationship? Do we not *want* our friends, lovers, and family-members to take pleasure in our relationships with them? The idea that our friends, lovers, or family members would find advantage in us seems equally inoffensive. The truth is, it is part of human nature to need others. This is just part of what it is to be social animals with limited resources. Indeed, it seems humans need close relationships themselves: without them, we fail to develop and flourish. Given this fact, why should I take offense when someone finds our relationship useful or advantageous, and when that fact figures in her love for me? Again, there may be limits here: we typically hope that those who love us also do so in virtue of features they admire about us, or that they take pleasure in, and not merely in virtue of our use to them. Nevertheless, that the advantage of a relationship figures among the operative grounds of love seems unproblematic.

As a final counter to Augustine's reply, it seems incorrect that our motives in loving action are necessarily self-regarding if self-regarding pleasure or advantage figures in our assessment of love's operative grounds. The key point here is that the operative grounds of love are typically distinct from the lover's motives in loving action.²⁴⁶ Consider a person's love for her friend. While the operative ground of her love may be the value of certain qualities of the friend and of the relationship she has to him—the value of both of which may be related to the fact that she finds them pleasurable—when her friend needs something, it is not necessarily the case that she acts to provide it in order to receive pleasure. Rather, if the friendship is healthy, her motive

²⁴⁶ I say "typically" because, as Niko Kolodny has pointed out, there seem to be cases in which the operative ground of love is also one's motive in loving action. For example, suppose the operative ground of your love for a friend is your valuable relationship to him. In a case where you are not sure how you should act toward him, after some deliberation your motive for action might be that you think this is what a friend ought to do. In other words, the relationship also turns out to be the motive, in some sense. See Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship," 161. One might quibble that the operative ground of love, in this case, is the *specific* relationship between the two friends while the motive is the *ideal* of friendship. However, perhaps the case could be modified to address this issue.

is, more than likely, simply to further her friend's good. This motive need not be compromised by the fact that the operative ground of her love is pleasurable qualities and a pleasurable relationship. Similarly, if the operative ground of a child's love for her parent is the relationship she has to the parent—in which the child sees considerable personal advantage—it does not follow that the child's motives in loving action must be her own personal advantage. Rather, again, the child's motive could still be her parent's good. This is because, in most cases, the operative grounds of love are one thing while the motives of loving action are another.

5.5 CONCLUSION

I conclude, then, that the Augustinian reply need not worry us. It seems perfectly appropriate for qualities and relationships that lovers find both pleasurable and advantageous to serve as operative grounds of love. The upshot is that part of the problem with Augustine's argument is now evident: the argument assumes that love should be a response to the value of an object when in fact love may quite properly be a response to the value of certain qualities of the object, or of a relationship to the object, neither of which necessarily constitute the value of the object itself. Or, put another way, love may properly be a response to a range of kinds of value possessed by the object (e.g., relational value, character value, etc.) and not merely the kind of value Augustine has in mind—value according to nature.

This problem with Augustine's argument also makes clear part of the story of the proper relation between love and value. However, much of that story remains opaque. In particular, what are we to make of Augustine's suggestion in premise (1) that the degree of one's love should be *proportional* to the relevant value? Even if love may properly be a response to other kinds of value—e.g., the value of qualities or relationships—should it be proportional to such value? My next aims will be to address this question and to explain why we should love some

people more than others. However, in order to do so I will need to lay further groundwork. In particular, I will need to say more about the kinds of relationships to which love may properly be a response and the value that they exhibit. I will take up this task in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER 6 – ON RELATIONSHIPS AND THEIR VALUE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One I explained Augustine’s argument to the conclusion that we should love all people equally. Premise (1) of that argument claims that the degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has. In Chapter Five I argued that premise (1) of Augustine’s argument goes wrong when applied to love for people since it assumes that love is properly a response only to the value of a person as such. Drawing on my Chapter Four view of love’s proper grounds—i.e., those features in response to which love properly arises or is sustained—I claimed that love may properly be a response to the value of other features of the beloved, including certain of his qualities or a relationship between lover and beloved. Thus, I claimed that Augustine takes too narrow a view of the kind of value to which love may properly be a response. I suggested that this line of thought illuminates something of the proper relation between love and value, in partial fulfillment of one of the central aims of my dissertation. However, I also noted that it leaves much of that relation opaque—in particular, whether Augustine is right to claim that the degree of one’s love should be *proportional* to value in some

way, even if the kinds of value in view are broadened to include the value of qualities and relationships.

Ultimately, in Chapter Seven, I will argue that while the degree of one's love need not be proportional to the value of qualities possessed by the beloved, love *should* be proportional to the value of certain relationships between lover and beloved. That love should be proportional in this way will form the basis of my account of why we should love some people more than others in Chapter Seven. I will argue there that we should typically love those relationally closer to us more than those relationally distant from us because closer relationships are typically more valuable or important to us than more distant ones.²⁴⁷ To support this point, however, I will need a clearer picture of both the kind of relationships I have in mind and their value. Thus, in this present chapter—Chapter Six—I will offer such a picture. I will describe in some detail what sort of relationships may properly ground love, and I will sketch why, and in what sense, such relationships are valuable. I will conclude the chapter by arguing that close instances of such relationships are typically more valuable both non-finally (e.g., instrumentally) and finally (i.e., as ends) than more distant ones. Arguing these claims will leave me positioned to argue, in Chapter Seven, that we should typically love those to whom we are relationally closer more than those from whom we are relationally more distant.

6.2 GOOD FRIENDSHIPS

In Chapter Four I provisionally accepted Niko Kolodny's account of properly love-grounding relationships. Here I will refine Kolodny's view in various ways—or, at least put different language to it—to arrive at the view of such relationships that I fully endorse. Rather than the cumbersome, 'properly love-grounding relationship,' I will use the simpler terms 'good

²⁴⁷ There will be one important exception which I will begin to explore in Section 6.10.

relationship,’ ‘good friendship,’ ‘good familial relationship,’ etc., to refer generally to the kinds of relationships that may serve as proper grounds of love.

As noted in Chapter Four, according to Kolodny, good relationships of all kinds share three typical characteristics: they are ongoing or persistent over time, they hold between particular people, and they are historical, i.e., they depend on facts about the past, such as one’s history of attitudes and activity with a person, or certain familial facts (e.g., facts about who gave birth to whom, who adopted whom, or who married whom).²⁴⁸

According to Kolodny, at the most general level there are two kinds of good relationships: attitude-dependent and attitude-independent.²⁴⁹ In this and the next two sections I will address these two kinds, beginning here with attitude-dependent relationships. According to Kolodny, good friendships and romantic relationships are paradigm cases of attitude-dependent relationships. As suggested by the label, Kolodny thinks such relationships consist (in part) in certain attitudes one has toward the other person in the relationship and toward the relationship itself. For example, he thinks good friendships and romantic relationships consist in a pattern of concern “for one another, for the relationship, and for the pattern itself.”²⁵⁰

Kolodny also suggests that such attitude-dependent relationships often further consist in certain patterns of mutual activity between relatives, such as leisure, social, or sexual activity.²⁵¹ Of course, this claim is consistent with the idea that the pattern of mutual activity could be marked by long physical separations and breaks in communication. One thinks here of friends that live in different cities or of two lovers separated by war. In such cases there remains a *pattern* of mutual activity—e.g., finally being together again after long separations, exchanging

²⁴⁸ Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 148.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 149.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

letters every few weeks, or talking on the phone when possible. If no such pattern is in place—even if marked by long pauses in activity—it seems there is no genuine friendship or romantic relationship.

To flesh out Kolodny's picture and cast it in terms consistent with my project, it will be helpful to step through an example of good friendship as it develops from inception to maturity. Suppose two people that do not yet know each other happen to be taking the same course at a university. At first, they are not friends. If a good friendship is to develop, from the start each must have a certain basic set of positive attitudes toward the other, which I would characterize as a love of one's fellow human being or a love of one's neighbor, as described in Chapter Two. For example, each must be willing to be around the other and to interact in friendly ways—e.g., perhaps being willing to sit next to each other in class, make small talk, and to learn a bit about the other. Put in the terms of Chapter Two, each must have a tendency of will toward a thin kind of union instantiated by, expressed by, and produced by such activities. Similarly, each must have a general tendency of will toward the good of the other—e.g., perhaps being willing to share notes if the other is absent, or to pick up the other's pencil if it falls on the ground, and certainly to refrain from intentionally harming the other person. If one or both of the two were unwilling to sit next to the other, to talk to the other, or to help the other in such small ways—i.e., if one or both of them lacked love for her neighbor—then it is hard to see how a good friendship could develop between them.

Suppose, then, that each person has this love of neighbor for the other. Given my account of love's proper grounds in Chapter Four, the value of each person's mere humanity would serve as the proper ground of this love. As such, it would be an attitude that each might have for any other person under the same circumstances. However, if a good friendship is to develop, then each person must come to have further proper grounds of love for the other. As I suggested in

Chapter Four, it is quite typical for certain attractive qualities of the other person to play this role.²⁵² You notice that the other person is funny, or smart, or kind and this stirs a new kind of love for him.²⁵³ Typically, among these qualities is the fact that the other person appreciates or likes you. I take it that this discovery of attractive qualities in the other is what accounts for our sense that we “click” with someone; in such moments we come to see potential in the other for a genuine friendship. The new love is more particular than the prior love of neighbor: it is stirred by qualities that not just anyone has, and so it is a kind of love that one would not have for just anyone (though one might have it for others with the same qualities).

If all goes well, over time this new kind of love would draw the two people into a closer and more personal kind of union. Topics of conversation might range more widely and perhaps be more personal at times. Mutual activities might branch out beyond the original context of the course they were both taking and might include social activities that each chooses to do together. Each person might come to know increasingly more about the other. Similarly, aspects of the other’s good to which one might contribute, and the costs one might be willing to bear in doing so, would broaden. Perhaps one would now be willing to help him move into a new apartment on the weekend. With the development of this new kind of love and the union of which it is part, the two would have a genuine good friendship, albeit a relatively new one.

The development of the relationship into a mature good friendship would occur as a yet further proper ground was added to each person’s love for the other, namely, the friendship itself and its extension over time. As the friendship continues, the relationship and its history begin to take on a value and import of their own, distinct from the qualities one appreciates about the other person. A love properly grounded on the friendship and its history in this way would be

²⁵² See Aron et al., “Experiences of Falling in Love,” 251.

²⁵³ This new love might either replace one’s love of neighbor or might simply layer on top of it. For my purposes, it doesn’t much matter which.

even more particular than a love grounded on certain qualities of the other: no one but this person would have the same past and present relationship with you. In such a mature good friendship, the union between the two would continue to be instantiated, expressed, and produced by a pattern of social activity—by which each person was attentive to the other, shared with the other, gained knowledge of the other, expressed love and commitment toward the other, and was aware of these facts—but it would grow more robust over time as each came to know the other more completely. The aspects of the other’s good that one would be willing to pursue, and the costs one might be willing to incur in doing so, might also become more substantial.

Of course, the example I have described here might admit of variations. Perhaps it would be possible to develop a fairly long history of mutual activity with someone without coming to appreciate any particular qualities of the other person, or without that sense of potential for friendship. This might occur with a long-term coworker or a servant in your house. In such cases, perhaps it would be possible to shift from a general love of neighbor to a love properly grounded on one’s history together, without an intervening phase of love properly grounded on qualities. Such a progression might mean that the love one has for the other is of a different kind, according to its different proper grounds. Nevertheless, I take it that this could also be a genuine kind of friendship.

Furthermore, the kind of union instantiated between friends also admits of great variety. As noted in Chapter Two, perhaps there are some friendships in which conversations focus only on certain topics—e.g. collectible stamps or surfing. Perhaps there are other friendships that studiously *avoid* certain topics of conversation—e.g., a religious disagreement or one’s childhood abuse. Similarly, perhaps there are friendships in which the mutual activity pursued by the friends is only of a certain kind—e.g., taking a dance class together or having a beer after work.

In any case, regardless of such variations, the main point to see is that good friendships consist in what I have called union between two people. I take it that this claim captures Kolodny's idea that such relationships consist both in a "pattern of concern" for one another and for the relationship, and in a pattern of mutual activity. A mature good friendship will consist in both the present instantiation of union and a history of union.

Finally, I take it that a good romantic relationship is simply a particular kind of good friendship that instantiates a kind of union that ordinary friendships do not. While I will not endeavor to describe this union in any detail (my aims are served just as well by lumping it crudely with the union of friendship I described above), it seems to me that romantic union is distinguished from the union of ordinary friendship by a past or present sexualized mutual attentiveness and sharing between people, and perhaps also by certain feelings or emotions that typically accompany such activity.²⁵⁴ In other respects, I take it that romantic relationships are like ordinary friendships, as described above.²⁵⁵

6.3 CAN FRIENDSHIPS BE PROPER GROUNDS OF LOVE?

One might worry that my view of good friendships generates a vicious circularity in their role as proper grounds of love. In the previous section and in Chapter Four I claimed (with Kolodny) that good friendships may serve as proper grounds of love for a friend; here, I have claimed that such friendships partially *consist* in love for one's friend or romantic partner, insofar as they consist in union which includes mutual love (and mutual loving commitment) as one of

²⁵⁴ I obviously owe an explanation of what I mean by "sexualized" here, though I cannot give it here. I hope to take up this topic in future work.

²⁵⁵ One might think that sexualized activity is unnecessary for romantic relationships to be such. Perhaps there are certain "celibate romances" with no past, present, or future of sexualized mutual attentiveness, sharing, or associated feelings. While I think relationships of that sort are surely possible, I think calling them "romances" or "romantic relationships" is a misnomer. Absent the features I have gestured at, such relationships seem to me nothing more than ordinary friendships.

its elements. Thus, in these cases it might seem that what properly grounds one's love is one's love, which might suggest that in such cases love in fact has no proper ground at all.

Given this worry, it seems we should refine the claim that good friendships may serve as proper grounds of love. Specifically, it seems best to say that all aspects of such a friendship *except* your present love for (or loving commitment to) the other may serve together as a proper ground of your love for him.²⁵⁶ For example, the following features could, together, properly ground your present love for your friend: your past and present mutual attentiveness, your past and present mutual sharing of thoughts and feelings, your knowledge of each other, your *past* mutual love and commitment, your friend's present love and commitment toward you, and your past and present mutual awareness of these facts. In this case love would not be self-grounding or ungrounded.

Granted, if a good friendship partially consists in my present love for the other (as I have suggested above), the problem raised here would prevent us from saying that such friendship with a person is, strictly speaking, the proper ground of my love for him in mature cases. Nevertheless, in the case just noted—where our friendship *minus my present love* serves as my present love's proper ground—the claim is more-or-less that the relationship is the proper ground of love. And this sort of claim seems adequate to stabilize the idea that attitude-dependent relationships may serve as proper grounds of love.

6.4 FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIPS

The second kind of good relationship that Kolodny identifies is what he calls an attitude-*independent* relationship. According to Kolodny, familial relationships are paradigm cases of this kind of relationship. The main thing that distinguishes them from attitude-dependent relationships is that they do not necessarily consist in a pattern of reciprocal attitudes or mutual

²⁵⁶ Kolodny offers a reply of basically this form. See Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship," 162.

activity. Rather, certain historical facts are sufficient for an attitude-independent relationship to obtain. For example (to repeat from Chapter Four), that Amy is my sister does not depend on whether either of us is concerned about the other's wellbeing, or whether we communicate or spend time together. Rather, it simply depends on "a biological tie, or a fact about our upbringing."²⁵⁷ Of course, attitude-independent relationships often do involve patterns of mutual concern and activity—or union, as I would put it. Kolodny's point is simply that such patterns are not necessary for the relevant relationships to obtain, or for them to serve as proper grounds of love. Since I think Kolodny's term 'attitude-independent relationship' is cumbersome and can be misleading,²⁵⁸ I will use the term 'good familial relationship' instead.

Kolodny is surely correct that we can have familial relationships with people without having any present or past patterns of attitudes or activity with them. For example, if I had a distant sister, it does seem that she would be my sister regardless of the fact that I may never have met her and regardless of any attitudes I may or may not have toward her. That she would be my sister would come simply from the fact that she is the daughter of my mother and father (or at least one of them).

Could such a distant familial relationship serve as a proper ground of love? In other words, could it be a *good* familial relationship? It seems so. Suppose that one day my mother informed me that I was adopted and that my biological mother was still alive. It would be appropriate if, in response to the realization that I had a different biological mother, I became inclined toward some sort of union with her and toward her good. In other words, it would be appropriate if I came to love her to some degree. Indeed, these sorts of inclinations are very

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 149.

²⁵⁸ For example, he means to say not only that such relationships are independent of attitudes but also that they are independent of mutual activity. However, this point is not captured by his term. Moreover, familial relationships are typically not *independent* of attitudes and activities; it's just that the relevant attitudes and activities are not *constitutive* of familial relationships, for Kolodny.

common for adopted children.²⁵⁹ Thus, it seems that Kolodny is correct that a mere biological connection can serve as a proper ground of love.

The same seems true of certain non-biological familial relationships. For example, suppose that someone adopted a child without ever having seen her. In that case it would still seem appropriate that the adoptive parent love his adopted child simply because of the adoptive parent-child relationship that obtained between them. Thus, it seems certain non-biological familial relationships can also serve as proper grounds of love.

Cases of relationships that are familial in virtue of marriage seem less clear to me. For example, suppose two people are married in an arranged marriage in which neither of them has ever met or seen the other. Would it be appropriate for them to love each other simply in virtue their marriage, which presumably makes them members of the same family? Possibly, but the case does not seem clear to me. At the very least it seems likely that this is not how love typically *does* arise in arranged marriages (if it does). Rather, it seems more likely that each would come to see certain things about the other that they appreciate (e.g., good qualities), which would bring about love. Thus, I imagine that the best of such relationships would be more like romantic relationships as described previously—a kind of friendship—despite the prearranged familial connection.²⁶⁰ I am similarly uncertain about whether other relationships that are familial merely in virtue of marriage—e.g., “in-law” relationships—may serve as proper grounds of love. In any case, such uncertainties do not threaten my main claim as stated above that there are *some*

²⁵⁹ According to one article, at least 50% of adopted children search for their birth parents at some point in their lives. See U. Müller and B. Perry, “Adopted Persons’ Search for and Contact With Their Birth Parents I: Who Searches and Why?,” *Adoption Quarterly* 4 (2001): 8. I was made aware of this statistic and article by David Velleman’s paper, J. David Velleman, “Family History,” *Philosophical Papers* 34, no. 3 (2005): note 1.

²⁶⁰ Although I searched for empirical studies of love in arranged marriages that might inform my views here, I did not find any. Thus, my ideas here are pure speculation. In any case, not much hangs on the speculation. If I am incorrect—i.e., if love arises in at least some arranged marriages merely in response to the marital bond—then such cases are simply another example of the kind of cases I discuss above in which people sometimes (appropriately) love in response to a mere biological or adoptive familial relationship.

familial relationships (e.g., merely biological or adoptive ones) that may serve as proper grounds of love without any existing union.

What about bad familial relationships? Suppose a biological family member is a terrible person and treats you badly. Would love for this person still be appropriate in virtue of the mere biological connection? And would failure to love the person be inappropriate for the same reason? To answer these questions, it is important to see that proper grounds of love do not, in general, impose *requirements* to love. Rather, as explained in Chapter Four, in general they are features in virtue of which love is rendered appropriate in cases where it is so. Put another way, if you love someone and if that love is appropriate, the proper grounds of love are the features that make it so. If you do not love someone, even in the face of possible proper grounds of love (e.g., good qualities), then such possible proper grounds do not *necessarily* make your lack of love inappropriate. For example, if you fail to love as a friend someone that you just met, despite his attractive qualities, there seems nothing inappropriate about that fact.

Nevertheless, in the face of certain relationships it seems a failure to love *would* be inappropriate. For example, if you have a friendship with a substantial history of union (which includes a history of mutual love) it does seem that a failure to continue to love that person would be inappropriate because of your history together. Thus, it seems that mature friendships do impose requirements to love. Similarly, in the face of certain familial relationships it seems we have requirements to love. I leave it open, here, whether the requirements are moral or non-moral. The latter seems more plausible to me in most cases, though not in cases of parental relationships. It seems to me that a parent does have a *moral* requirement to love his child in virtue of the enormous developmental importance of the parental relationship he bears to her and the place of his love in it.

However, importantly, these requirements to love imposed both by friendships and familial relationships seem defeasible in most cases. In particular (to return to our questions), if the friend or family member turns out to be a terrible person, or does very bad things toward you, in most cases this fact implies that failure to love the friend or family member would not be inappropriate. For example, if your friend or brother (whom you love) murdered your spouse, then it seems there would be no requirement for you to continue to love him as a friend or brother: it would be appropriate if you failed to love him. In such a case, it might also be inappropriate if you continued loving your murderous friend or brother (as a friend or brother), though this is less clear to me.

A parent's love for a child may be a case in which a failure to love would *always* be inappropriate, even if the child did something terrible. For example, it might still be appropriate for a parent to love his child, and inappropriate if he did not, even if she murdered her sibling (his other child). Of course, we would expect the parent's attitude to be torn in a case like this—perhaps he would both love and hate her. But, it might still be inappropriate if he failed to love her. However, again, this kind of case does not seem entirely clear to me.

Despite the fact that what I will call *mere* familial relationships may serve as proper grounds of love without the instantiation of any particular attitudes or activities—i.e., without the union that constitutes friendship—as noted above, familial relationships often do include what we might call a kind of friendship. Indeed, it seems that mere familial relationships often generate an *expectation* of future friendship. When familial relationships do involve such a friendship, one difference between ordinary friendships and such familial relationships seems to be that the aspects of the family member's good targeted by familial love are often more substantial than those targeted by ordinary friendship. For example, it is more common to provide family members with substantial financial support (e.g., paying for university),

emotional support in very dark times, and care in the process of dying, birthing, or childrearing than it is to do so for mere friends. When issues of such gravity are at stake, family relationships seem typically (though not exclusively) to be the ones we turn to.

6.5 THE VALUE OF RELATIONSHIPS

In what sense are good relationships valuable? And what, exactly, makes them so? In the remainder of the chapter I will try to answer these questions. To begin with, it will help to distinguish the notion of *final* value from the notion of *non-final* value.²⁶¹ Something has non-final value if it is good for the sake of something else good, i.e., if it is good in virtue of some further good or end that it contributes to in some way.²⁶² For example, money has non-final value: it is good for the sake of the good things it can buy us, such as food, clothing, and shelter. In the case of money, we can also say, more specifically, that it has *instrumental* value, or that it is instrumentally good, since money is a means to these further goods. While instrumental goods are the main kind of non-final good I will focus on in this chapter, it is important to note that they are not the only kind of non-final good, and thus they do not represent the proper contrast class for final goods. As Julie Tannenbaum points out, there are other non-final relations, in addition to instrumentality.²⁶³ For example, insofar as we might ski for the sake of a good vacation, it seems

²⁶¹ My discussion of these kinds of value is heavily influenced by Julie Tannenbaum's treatment in Julie Tannenbaum, "Categorizing Goods," in *Oxford Studies in Metaethics*, ed. Russ Shafer-Landau, vol. 5 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁶² We must be careful here with the "for-sake-of" relation. As Peter Geach has pointed out, the locution may be used in at least two ways: "the noun-phrase following it may relate to the benefit...or to the beneficiary." The sense in which I will use it here is that where the noun-phrase relates to the "benefit"—or "good" or "end", as I will prefer to put it. So, something is good for the sake of something else if it is good because it contributes in some way to some further good, end, or "benefit." I will not use the "for-sake-of" relation in Geach's second sense, relating to the "beneficiary." We generally use this second sense when we talk of goods being for the sake of a person. So, we might cut the grass for the sake of our elderly neighbor. Here, it is not the case that cutting the grass contributes to the end that our elderly neighbor is; rather, cutting the grass is done as a service to our neighbor, the beneficiary of the act. See Geach, "Teleological Explanation," 82. Geach attributes his distinction between these two senses of the "for-sake-of" relation to Aristotle.

²⁶³ Tannenbaum, "Categorizing Goods," 265–266.

skiing has non-final value. But, skiing is not a means to a good vacation; rather, it is a possible *part* of a good vacation. Thus, certain non-final goods are such because they are partially constitutive of some further good and not because they are the means to some further good. Thus, the “for-sake-of” relation that obtains between non-final goods and some further good is broader than the instrumental relation.²⁶⁴

Something has final value if it is good for its own sake. For example, hiking in the mountains is a final good. If I went hiking in the mountains and someone later asked me, “To what end?”, I might sensibly reply: “I had no further end.” Thus, final goods are goods that are properly understood as ends. But, of course, hiking in the mountains might also be understood as for the sake of other goods too. Hiking is a form of exercise, so we might understand it as for the sake of health, i.e., as a means to health. Or, we might understand it as for the sake of enjoyment. In that case, it seems best to think of hiking not as a means to enjoyment, but rather as an *instantiation* of a certain kind of enjoyment. This case is different from the case of skiing for the sake of a good vacation. In that case, skiing was not the *instantiation* of the entirety of a good vacation; rather, it was *part* of a good vacation. In the hiking case, hiking might instantiate the entirety of the relevant enjoyment. Thus, insofar as the instantiation relation is not instrumental and is not one of partial constitution, it seems there is a third kind of for-sake-of relation.²⁶⁵ In any case, the main point I wish to make with the hiking example is that there are many goods that are both final and non-final. Indeed, if we allow the for-sake-of relation to be as broad as I have suggested—encompassing at least the instrumental relation, the partial constitution relation,

²⁶⁴ According to Tannenbaum, the instrumental relation is distinguished by temporality and fungibility. For example, the relation between money and the things it buys is temporal: first one has and uses the money, and then one obtains the groceries. Money is also fungible: a ten-dollar bill or two fives will do just as well. Furthermore, one might just as well barter for the groceries as use money. Thus, it is a fungible good.

²⁶⁵ Here again I draw on Tannenbaum’s account. See Tannenbaum, “Categorizing Goods,” 266.

and the instantiation relation—then it seems there will be few goods that are merely final. Rather, most final goods will have both final and non-final value.²⁶⁶

In particular, I take it that good relationships have both final and non-final value. They have final value insofar as they are good for their own sakes. In other words, good friendships and familial relationships are good as ends for us. I take it that this point is related to Aristotle's claim that "a social instinct is implanted in all humans by nature."²⁶⁷ His thought is that it is part of our nature as human beings to engage in social relationships, including the kinds I have been discussing.²⁶⁸ Such relationships are so fundamental to what we are that if we tried to imagine human life without them, we would no longer be imagining *human* life. Rather, we would be imagining the life of some other kind of creature with a different nature.²⁶⁹ Thus, relationships are things to be sought by the human being, i.e., goods that, because of its social nature, the human being does well in going for. Put another way, our social nature at least partly explains

²⁶⁶ It may be obvious to some readers that Plato's tripartite distinction between goods in Book II of the *Republic* (357b-357d) is lurking in the background of my account here. While this is correct, it is worth noting that my account here differs from Plato's insofar as Plato voices the distinction in terms of the *attitudes* we take toward the various goods, and not strictly in terms of the nature of the goods themselves. For example, he suggests that a Type I good is one that "we welcome" for its own sake, that a Type II good is one that "we love for its own sake and also for the sake of its consequences," and that Type III goods are those "we would not choose to have... for their own sake, but for the sake of the wages and other things that are their consequences." (Plato, *Republic*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2004).) I prefer to voice the distinction in terms of what is valuable for its own sake or what is valuable for the sake of other goods since I think putting things in terms of our attitudes can lead to counter-intuitive results. For example, a miser welcomes money for its own sake. But, money is the prototypical non-final good. Thus, if we put the distinction in terms of attitudes, it seems we must say that money is a final good for some people and a non-final good for others, which seems odd. Instead, it seems better just to say that money is a non-final good, and to say that the miser has made a mistake in the way she values money. Yet again, I draw on Tannenbaum here, who makes the identical point. See Tannenbaum, "Categorizing Goods," 259–260.

²⁶⁷ *Politics* 1253a30. All English quotations from the *Politics* are adapted from Aristotle, *The Politics and The Constitution of Athens*, ed. Stephen Everson, trans. Benjamin Jowett and Jonathan Barnes, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²⁶⁸ Despite the fact that Aristotle's famous claim occurs in his *Politics*, it seems clear from his account of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Book VIII)—which includes the range of relationships I have been discussing—that Aristotle does not have in mind merely political relationships, such as those between citizens. Recall that the *Nicomachean Ethics* serves as something of a preamble for his *Politics* (see *Nicomachean Ethics* Book I, Section 2).

²⁶⁹ As Aristotle puts it, "But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god." (*Politics* 1253a27-29) We may, of course, grant that the rare hermit or social recluse remains human without jettisoning Aristotle's claim, though in those cases we would likely require some sort of explanation for the atypical behavior.

why it is that good relationships are finally valuable (or good as ends) for us. It is part of our nature to seek them out.

That good relationships are final goods does not mean we are always justified in acting for the sake of such relationships; whether an act is justified is a distinct and more complicated question than whether the end of an action has final value. For example, listening to Beethoven may have final value and so may be good as an end. Nevertheless, if someone needs emergency help that you can easily supply, you will not be justified in listening to Beethoven there and then.²⁷⁰ Similarly, if one is in a committed romantic relationship, one may not be justified in pursuing a further romantic relationship, even though it might have final value. Thus, to say that good relationships have final value is to say that, under the right (justifying) conditions, human beings do well to pursue such relationships for their own sakes, as ends.

Good relationships also have non-final value. In particular, they have instrumental value insofar as they are a means to various further goods. Most obviously, those with whom we have such relationships often help us in various concrete ways.²⁷¹ For example, a good parent feeds, bathes, and clothes the young child he cares for. Similarly, my friend or my uncle might lend me some money. Or, my spouse might pick me up from the airport. Friends, romantic partners, or family members might even give their lives for one another on occasion. Good relationships can also bring us great pleasure. The social pleasures frequently experienced in friendships, romantic relationships, and familial relationships are surely some of the most profound pleasures of human

²⁷⁰ The example is Tannenbaum's. See Tannenbaum, "Categorizing Goods," 288–289.

²⁷¹ The idea that friendships and romantic relationships are ready sources of help fits with an influential psychological model of close relationships called the "self-expansion" model. According to this model, romantic relationships and friendships are opportunities to expand the capabilities of the self. The self-expansion model "holds that people are motivated to enter and maintain close relationships to expand the self by including the resources, perspectives, and characteristics of the other in the self." See Arthur Aron et al., "Close Relationships as Including Other in the Self," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 60, no. 2 (1991): 243. Thus, when one is in a close friendship or romantic relationship with someone, her talent, her beauty, her intellect, and her material resources are attributable to the self to some degree, thereby expanding and empowering the self in certain ways. By mentioning it here I do not mean to endorse this model.

life.²⁷² Finally, good relationships have also been shown to modulate the stresses and strains of life.²⁷³ This list is, of course, only a small sampling of the benefits that may accrue to those in good relationships. Insofar as such relationships may benefit us in the ways described, it seems clear that they have non-final value—that, in addition to being good for their own sakes, they are good for the sake of the further benefits they may bring.

As suggested by my response to Augustine’s reply in Chapter Five (Section 5.4), what I have said here about the non-final (instrumental) value of good relationships should not be construed as implying that our motives for action in these relationships are necessarily self-regarding or self-seeking. Granted, in some cases our motives *are* self-regarding. We often enter such relationships with an eye to certain instrumental benefits. We seek a friendship to alleviate our loneliness or insecurity. We seek a romantic relationship for the pleasures it brings. We become parents because we think it will enrich our lives in some way. Moreover, some of our activity in such relationships may be motivated by similar considerations. However, it is not clear that this arrangement is so terrible or how it could be any different. The truth is, a lonely life without the pleasures of such relationships is not a good human life, and so to be motivated to and in such relationships by the prospect of companionship and the pleasures it brings hardly seems objectionable. Insofar as I inevitably have a stake in my relationships—they *necessarily* involve me, as one of the two people in them—it is not clear that this self-regarding aspect of good relationships could be different: caring about such a relationship just is, in part, caring about certain of your own attitudes and activities. And there seems to be nothing wrong with this fact.

²⁷² Though the point that healthy relationships are pleasurable hardly needs defense, there is some interesting discussion of the point from a neurological perspective in the social psychology literature. For example, see Acevedo et al., “Neural Correlates of Long-Term Intense Romantic Love,” 156. Aristotle has plausibly argued that certain kinds of friendships can bring us to take more pleasure in the not-necessarily-social activities of our lives. I rely here, for my interpretation, on John M. Cooper, “Friendship and the Good in Aristotle,” *Philosophical Review* 86, no. 3 (July 1977): 302ff. Cooper is interpreting the *Nicomachean Ethics* 1170a4-11.

²⁷³ Acevedo et al., “Neural Correlates of Long-Term Intense Romantic Love,” 154.

However, while self-regarding motives generally play some role in the formation and continuance of good relationships, there are several reasons for thinking that our motives to and in such relationships are not merely self-regarding. First, recall that I began the discussion of the value of such relationships by emphasizing that they are final goods, i.e., good for their own sakes, or good as ends. Thus, we typically do not go for relationships for *purely* self-regarding instrumental reasons. Indeed, we are frequently drawn into relationships by our *love* for a person, which need not arise via self-regarding considerations. Rather, as I have argued in Chapters Three and Four, love for a friend or romantic partner often arises in response to some quality of a person—his beauty, her wit, his virtue, her talent—and not necessarily some feature we find useful or instrumentally good.²⁷⁴

Second, the activities we pursue in the midst of these relationships are generally not motivated by self-regarding considerations. I bathe my toddler because she has chocolate in her hair. I drive my friend to the airport so he can avoid paying for parking. I ask my spouse about her day because she looks discouraged. I take my mother out to dinner because it is her birthday. I go snowshoeing with my stepfather just to spend time with him. When I do these sorts of things—the stuff of ordinary good relationships—I am not aiming at benefits for myself. On the contrary, I either aim to serve a need of the beloved or I choose the activity as an end. Indeed, it seems quite plausible that if all these activities were motivated by self-regard the relationships would distort and wither (if they continued at all), and the benefits one typically derives from the relationships would diminish or vanish altogether.²⁷⁵ If this point is correct, then insofar as there

²⁷⁴ Of course, love can arise in response to beneficial or useful features too, as Aristotle has pointed out in his account of the kinds of friendship (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII.2). Moreover, one might argue that qualities like beauty, wit, virtue, or talent are features we find instrumentally good because they bring us pleasure, and thus that love in response to such qualities is self-regarding after all. While I do not deny that love may arise in a self-regarding way (as noted above), my point here is that it *need* not arise in this way. Rather, often we simply find someone good in some way and we are drawn to him or her for that reason, quite apart from any self-regarding hunt for benefits or pleasure.

²⁷⁵ Something like the paradox of hedonism might be in play here.

are some relationships that resist distortion and dissolution, it seems that other-regarding motivations play an important role in them.

Finally, my reflections, here, on the value of good relationships should not be misconstrued as a claim that there is nothing bad about such relationships. Indeed, even the best of these relationships bring new stresses, strains, and vulnerabilities that count on the negative side of the ledger. Nevertheless, my claim is that on balance such relationships are typically more good than bad, in the ways I have described.

6.6 CLOSENESS OF RELATIONSHIPS

I will shortly argue that the value of good relationships—i.e., the value of relationships that may serve as proper grounds of love—is generally proportional to their *closeness*. However, to lay the groundwork for that argument, in this section I will explain what it is for such relationships to be close.

Above I argued that most good relationships involve union. I claimed that good friendships (including good romantic relationships) *just are* a kind of union. Moreover, while I claimed that good familial relationships need not include union (they might consist merely in a blood relation, adoptive relation, or marital relation), I also suggested that they typically come with an *expectation* of a kind of familial friendship or union, and that this kind of union is typically part of familial relationships. In short, union constitutes good friendships and is typically present in familial relationships. In light of this fact, when we call a good relationship “close” or “distant,” we generally have in mind the closeness or distance of the *union* it involves. Thus, in this section I will explain what it is for a union to be close, and hence what it is for a relationship to be close.

Recall from Chapter Two that union consists in five elements: (1) a pattern of mutual sharing of aspects of one's mental life, such as thoughts or feelings that matter to oneself; (2) a pattern of mutual attentiveness, i.e., both a persistent perception of the other and an effort to understand her; (3) mutual knowledge of the other, such as knowledge of her values, her likes and dislikes, her aims and goals, aspects of her history, as well as her current state of mind and body; (4) mutual love and (in mature unions) mutual loving commitment—a kind of love in which its two tendencies of will are particularly firm or fixed; and (5) mutual awareness of the other elements of union. I will sometimes refer to each of these elements of union as “dimensions” of union.

Union may be close or more distant along the first four of these dimensions.²⁷⁶ First, in the context of a genuine union between two people—i.e., a union in which the five elements of union are present—the more two people know or understand each other, the closer their union will be. Here, the greater knowledge or understanding of a person that makes a union closer is not just a matter of knowing further facts about a person. Rather, it is more a matter of knowing facts about her that matter to who she is, or that make her who she is. In general, this will include knowledge of the things that the person herself finds important about herself, though perhaps not exclusively (the person may be ignorant of certain important facts about herself). Such mutual knowledge can account for the closeness we sometimes feel to childhood friends, despite long lapses in mutual activity: we know each other well because we spent formative years together. Mutual knowledge can also partly account for the closeness we often feel to certain family members: having similar genes, having the same relatives, having grown up together in the same family and culture, our family members can understand us in ways that few others can.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ Mutual awareness of the first four elements of union seems not to bear on whether a union is close or not. Such awareness just needs to be present for there to be a union at all.

Second, in the context of a genuine union between two people, a stronger mutual loving commitment will make their union closer. But, the commitment must be roughly symmetrical: if one person is very committed to the other while the other is not very committed to the one, a yet stronger commitment on the part of the first—making the commitments even more asymmetrical—will not make for a closer relationship. However, if two people have a firm inclination toward each other's good and a firm inclination to be in each other's lives, then this makes them closer than if they did not have such firm inclinations (again, assuming the other elements of union are also in place). Like mutual knowledge, strength of commitment often accounts for closeness between family members. Typically, few people are willing to stand by you in the steady way that your family members do. This commitment between family members often withstands considerable relational adversity, as well as separations of significant time and distance. It is part of what can make good familial relationships close.

Third, in the context of a genuine union between two people, that union will be closer to the extent that the two share thoughts or feelings with each other about the things that are important to them. Unions in which one or both parties avoid sharing aspects of their mental life that matter to them will, to the extent that they do so, be less close. Importantly, closeness or distance along this dimension of union assumes nothing about the particular content of the thoughts or feelings shared by the parties. In one relationship, a shared interest such as Star Trek or dancing might be the thing that the two people care most about in their lives. In that case, sharing thoughts or feelings about the interest might make the two very close. However, in another relationship focusing conversation on Star Trek or dancing might be a way of *avoiding* conversation about the things that matter to each person. In that case, such conversation might be a sign of a distant union. And, of course, people can make mistakes about what is important to them. A person might fail to recognize that he has feelings about a certain subject, or that such

feelings are important to him, and so fail to share them in a relationship. In that case, if the feelings are, in fact, real and important then to the extent that he does not share them the union will be less close than it could be.

Of course, no one is completely transparent in any relationship. There may be perfectly good reasons for avoiding certain topics of conversation in a relationship—perhaps we disagree with each other about a certain topic, and sharing my thoughts and feelings about it would only generate unresolvable conflict that might threaten our union. In that case, the union may be as close as it can be, given who we two people are. Nevertheless, it might still be the case that two other people who were able to share more freely could, for that reason, be closer than our current relationship can ever be.

Fourth, in the context of a genuine union, and up to a certain point, mutual attentiveness that is greater in frequency and duration, and over a longer period of time, also makes for a closer union. For example, imagine two unions that are identical except that in the first for the past two years the two people have talked on the phone twice per year for 15 minutes (on their birthdays, say) and in the second for the past 10 years the two people have had coffee together for 30 minutes every week. In that case (all other things being equal), I take it that the second union would be closer than the first, due to the longer period, durations, and frequency with which they have attended to each other (and perhaps also to the *way* in which they attended to each other, in person rather than by phone). Part of my intuition here may be due to the fact that more frequent mutual attention typically facilitates greater mutual knowledge and sharing in the union, which themselves make the two closer. However, it also seems that merely attending to each other more regularly, and for longer durations over a longer period of time, has an independent salutary effect on closeness.

Of course, there are limits here. Beyond a certain point, longer and more frequent times of mutually attending to each other would become stifling and might actually produce a more distant union, or dissolve the union altogether. Where, exactly, this upper limit on mutual attentiveness lies is hard to pinpoint; it is likely different for every union. Nevertheless, that there is such a limit does not diminish the idea that, below the limit, longer and more frequent periods of mutual attention make for a closer relationship. The frequency, duration, and period over which two people have been mutually attentive to each other seems less important to the closeness of a union than the first three dimensions noted above.

Given the four dimensions of union and closeness described above, a union could be close along certain dimensions and more distant along others. Perhaps you and your sister have a strong mutual commitment to each other and you know each other very well. These two dimensions of your union makes you close. However, it may be that you see each other only infrequently, and that when you do you do not typically share thoughts and feelings with each other in an especially free manner. These two dimensions of your union tend to make you less close than two people could be. However, these last two dimensions that distance you somewhat do not make it inappropriate to call your relationship “close”. Indeed, if union is in place, and if two people are close along any of its dimensions, it seems we would want to say that the relationship is close, though perhaps not that it is as close as any relationship can be.

Moreover, it seems that the four dimensions of closeness cannot necessarily be compared or summed to achieve a total measure of closeness for a relationship. As a result, there may be cases in which there is no fact of the matter which of two relationships is closer. Moreover, the picture is further complicated by the fact that there are different norms of closeness for different kinds of relationships. What makes for a very close adult friendship is different from what makes for a very close relationship with my young child. My child and I might be more attentive to

each other than my friend and I are, and I might be more committed to my child than to my friend. But, my friend and I might understand each other more clearly than my child and I do, and we would likely share with each other more freely the thoughts and feelings that matter to us. In such a case it seems there just may be no fact of the matter about which relationship is closer, given how the different dimensions of closeness stack up, and the different relational norms of closeness in play. Insofar as my account allows for this incommensurability of closeness in certain cases, I take it that such incommensurability counts in favor of the account.

Nevertheless, while comparative judgments about which of two relationships is closer do not seem possible in every case (both in reality and according to my account), such judgments do seem possible in certain obvious cases. For example, if one friendship exhibits greater closeness than another along all four dimensions of closeness, it seems obvious that the one friendship is closer than the other. Thus, the account seems to track well the amount of clarity that we generally think we have about the relative closeness of relationships.

6.7 THE NON-FINAL VALUE OF RELATIONSHIPS IS GENERALLY PROPORTIONAL TO THEIR CLOSENESS

In light of the foregoing account of what it is for union (and, thus, relationships) to be close, in the remainder of the chapter I will argue that the value of a good relationship is generally proportional to its closeness: closer instances of such relationships are generally more valuable than more distant ones. More specifically, in this and the following three sections I will argue that closer relationships are generally more *non-finally* valuable than more distant ones. I will conclude the chapter by arguing that the *final* value of close relationships is also generally greater than that of more distant ones.

That the non-final value of good relationships is generally greater in close instances than in more distant ones is evident from the kinds of benefits that typically result from good relationships. For example, the kind of relief from life's stresses and strains available in some good relationships (e.g., friendships and romantic relationships) is greater in closer ones than in more distant ones.²⁷⁸ This relief comes about, it seems to me, in part as a result of being understood and accepted by another person. Our load is lightened when we can share the personal thoughts and feelings that trouble us. However, these kinds of thoughts and feelings are often of the sort that could leave us exposed to further trouble if we shared them with someone that would not keep them in confidence. If everyone knew of our challenges, failings, and disappointments then things could go very badly for us.²⁷⁹ Thus, we are typically inclined to share such thoughts and feelings only with those that we trust—in relationships with those that we know are concerned for our interests and that have a track-record of safeguarding the personal things we share with them. Relationships like this typically come about slowly as each person shares increasingly personal aspects of her thoughts and feelings with the other over time, gradually building the pattern of attention, interaction, knowledge, and commitment that constitutes a robust, close union. The picture here is one in which we are able to share our

²⁷⁸ See, for example, James A. Coan, Hillary S. Schaefer, and Richard J. Davidson, "Lending a Hand: Social Regulation of the Neural Response to Threat," *Psychological Science* 17, no. 12 (December 2006): 1032–39. This study suggests a positive correlation between a common psychological measure of romantic relationship quality (the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, or DAS) and the regulation of stress response as measured using fMRI techniques. The DAS survey includes questions that evaluate the elements of my account of closeness, including strength of commitment, and the frequency and depth of sharing and attentiveness to one another. See Graham B. Spanier, "Measuring Dyadic Adjustment: New Scales for Assessing the Quality of a Marriage and Similar Dyads," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 38, no. 1 (February 1976): 27–28. Thus, Coan et al.'s study may be understood as demonstrating the correlation between closeness and stress relief that I suggest. Another fMRI study has shown that brain systems with "the capacity to modulate anxiety and pain," and that are "central brain targets for the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder and depression" are activated in people experiencing long-term romantic love and not in people newly in love. See Acevedo et al., "Neural Correlates of Long-Term Intense Romantic Love," 156. If we assume that the relationships between those experiencing long-term love are closer than the relationships between those newly in love (a reasonable though not unquestionable assumption), then the study suggests a correlation between the closeness of a romantic relationship and relief from various kinds of stress.

²⁷⁹ Kant makes this point. See Immanuel Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals," in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary J. Gregor, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6:471–472.

troubled thoughts and feelings most freely with those we are closest to—i.e., with those with whom we have a closer union.²⁸⁰ Insofar as the relational benefit of stress relief seems, at least in part, tied to this free sharing of our troubles, the benefit will be more completely available in our close relationships than in our more distant ones, since they are constituted by closer union.

Certain pleasures of good relationships are also richer and more completely available in closer relationships than in more distant ones. A closer union often makes for freer and more wide ranging conversations, since in such cases we typically feel more at ease and less guarded, and since we simply know more about the other person and what matters to her. Thus, social pleasures of conversation seem more completely available in closer good relationships.

Finally, a closer good relationship is typically a more robust source of practical help than a more distant one. If we need a ride to the airport at five in the morning, or if we need to go to the emergency room in the middle of the night, we generally call upon those who are relationally close to us, not those who are relationally more distant. Why? Because such benefits are more readily provided in close relationships than in more distant ones. These sorts of benefits derive from the greater commitment to us (and hence to our good) that those close to us often have, which makes them close to us. Thus, more robust help is a typical benefit of a closer relationship, which contributes to the generally greater non-final value of closer relationships over more distant ones.

6.8 BURDENSOME CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS: COUNTEREXAMPLE?

While most cases of close good relationships are more non-finally valuable than more distant ones, perhaps there are exceptions. For example, certain close relationships might become incredibly burdensome. Perhaps your child is falsely accused of a terrible crime, thereby

²⁸⁰ Of course, sharing and being understood by the other are also part of what *make* the relationship close. Thus, close relationships are self-reinforcing in a certain way. We interact more freely with those we are close to and this free interaction, in turn, makes us closer.

involving you in a financially and emotionally costly battle to prove her innocence.²⁸¹ Or, perhaps your dearly loved spouse of 30 years is severely injured and the expenses for her treatment end up bankrupting you, leading to enormous personal strain. Worse, in these sorts of cases the typical benefits of properly love-grounding relationships that I noted above—stress relief, social pleasures, and practical help—might be swamped by the enormous stress that the relationship brings. Perhaps a close relationship like this would be non-finally worse than a more distant one that came without such tremendous burdens.

While such cases seem challenging, I am not convinced that they disprove the claim that closer good relationships are more non-finally valuable than more distant ones. Why? First, long-term benefits could render close but currently burdensome relationships more non-finally valuable than distant but currently less burdensome relationships. The burdens brought on by circumstances like false accusations or severe injury frequently ease with time, making space once again for the relationship to be non-finally valuable. Indeed, walking through trials with someone you are close to can often bring greater closeness to the relationship,²⁸² making it enormously valuable in non-final ways. Thus, perhaps the prospect of a less burdensome future could still render a currently burdensome close relationship more non-finally valuable than a more distant but currently less burdensome relationship.

But, we can of course imagine burdensome relationships that will never be otherwise. Perhaps one's beloved spouse is not injured but is instead suffering from a degenerative disease that will ultimately result in his death and you are the one charged with caring for him. In this case, the burdens of the relationship could be enormous, the benefits to the caregiver swamped by the burdens, and there could be no end in sight to the situation.

²⁸¹ The recent case of Amanda Knox comes to mind here. I do not mean to imply that I think Knox was innocent.

²⁸² Such ordeals often bring us to attend to the other more intensely than we have before, to come to understand him in deeper ways, and to expand (or at least to fully appreciate) our commitment to his welfare, thereby yielding greater closeness.

However, even here there is a sense in which such a close relationship might be more non-finally valuable than a more distant one without such burdens. We have only been considering the non-final value of the relationship from the perspective of one of its participants, i.e., the caregiver saddled with the burdens. But, from the perspective of the other participant—the accused child or the injured or diseased spouse—the close but burdensome relationship would be extremely valuable. In times of trial, close relationships are frequently crucial sources of comfort and encouragement that help the embattled person to keep going. Given this point, even a close and unremittingly burdensome relationship might turn out to be more non-finally valuable on the whole than a more distant but less burdensome one, if benefits to both parties are considered.

6.9 HIGHLY BENEFICIAL DISTANT RELATIONSHIPS: COUNTEREXAMPLE?

While close but burdensome relationships may not disprove the claim that close relationships are more non-finally valuable than more distant ones, perhaps cases involving highly beneficial but more distant relationships might. For example, suppose you are considering exclusive romantic relationships with two possible partners: one of them is tremendously rich and would surely enrich you if you established a relationship with her; the other has little money. However, you can also plainly see that your relationship with the wealthy person would be much more distant than the one you could establish with the person of modest means. Or, suppose that you could give yourself to a certain relationship that would remain relatively distant but would yield exceptional career prospects. Suppose further that this relationship and the resulting career would leave you no time to establish any close relationships of other kinds. Alternatively, you could choose to form a close relationship of some sort (e.g., a friendship, or a romantic relationship) and forgo the excellent career prospects. Do cases like these show that a certain

distant relationship may be more non-finally valuable than an alternative close relationship, given the benefits that would come with the more distant relationship?

I don't think so. The reason is that tremendous wealth and exceptional career prospects just aren't as important as the benefits tightly connected with close relationships. The social benefits deriving from close relationships—social pleasures, companionship, alleviation of loneliness, and even the particular kinds of stress relief and practical help deriving from such relationships—are fundamental to human well-being. Not only are they enjoyable but they are basic human needs, on a similar level with food, water, and air. This is part of what it means to say that we are by nature social: we need close relationships and the social benefits naturally deriving from them. In contrast, tremendous wealth and exceptional career prospects are just not as important for human beings. Yes they are nice, if they come along, but a life without them is no tragedy. One may surely live a good life, or achieve human well-being, without them. Thus, by my lights it is folly to seek them over the social goods naturally deriving from close relationships if one cannot have both. If I am correct about this, then the more distant relationships described above are not more non-finally valuable than the alternative close relationships, despite their promise of wealth and career prospects.

My reply, here, suggests a yet more difficult case for my view. Perhaps we could concoct an extreme case in which the benefits deriving from a more distant relationship are food, water, or air, while the mutually exclusive alternative closer relationship promises either a substandard portion of such resources or their complete absence. Under these conditions, it seems that the more distant relationship would be non-finally more valuable than the closer relationship, given the import of the needs at stake.

However, I don't think this concession causes real worries for my view. This second case is so extreme that we can safely set it aside as an extraordinary circumstance. Such a case only

seems plausible where the natural and social environment has been so devastated as to make efforts to discern social and ethical norms fruitless. The exercise is something like trying to generate intuitions about the good and right thing to do after a nuclear holocaust has ravaged the earth and left only three people alive. Or like trying to discern the good and right thing to do when the social fabric has been rent by decades of brutal war. It is not that there are no social or ethical norms in such situations. It is just that they may not be indications of the norms according to which a human being should live when circumstances are more ordinary. Put another way, to imagine a choice in which the mutually exclusive alternatives are a distant relationship that provides food, water, and air or a close relationship in the absence of such goods (i.e., a close relationship accompanied shortly by death) is to imagine a context of choice that is entirely inhospitable to living well or flourishing as a human being. As such, while the more distant relationship might well be more non-finally valuable in such a case, I claim that the case implies conditions of choice that render it irrelevant to my aim here. My aim is to discern norms and values applicable to relationships under more ordinary conditions—conditions in which a human being has a reasonable chance at living well or flourishing. My claim, then, is that under such more ordinary conditions close relationships are non-finally better than more distant ones, given the importance of the benefits that naturally derive from them. Therefore, the extreme case imagined here is not a threat to my view.

6.10 PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH INFANTS

One final case does seem to cause genuine trouble for the general view I am trying to support—that close relationships are more non-finally valuable than more distant ones. The case is that of parental relationships with newborn or infant children.²⁸³ By calling the relationships

²⁸³ By “newborn” or “infant” I mean a child younger than roughly six months. I have chosen this age for reasons that will be explained in a footnote below, though, for me, nothing much hangs on this specific age marker. My main point is to suggest that there is an early period of child development where the relationship between parent

“parental” I mean to indicate a relationship in which the adult in the relationship has primary (though perhaps not sole) responsibility for the care of the infant. Such cases are troubling for my general view since they seem to be quite ordinary cases in which the relationship is highly non-finally valuable, but in which the relationship cannot be close.

I take it that the substantial non-final value of such relationships is fairly obvious. Infant children have tremendous need of a parent’s care. Without it they might die, or at least fail to develop in normal, healthy ways. Insofar as this crucial care for the infant is a benefit of the parent-infant relationship, the relationship is highly non-finally valuable.

However, such relationships cannot be close. Indeed, in the first few months of life an infant does not even seem capable of *union* with her parent, let alone a *close* union. To be sure, a good parent will exhibit all the states and activities constitutive of a close union with the infant: he will share his thoughts and feelings about the baby via physical touch and even words; he will attend to the baby more intensely than he does to perhaps any other person; he will have considerable knowledge of the baby’s (thus far short) life story and current state of being; he will have an extraordinarily strong loving commitment to her; and he will likely be aware of all these states and activities. However, as described in Chapter Two, union requires that these states and activities be *mutual*, and the infant is not capable of reciprocating in a way that rises to the level of genuine union.²⁸⁴

and child is considerably different in kind.

²⁸⁴ Though, certainly a kind of proto-union is possible, in some respects. See C. Trevarthen, “Intrinsic Motives for Companionship in Understanding: Their Origin, Development, and Significance for Infant Mental Health,” *Infant Mental Health Journal* 22, no. 1–2 (2001): esp. 99–100, 102. By calling the infant “incapable of union” I do not mean to say that infants are generally without competence. Indeed, one of the central themes in neonate development research over the past 50 years is that infants are competent and complex in ways that were generally overlooked prior to 1960. While I am very sympathetic to such claims, it still seems to me that the normal infant’s many competencies do not rise to the level allowing for what I have called “union”. For the picture of neonate capabilities that follows I rely on the following seminal works in child development, among others: T. Berry Brazelton and J. Kevin Nugent, *Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale*, 4th Edition, vol. 190, Clinics in Developmental Medicine (London: Mac Keith Press, 2011); D.W. Winnicott, *Mother and Child: A Primer of First Relationships* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1957); Peter H. Wolff, “The Causes, Controls, and Organization of Behavior in the Neonate,” *Psychological Issues* V, no. 1 (Monograph 17) (1966): 1–106.

First, she cannot share her thoughts and feelings with the parent. Indeed, it is doubtful that a newborn even has cognition that rises to the level of a thought. While she might well have feelings (e.g., feelings of comfort or discomfort), she cannot *share* them with the parent, except in a figurative way. For example, when she cries at her discomfort, this is a response to the discomfort but not a mode of intentional communication or sharing. Similarly, while infants are capable of “smiling,” in some sense, these facial expressions are not generally regarded as “social smiles,” i.e., smiles indicative of genuine social interaction between parent and child.²⁸⁵ Second, she cannot be attentive to the parent. While she can look at and listen to the parent in a relatively sustained way when she is calm and the parent is close by (e.g., while nursing), such perceiving is not aimed at understanding the parent, except perhaps in a very indirect way.²⁸⁶ Third, she cannot have knowledge or understanding of the parent in the sense constitutive of union; her cognitive faculties are just not sufficiently developed to allow it. Fourth, she cannot have love or a loving commitment toward the parent. Whatever behavioral tendencies the infant exhibits, they will not be aimed at the good of or union with the parent, and they will not arise in response to an apprehension of the parent as good. Indeed, it is not even clear that the infant has that capacity for action that we call the “will,” in which case tendencies of will are out of the question. Given that she cannot exhibit these four dimensions of union, it is obvious that she also lacks its fifth dimension, which is to be aware of these states and activities. Thus, the infant cannot exhibit the relevant states and activities, and so genuine union with an infant is not possible, let alone a close union. For this reason, parent-infant relationships seem to be

²⁸⁵ See Brazelton and Nugent, *Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale*, 190:67.

²⁸⁶ The development of a normal infant’s capabilities is surely on a trajectory toward the attainment of higher cognitive powers, and her perception of the world around her—including her parent—importantly contributes to that development. Thus, we might say that her perception of the parent is part of what will eventually result in her ability to understand the parent. But, it seems pretty clear that the infant’s perception of the parent is not part of any direct effort to understand him.

exceptions to the claim that closer instances of good relationships are more non-finally valuable than more distant ones.²⁸⁷

While what I have said seems strictly correct to me, perhaps, in the end, a parent can achieve a *kind* of asymmetrical closeness with his infant child insofar as he can exhibit the states and activities constitutive of union and can exhibit them to a degree that would make for a close relationship if they were mutual. In such a case, we might say that the parent is close to the infant, though we might not say that the infant is close to the parent, or that the relationship is a close one in the sense I have described in Section 6.6.²⁸⁸ If we attribute a kind of closeness to the relationship between a good parent and his infant, at the very least the closeness we attribute would have to be quite different from the closeness I have described. But, in that case, I would be equivocating if I were to claim that closer relationships are more valuable, even in the case of parent-infant relationships, since the account of closeness is not the same in that case as in the other cases I have noted. So, even if we want to attribute a kind of closeness to parent-infant relationships, it seems my view has nothing to say about it.

Finally, it is important to note that I am only denying the possibility of union and closeness between a parent and his child for the earliest stages of the child's development, i.e., up to roughly six months. After that, it seems to me that a child *is* capable of union with a parent, and that this union can be extraordinarily close owing to the kinds of mutual attentiveness, sharing, knowledge, and loving commitment that it involves.²⁸⁹ Nevertheless, I will argue in

²⁸⁷ One way to save the general view might be to say that the *mere* familial relationship between parent and infant makes them close. However, I don't think we want to say that, since a parent who abandons his child still has that mere familial relationship to her, but is surely not close to her and does not have a close relationship with her. So, although mere familial relationships can be proper grounds of love, they are not part of union and are not sufficient for closeness.

²⁸⁸ I am inspired here by Eleonore Stump's treatment of closeness. See Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*, 120.

²⁸⁹ For example, "There is evidence that infants as young as six months are motivated to share cognitive topics, or purposes and interests, directed to the surrounding environment as well as to persons, and not just emotions related to regulation of physiological states or levels of arousal and excitement..." Trevarthen, "Intrinsic Motives for Companionship in Understanding: Their Origin, Development, and Significance for Infant Mental

Chapter Seven that, unlike other relationships, the reason that a parent should love his own children (infant or otherwise) more than many other people has nothing to do with the closeness of the parent-child relationship. Thus, the exceptional nature of the parent-infant relationship illustrated in the discussion here will have implications for my account of why we should love some people more than others.

6.11 THE FINAL VALUE OF RELATIONSHIPS IS PROPORTIONAL TO THEIR CLOSENESS

In the previous four sections I argued that, with one important exception, close good relationships are *non-finally* better than more distant ones, at least under the ordinary natural and social conditions that concern me here. In this last section before concluding the chapter, I will further suggest that close good relationships are generally *finally* better than more distant ones. The case of parent-infant relationships may again be an exception here, though I will not explore the case any further; I will simply assume that they are exceptional.

That close good relationships are finally better than more distant ones is difficult to demonstrate. The difficulty seems attributable to the fact that whatever goods one might cite as evidence of their greater value would seem to suggest their greater *non-final* value rather than their greater final value. Nevertheless, perhaps there are still things we can say. To take a page from Mill's book,²⁹⁰ people with experience of both close and more distant relationships tend (*ceteris paribus*) to seek a closer one over a more distant one if they cannot seek both. This is evidenced by the fact that people with experience of both typically want to develop their existing relationships such that they become closer. Moreover, this seems so even if developing the

Health." Thus, six months seems to be the point at which infants can share thoughts and emotions, and can exhibit attentiveness toward others, in the senses required for union.

²⁹⁰ *Utilitarianism*, ch.2, §5-6, to be precise.

relationship would bring no change in the benefits to be gained from the relationship. Indeed, when we pursue greater closeness in a relationship we are typically not just hunting for stress-relief, pleasure, practical help, or other benefits. Rather, if a relationship is good, and if we recognize it as such, we typically want to pursue it and nurture it because of what it is and not just because of what it might get us.

Of course, there are many conditions under which we do *not* want to make our good relationships closer. We have a limited capacity for close relationships since they require considerable time and energy to develop and sustain. If these capacities are already exhausted—either by other existing relationships, or by our pursuit of different goods altogether—this provides a reason not to pursue a closer relationship with someone, regardless of the fact that one might love or value the person enough to do so under other circumstances. Furthermore, one might have relational, moral, or professional reasons to keep a certain relational distance with someone. For example, if one is in an exclusive romantic relationship with person A, this might provide a relational or moral reason not to pursue a romantic relationship with person B. Or, if you supervise someone at work, you might have a professional (and perhaps moral) reason to maintain a certain relational distance and not pursue a closer relationship.

However, if conditions like these hold, the *ceteris paribus* condition on my claim above is not satisfied. Put another way, under such conditions the reason for pursuing a closer relationship provided by its superior final value is not the only consideration bearing on whether to pursue it. My claim is *not* that those with relevant experience typically seek close relationships over more distant ones *under all conditions*. Rather, my claim is that where the relative final value of close and distant relationships is the only (or prevailing) consideration bearing on the question of whether to pursue a closer relationship, those with relevant experience typically choose the closer over the more distant. Thus, the cases I have noted in which people do not

make this choice fail to disprove my claim, since they are cases in which considerations *other* than the relative final value of close and distant relationships prevail. They are cases in which other values compete with the final value of the close relationship.

But, couldn't there be cases in which a person has a good relationship, there are no different values competing with the value of a closer version of that relationship, and yet the person still fails to want to develop the relationship such that it becomes closer? For example, it seems some people might deliberately arrange their lives such that their relationships can never really be close, or at least close beyond a certain limit. Such a person would not fail the *ceteris paribus* condition on my claim, since no practical, relational, moral, or professional values would compete with the value of the closer relationship in settling what to do. Yet she would fail to want to develop her relationships such that they become closer. Perhaps such a case shows that closer relationships are not more finally valuable than more distant ones, contrary to what I have claimed.

In reply, I readily grant that there are such cases. However, I do not think that they threaten my claim. First, such cases do not seem typical, and my claim was about what people typically want. Thus, it still seems true that people with experience of both close and more distant relationships *typically* want to develop their existing relationships such that they become closer.

Second, it seems that the person who prefers not to pursue closer relationships in this way is making a mistake that requires some sort of explanation. One explanation could be that the person has not actually experienced closer relationships. In that case, the person might fail to see the value of close relationships properly, since she has never experienced them. If so, then it would turn out that the case was not even an exception to my claim, since my claim is about those who have experience of both kinds of relationships. Another explanation might be that

someone has been badly mistreated or hurt in a previous relationship and now he fears that making his relationships closer will leave him open to further mistreatment or pain. While we should surely sympathize with a person experiencing such fears, and while we can surely understand why he does so, it still seems that keeping *everyone* at arms length is a pathology for which he should seek help. The reason it is pathological is that by keeping everyone at arms length he is missing out on one of the most important final goods of human life: close relationships. Thus, in the end, such cases threaten *neither* my claim that closer relationships are more finally valuable than more distant ones, *nor* the claim that is supposed to support it—namely, that people with experience of both close and more distant relationships *typically* (or, in non-defective cases) want to develop their existing relationships such that they become closer.

6.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have offered a picture of the two main kinds of good relationships—i.e., those relationships that may serve as proper grounds of love. I argued that good friendships (including good romantic relationships) consist in union, which is one of love’s two targets as described in Chapter Two. This union amounts to mutual attentiveness, mutual sharing of aspects of one’s mental life, mutual knowledge or understanding of the other, mutual love (and, in mature cases, mutual loving commitment), and mutual awareness of these attitudes and activities. Good familial relationships typically also consist in union between two family members, though they need not. In some cases, a familial relationship consisting merely in a blood relation or an adoptive relation (a “mere” familial relationship) may serve as a proper ground of love.

I further offered a picture of what it is for such relationships to be close. They are close, I claimed, if the union partially constituting them is close. (Mere familial relationships are not

close insofar as they do not exhibit union.) I further claimed that a union is close when it exhibits one or several of the first four features of union to a significant degree. So, for example, a union might be close in virtue of the fact that both people have substantial knowledge or understanding of each other. Or, it might be close in virtue of a strong loving commitment that the two have to each other.

Finally, I argued that the value of good relationships is generally proportional to their closeness. I claimed that, under ordinary conditions, the non-final value of close good relationships is greater than that of more distant instances of such relationships, since close instances yield greater benefits, such as stress relief, social pleasures, and practical help. I also argued that closer instances of such relationships are more finally valuable—more valuable as ends—than more distant ones. The only exception that I admitted to these claims is the case of parent-infant relationships, which are highly valuable but not close in the sense I described.

In Chapter Seven I will use these conclusions about the relative value of close and distant relationships to argue that we should generally love those we are relationally close to more than those we are more distant from. In doing so I will both fill out what I take to be the correct relation between love and value and offer an account of why we should love some people more than others.

CHAPTER 7 – ON LOVING SOME PEOPLE MORE THAN OTHERS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One I explained an argument by Augustine in *De doctrina christiana* that all people should be loved equally. I summarized the argument as follows:

- (1) The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has.
- (2) Every person has equal value.
- (3) Therefore, we should love all people equally.

In Chapter One I suggested that premise (1) seems false, but that it is hard to say exactly what is wrong with it. I also suggested there that the argument prompts us to seek an explanation of why we should love some people more than others (e.g., our own children more than a new friend).

In this final chapter I aim to address these two issues directly. Although I explained what I take to be the central error of Augustine's argument in Chapter Five, here I will complete my account of what is wrong with the argument by explaining what I take to be the correct relation between the degree of our love for people and the value to which love might respond, and in particular what sort of proportionality holds between them, if any. I will argue that while the

degree of one's love need not be proportional to the value of qualities possessed by the beloved, the degree of one's love should be proportional to the value of certain relationships between lover and beloved. Since closer relationships of the relevant sort are generally more valuable than more distant ones (as argued in Chapter Six), the claim that love should be proportional to the value of certain relationships will amount to the claim that we should generally love those we are relationally closer to more than those we are relationally more distant from. Finally, I will conclude by suggesting that such preferential love is called for by the fact that we should obviously choose better goods over worse ones, and the fact that such preferential love just is, in part, a tendency to choose a more valuable relationship over a less valuable one.

7.2 LOVING ONE PERSON MORE THAN ANOTHER

Before addressing Augustine's idea that the degree of one's love should be proportional to value in some way, we will need a clearer understanding of the kind of proportionality in view here and of what it might mean to love one person more than another. In this and the next two sections I will address these topics. I will take them in reverse order.

There are many senses in which one might be said to love one person more than another, and thereby to exhibit preferential love. First, one might feel certain emotions more intensely toward the one than the other, or one might have stronger occurrent desires for the good of, and union with, the one over the other. While I think it makes some sense to talk of preferential love in these terms, strictly speaking I do not think preferential love *consists* in feeling such emotions or having such desires. Recall that in Chapter Two I argued that emotions and occurrent desires (along with intentions) are downstream effects of love that do not constitute the attitude itself. Thus, if that account of love is correct, preferentially intense emotions or occurrent desires are

possible effects of love that do not constitute preferential love itself. For this reason, I will set aside this possible view of preferential love.

Second, one might be said to love one person more than another if one loved the one but not the other. Although I think such cases are genuine cases of preferential love, I will also set aside this account of preferential love since I do not think there are norms suggesting that we should love some people more than others in this sense. Insofar as I think we owe at least a thin kind of love to any human being we encounter—a kind of love I called “love for neighbors” in Chapter Two²⁹¹—I see no case in which we should love one person but not another. Thus, I will set aside this possible view of preferential love.

Third, one might be said to love one person more than another if one has certain “ordinal preferences” for the one over the other. By calling the preferences “ordinal,” I mean to suggest that such preferential love amounts to a tendency of will to rank people in a certain *order* with respect to certain of one’s choices. This sense of preferential love takes cues from Augustine’s view as explained in Chapter One. There I claimed that Augustine thinks that to love one person more than another is primarily to be willing to benefit the one over the other in cases where one cannot benefit both. In light of my account of love in Chapter Two, we might say that loving one person more than another in this sense amounts to having a tendency of will to prefer or prioritize the good of the one over that of the other in such cases. However, in Chapter One I suggested that Augustine also seems to think loving one person more than another might consist in preferring, or being more willing, to “belong to” the one than the other. In the terms of Chapter Two, we might say he thinks that loving one person more than another in this sense amounts to having a tendency of will to prefer or prioritize union with the one over union with the other in cases where one cannot pursue it with both. This third kind of preferential love—

²⁹¹ I also tried to motivate the idea of neighbor-love somewhat in Chapter Two, though my treatment there was nothing like a complete case for it since that kind of discussion would have taken me too far afield. In any case, here I simply assume that we owe such love to all.

preferential love as “ordinal preference”—thus has two modes, the first related to the good of the beloved and the second related to union with him.

Fourth, and finally, one might be said to love one person more than another if one were willing (from love and not merely from duty) to expend more resources for the good of the one, or for the sake of union with him, than for the good of or union with the other. For example, suppose you have two friends and that you love each one. Because you love them, you would be willing to do various favors for each of them and you would be willing to make efforts to sustain your union with each. For example, you would gladly lend either of them a book, if needed, and you would gladly get coffee with either of them. However, if the second friend asked you for a ride to the airport at four o’clock in the morning you would politely decline (or perhaps you would do it from a sense of duty but feel slightly put out), whereas if the first friend asked for the same favor you would happily agree. Similarly, if both friends moved to equally distant cities, you would not go and visit the second while you would go and visit the first regularly. In these cases, your willingness (from love) to expend resources for the sake of the first friend’s good and union with him would exceed your willingness (from love) to do so for the second; this willingness to expend more for the first than for the second would amount to a kind of greater love for the first over the second. Like the third sense of loving one person more than another, this fourth sense—preferential love as a willingness to expend more resources in pursuit of love’s targets—exhibits two possible modes, the first related to the good of the beloved and the second related to union with him.

The fourth sense of preferential love is different from the third. For example, it is possible that you would be willing to expend equal resources in pursuing the good of or union with two friends that you love, but you might still prefer some aspect of the good of or union with one friend over another if you could not pursue both. Nevertheless, despite this possibility, it seems

that more often than not the two senses of preferential love would track together: if you rank someone's good (or union with him) more highly in your order of choices than the good of (or union with) another person, then it seems likely you would be willing to expend more resources for the sake of the first than the second.

At the end of this chapter I will offer an account of why we should love some people preferentially over others. My focus, there, will be on preferential love in the third sense described above—preferential love as ordinal preference—since I think an explanation of why, in some cases, we should love in that way is easiest to see. For this reason, I will primarily (though not exclusively) have the third sense in mind throughout the chapter, and I will explain the third sense further in the next section by way of several examples that I take to be paradigmatic. However, at the end of the chapter I will also return to preferential love in the fourth sense described above, and I will suggest why it too might be called for in relevant cases.

7.3 PARADIGM CASES OF ORDINAL PREFERENCE

Recall Bernard Williams's famous case in which two people need rescuing but you can only rescue one of them.²⁹² Departing from Williams's specific example, suppose one of the needy people is a new friend and the other is your own child. Suppose further that you love both of them to some degree, but that you choose to rescue your child. I submit that, for most parents, rescuing your child over your new friend in this admittedly terrible situation would be one possible expression of (one mode of) greater or preferential love for your child over your new friend. In other words, such an act might express your tendency of will to prefer or prioritize the good of your child over that of your new friend in cases where you cannot pursue the good of both.

²⁹² Bernard Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality," in *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 18–19.

Of course, your act would not *have* to be an expression of preferential love. It might be that you act, in that case, from a sense of greater duty toward your child than toward your new friend. We may plausibly suppose that you have *prima facie* duties to rescue both people; indeed, it seems plausible that you would have a *prima facie* duty even to rescue a stranger in such a situation. However, it also seems plausible that your duty to your child would be more stringent and might override the duty you have to your new friend. Thus, if you rescued your child while motivated by this more stringent duty to him, your act would not necessarily be an expression of greater love for him over your friend. Rather, it would simply express your assessment of the relative duties you had to the two people.²⁹³ Nevertheless, for most of us I assume such a result would be neither typical nor desirable. Rather, thoughts of duty—and perhaps even unconscious motives of duty—seem worse in this case than motives of love. Indeed, this seems to have been part of Williams’s point in the original example.²⁹⁴ In any case, regardless of whether the motive of duty or love is more desirable here, my main point is that it is both possible and plausible that you would rescue your child in such a case from a motive of love, and that such an act would express your preferential willingness to pursue his good over that of your friend—i.e., that it would express one mode of preferential love for him. If such were the case, then, on my view, you would love your child more than your new friend. I take this case to be a paradigm of one mode of preferential love as ordinal preference.

Consider, now, a case that exemplifies the second mode of preferential love as ordinal preference, i.e., greater willingness to pursue union with one person than another. Suppose you have been seeing two people in a romantic sense and that you love both of them to some degree.

²⁹³ There is, of course, the possibility that motivation by duty could also be an expression of love. While I think this possibility is interesting and worth exploring, my working view is that motivation by duty and motivation by love are two distinct (though perhaps compatible) motives. In any case, if a motive of duty just were a kind of loving motive then the sort of worry about the rescue case that I raise here would not actually be a worry at all: preferentially rescuing one’s child from duty would also be an expression of preferential love, and so the case would still illustrate preferential love.

²⁹⁴ See also Harry Frankfurt’s reading of the case in Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, 35–37.

Suppose further that exclusivity in romantic relationships is important to you and that the two relationships have progressed to the point where you no longer feel comfortable seeing both people. Now suppose that you choose to continue seeing one person and that you break it off with the other. I submit that such an act of continuing to see the one and breaking it off with the other could be an expression of your greater love for the one over the other—in this case, your tendency of will to prefer or prioritize union with the one over the other in a case where you could not pursue the relevant kind of union with both (while also maintaining your values). Again, as for the rescue case, such an act *need* not express preferential love. After all, you could have non-loving motives for acting this way: perhaps you are the queen and partnering with the one will yield more useful political alliances than partnering with the other, and so you choose for political or strategic reasons. Nevertheless, under more ordinary circumstances, it seems quite possible and plausible that your choice would express a tendency of will to prefer union with the one over the other, and thus greater love for the one over the other. I take this case to be a paradigm of the second mode of preferential love as ordinal preference.

These two paradigm cases are, of course, quite momentous and rare. I have chosen them because I think they isolate well the condition of will that I take preferential love as ordinal preference to be. Nevertheless, we might also point to a whole range of more ordinary cases that could reflect the greater willingness to pursue another's good or union with him that I have in mind. For example, it might be that two friends need a place to stay. Although you love both of them to some degree, you cannot host them both, and so you choose to host one over the other. In such a case, your choice could be an expression of your greater willingness to pursue the good of the one over the other. Or, it might be that two friends are performing on opening night at a festival, but their performances are scheduled for the same time. Although you love both of them to some degree, you must choose one over the other and so you attend the performance of one

and not the other. Again, your choice in such a case could be an expression of your greater willingness to pursue union with the one over the other. And we could, of course, multiply ordinary examples like these.

The problem with these more ordinary cases, though, is that the range of good reasons for choosing the relevant course of action seems much wider than for my paradigm cases, and so it seems far less obvious that the ordinary cases might be cases of preferential love. For example, it could be that you host one friend and not the other simply because the other has a good alternative to staying with you while the one does not. In that case, your choice would simply solve a problem of coordination and need not express preferential love. Or, it could be that both friends come to town fairly frequently and that you hosted the other last time. In that case, your choice might express your relatively *equal* love for both of them. Or, it could be that the one friend has never traveled outside her home town before and that she is making her first trip just to see you, while the other friend is in town on a regular business trip and her employer would gladly put her up in a hotel. In that case, your choice might reflect the fact that your hosting the one friend would amount to a much more important good for her than would hosting the other and not the fact that you loved the one more than the other. We could obviously imagine parallel permutations of the case in which you choose one friend's performance over the other. Thus, it seems much less clear that the more ordinary cases above reflect preferential love.

Nevertheless, it does seem that preferential love as ordinal preference structures the ordinary choices and decisions of our lives to a significant extent. Although it is easy to doubt whether any one ordinary choice or decision really reflects preferential love as ordinal preference, it seems almost a truism that the cumulative pattern of our ordinary beneficence and our ordinary pursuit of union with the various people in our lives reflects our greater love for some over others. Most of us structure our lives to some extent around the people we love.

However, some of those influence more of this structure than others. Cumulatively, we spend more time and energy aiming at the good of these people, and union with them, than we do for others we love. What accounts for a large part of this cumulative pattern, it seems to me, is that we have a greater willingness to pursue the good of some people we love than others, and that we prefer union with some people we love to union with others. In short, for most of us the cumulative pattern of our ordinary choices reflects preferential love as ordinal preference.²⁹⁵

Given the two senses of preferential love that I wish to carry along—“willingness to expend more resources” and “ordinal preference”—each of which has two modes, it is of course possible, and perhaps likely, that there will be cases in which it is indeterminate whether I love one person more than another. Most obviously, there could be cases in which I am willing to expend equal resources in pursuit of the good of or union with two people, or in which my loving tendencies of will toward the good of or union with two people would not clearly prioritize one over the other in cases of conflict. In those cases, it would be indeterminate, on my view, whether I loved the one person more than the other. Similarly, there could be cases in which the two kinds of preferential love cut in different directions, or in which the two modes of either kind of preferential love come apart. For example, perhaps I am more willing to benefit person A than person B from love when I cannot benefit both, yet I prefer to pursue union with person B over person A in cases where I cannot pursue it with both. In that case, again, it might be indeterminate, on my account, whether I love either person more than the other. However, that my account would be indeterminate about these cases seems to me the right result: it really would be indeterminate, in such cases, whether I loved one person more than the other. Thus, insofar as there are likely many such cases in which it is, in fact, indeterminate whether we love

²⁹⁵ Of course, preferential love is not the *only* thing that the cumulative pattern reflects. In addition to concerns for duty, convenience, coordination, equity, and personal utility, as suggested by the examples above, the cumulative pattern also reflects the nature of the different kinds of relationships we have with different people. For example, the aims of a relationship with one’s mother are different from the aims of a relationship with one’s spouse. Mere differences in such relational aims also play some role in forming the cumulative pattern of our ordinary choices.

one person more than another, it is a virtue of my account that it yields indeterminacy in those cases.

7.4 LOVE AND THE VALUE OF RELATIONSHIPS

At this point, it will be helpful to take stock of where the discussion has led us. In Chapter Five, after suggesting that Augustine’s argument assumes too narrow a view of the kind of value to which love is properly a response (i.e., only the value of a human being as such), I raised the question of whether premise (1) of his argument—“The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has”—would make sense if we allowed it to apply to further kinds of value. For example, should the degree to which we love a person be proportional to the value of a relationship we have with him, or to the value of certain qualities he possesses?

In Chapter Six I laid groundwork for addressing these questions. First, I explained my view of “good relationships” (i.e., those that might serve as proper grounds of love), and I suggested that such relationships have both final and non-final value. Next, I gave an account of what it is for a good relationship to be close, and I argued that (under ordinary conditions) both the final and non-final value of good relationships are generally proportional to the closeness of the relationship. Then, in the first few sections of this chapter (Chapter Seven), I explained what I mean by “loving one person more than another,” i.e., either having an ordinal preference for the good of or union with the one over the other (third sense), or being willing to expend greater resources in pursuit of the good of or union with the one over the other (fourth sense).

With these pieces in place, I am now in a position to defend the following version of Augustine’s premise (1), broadened to apply to a kind of value beyond what he imagined: the degree to which one person loves another should be proportional to the value of the good

relationship between them. Given my claim that the value of such relationships is generally proportional to their closeness, I may be understood as claiming that the degree to which one person loves another should generally be proportional to the closeness of the good relationship between them. In other words, I claim that, in general, we should love more those we are relationally closer to, and we should love less those we are relationally more distant from.

So, for example, I hold that one should love a close friend more than a distant one. Similarly, one should love a close aunt, brother, grandmother, or parent more than a distant one. Also, one should love a spouse to whom one is close more than a more distant friend or family member. But, it also seems quite conceivable that one should love a very close friend or family member more than one's spouse, if one were not very close with one's spouse. All these cases are so, I take it, because close relationships are (under ordinary conditions) generally more valuable than distant ones, and because in cases where one person loves another the degree of that love should be proportional to the value of the good relationship between them.

7.5 PREFERENTIAL LOVE, CLOSENESS, AND COMMITMENT: AN EMPTY CLAIM?

One might worry that the view I just stated is empty or uninformative in some way. I claimed that the degree to which one person loves another should be proportional the closeness of the good relationship between them, which amounts to the claim that we should love more those we are relationally closer to, and that we should love less those we are relationally more distant from. But, recall from Chapter Six that relational closeness may partially consist in a loving commitment, which, as explained in Chapter Three, is simply a kind of love. Now, if my accounts of these concepts ("closeness" and "loving commitment") are correct, it might seem that in claiming we should love more those we are relationally closer to I am effectively claiming

that we should love more those whom we love. But, this claim seems at best empty or uninformative and at worst obviously wrong: why think the fact that we love someone entails that we should, for that reason, love him *preferentially*?

This objection glosses over several important distinctions which render it ineffective. First, and perhaps most importantly, it is not mere love that makes for a loving commitment, and hence for a close relationship; rather, as explained in Chapter Three, it is a particularly *firm* or *fixed* kind of love that makes for loving commitment and closeness. Moreover, it is the stability or fixedness of the love involved in a loving commitment that calls for preferential love. Put another way, it is the fact that our love for someone is firm and fixed that implies we should be willing to expend greater resources in pursuit of that person's good or union with him and that we should be willing to rank his good and our union with him higher than that of others in our order of priorities. And that claim—that the firmness or fixedness of our love might call us to expend more for someone and to prioritize him more highly—does not seem uninformative or obviously wrong. Indeed, by my lights it has a plausible ring to it.

Second, a loving commitment (i.e., firm love) is only one of several factors that might make a relationship close. As described in Chapter Six, closeness may also consist in substantial mutual knowledge of (and by) the people in the relationship, a substantial pattern of mutual sharing of relevant aspects of each person's mental life, and a substantial pattern of mutual attentiveness to each other. Thus, boiling relational closeness down to mere love—even the firm, fixed kind of love that makes for loving commitment—is unwarranted. In some cases, then, my claim that we should love more those we are closer to might amount to the claim that we should love more those (a) whom we know better and who know us better; (b) with whom we share more of our mental lives and who share more of their mental lives with us; (c) to whom we are

more attentive and who are more attentive to us; *and* (d) to whom we have a stronger loving commitment and who have a reciprocal loving commitment to us.

Third, and finally, clause (d) of the compound sentence above suggests a further reason that my claim is not merely that we should love more those we love, or even that we should love more those we love more firmly. Rather, the claim is (at worst) that we should love preferentially those with whom we share a *mutual* loving commitment, i.e., a mutual and particularly fixed kind of love. Thus, in addition to the fixedness of my love for the beloved, the fixedness of *his love for me* is part of what justifies my preferential love for him. We can add, here, that my own *past* loving commitment to the beloved (and his to me) may also call for my *present* preferential love for him.

Thus, in the end, the objection that my claim is empty or uninformative seems unwarranted. It fails to take into account the nature of a loving commitment as a particularly firm or fixed kind of love (as explained in Chapter Three) and it leaves out of account several of the multiple factors that might make a good relationship close, including mutual attentiveness, mutual sharing of aspects of each other's mental life, and mutual knowledge or understanding. With this objection dispatched, I will turn, now, to a further worry about my claim that the degree of one's love should be proportional to the value of one's relationship to the beloved, and so to the closeness of that relationship.

7.6 PREFERENTIAL LOVE FOR INFANTS

The case of a parent's preferential love for his infant child seems to be a counter-example to my claim that we should love more those we are relationally closer to, and that we should love less those we are relationally more distant from. As I argued in Chapter Six, a parent cannot achieve union with his infant child, let alone a close union. Nevertheless, it seems there are many

cases in which I should love my infant child more than someone with whom I can achieve a union of some degree of closeness. For example, it seems that I should love my infant child more than a new friend. Indeed, this is the intuition that set me worrying about Augustine's argument in the first place, in Chapter One. Given this intuition, the case seems to be a counter-example to my view since the relationship I have with my new friend is, in fact, closer than that I have with my infant child.

In response, I am inclined to think that parental love for infants *is* a counterexample to the claim that we should love more those we are relationally closer to and love less those we are relationally more distant from. However, I do not think it is a counterexample to my more general view that the degree to which one person loves another should be proportional to the *value* of the good relationship between them. Indeed, as I suggested in Chapter Six, the parent-infant relationship is incredibly valuable insofar as the infant's well-being depends heavily upon it. Thus, proportionality between the degree of love and the value of the relationship might sensibly hold also in this case. What makes the case different is simply that—as I claimed in Chapter Six—the value of the relationship is not proportional to its closeness. One upshot of this difference between a parent's preferential love for his infant child and an adult's preferential love for another adult is that the account of why we should love preferentially will be different in each case. I will elaborate on this upshot in the final sections of the chapter.

7.7 LOVE AND THE VALUE OF QUALITIES

Having argued that the degree of one person's love for another should, indeed, be proportional to the value of the good relationship between them (and so to the closeness of that relationship, with the exception of parental love for infant children), one might wonder whether the same should be said for the other kind of value that may properly ground love—namely, the

value of certain qualities. Should the degree of one's love for a person be proportional to the value of his qualities? In this section I will argue that it is *not* the case that it should be. Thus, I will claim that there is no norm with respect to qualities comparable to the norm counseling proportionality between the degree of love and the value of good relationships.

At the outset, it is important to notice that the fact that qualities may serve as proper grounds of love (as I argued in Chapter Four) does not *entail* that the value of qualities demands the sort of proportional degree of love that the value of relationships seems to demand. Whether something is a proper ground of love is a distinct question from whether something is such that the degree of one's love should be proportional to its value. I have argued that relationships may serve both roles, but it should not be assumed that qualities also may serve both roles simply because they may serve the first.

Indeed, a consideration of concrete cases suggests that there is no norm demanding that the degree of one's love for a person be proportional to the value of his qualities. Suppose I have met two people recently and that I do not yet have a good relationship with either of them. The first person has a smile that is very attractive to me while the second does not, but the second is kind while the first is not. Suppose further that each of these qualities has stirred in me a new love for each of the people, i.e., each quality is an operative ground of my love for its bearer.

Now, as I argued in Chapter Four, such new love seems perfectly appropriate in each case, and so such qualities, we may suppose, also serve as proper grounds of my love. In this case, the quality of kindness (a character virtue by some measures) seems much more valuable than the quality of an attractive smile. Indeed, in the terms I used in Chapter Four, kindness is relationally-conducive in a more robust sense than an attractive smile. Even if an attractive smile makes a person pleasing and is thereby conducive to a relationship with him in some way, relationships can go on without attractive smiles; there are myriad other qualities that we might

find pleasant about a person. In contrast, without kindness a relationship will be quite difficult. Thus, kindness seems much more valuable, both in general and specifically as a proper ground of love.

If there were a norm suggesting that the degree of one's love for a person should be proportional to the value of that person's qualities, the case I have described above seems like a case in which the norm should come into play. In other words, if there were such a norm, it seems that I should love the kind person more than the person with the attractive smile. However, in fact, it does *not* seem that I should love either person more than the other. Indeed, it seems artificial to think that questions about whom one should love preferentially arise at all in such cases. I *may*, it seems, love either person preferentially without any impropriety. But, there just does not seem to be a fact of the matter about whom I should love more in such a case. That there is no such fact of the matter seems true despite the fact that kindness is a more important and valuable quality than an attractive smile. Thus, the case seems to suggest that the degree to which one loves a person need *not* be proportional the value of the person's qualities.

Another kind of case in which we might expect the purported norm to have some bite is one in which two people have the same valuable quality but bear it in differing degrees. For example, suppose again that I have met two people recently and that I do not yet have a good relationship with either of them. Suppose further that the sole proper ground of my love for one of the people is his average degree of kindness while the sole proper ground of my love for a second person is his *exceptional* kindness. In this case, I am again inclined to say that there is just no fact of the matter about whom I should love more. The question never arises, despite the fact that exceptional kindness seems more valuable than average kindness. Thus, again, it seems that the degree of one's love for a person need not be proportional to the value of a person's qualities.

The upshot, here, is that there does not seem to be a norm suggesting that the degree to which we love a person should be proportional to the person's qualities. I have considered two cases in which, if there were such a norm, it would come into play and tell us who we should love more. But, on my reading of the cases, no such norm actually comes into play. Thus, if my reading is correct, we can safely assume that there is no such norm. With this conclusion in place, I will now turn to the final task of the dissertation, which is to explain why there are, nevertheless, some people we *should* love more than others.

7.8 WHY WE SHOULD LOVE PREFERENTIALLY, PART 1: NON-INFANT RELATIONSHIPS

Here it will again be helpful to pause and reflect on where we are in the discussion. Since Chapter Five, my quarry has been an analysis of premise (1) of Augustine's argument: "The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has." In Chapter Five, I suggested what I take to be wrong with the premise—namely, that it assumes too narrow a view of the kind of value to which love may properly be a response. In Chapters Six and Seven I have explored the extent to which the degree of one's love should be proportional to the different kinds of value to which love may properly be a response, such as the value of good relationships and the value of personal qualities. My central conclusion with respect to this second point is that there is an important norm suggesting that the degree of our love for a person should indeed be proportional to the value of our good relationship to him, and thus that we should love preferentially those with whom we have more valuable relationships. I also concluded that there is no comparable norm suggesting that the degree of our love for a person should be proportional to the value of his good qualities. However, even with such conclusions in hand, we might still wonder *why*, exactly, we should love some people more than others. What is it, exactly, about

good relationships that calls for preferential *love*? As a final installment in my effort to illuminate the connection between appropriate love and value, in the next two sections I will try to answer this question.

The account of why we should love some people preferentially begins with what I take to be a basic principle of practical reason: (P) If we are faced with a mutually exclusive choice between a more valuable object and a less valuable object, and if it would be appropriate in all other ways to choose either one,²⁹⁶ we should choose the more valuable over the less.

Now, recall from Chapter Six my claim that closer relationships are more valuable than more distant ones, except for cases of parent-infant relationships, which are highly valuable despite not being close in the sense I have explained. If both this claim and (P) are correct, it follows that if we are faced with a mutually exclusive choice between a close relationship and a more distant relationship, neither of which is a relationship with our own infant child, we should choose the close relationship over the more distant relationship.

Next, recall that in Chapter Two I argued that love is, in part, a tendency of will toward union with the beloved. In Chapter Six I further claimed that union with a person *just is* a kind of good relationship with him. Thus, love is, in part, a tendency of will toward such a relationship. We might, then, say, as I suggested in Chapter Four, that love is a kind of attitudinal “glue” that draws us into good relationships and holds them together. Now, *preferential* love, in the third sense I have described (in Section 7.2), is, in part, simply a tendency of will to prefer or prioritize union with one person over another in cases where we cannot have union (or aspects of it) with both. But, given my account of love, we may re-describe preferential love as, in part, a tendency of will to prefer or prioritize one good relationship over another, since union just is such a relationship. The question about why we should love some people preferentially in cases not

²⁹⁶ E.g., there are no moral reasons to refrain from either.

involving parent-infant relationships then becomes, why should we have a tendency of will to prefer or prioritize *closer* instances of good relationships over more distant ones?

At this point, I trust that the answer is fairly obvious. If, in such cases, practical reason tells us to choose the closer good relationship over the more distant good relationship (since the former is more valuable than the latter), then of course we should have a tendency of will to prefer or prioritize closer instances of good relationships over more distant ones since such a tendency is simply a tendency to choose in the way that practical reason dictates. Thus, in cases not involving parent-infant relationships, preferential love of someone with whom we have a close relationship over someone with whom we have a more distant relationship is called for by the fact that such love is a tendency to choose the more valuable relationship over the less valuable when we cannot have both, as practical reason says we should.

What about the fourth sense of preferential love described above—preferential love as willingness to expend more resources in pursuit of love's targets? What might call for this sort of preferential love? I take it that the story is similar to that I have just told for preferential love as ordinal preference. Suppose you already have a close friendship and so a close union with someone. Expending resources in pursuit of love's targets with respect to that person, then, will be (in part) a means of sustaining that union. *Preferential* love for your close friend—in the fourth sense under consideration here—over someone with whom you have a more distant relationship, then, is a tendency to choose greater expenditures of your resources in sustaining the union than you would in sustaining your union with the other person, if need be. This tendency is called for by the fact that the union you have with your close friend is more valuable than the more distant union you have with the other person. It is more worthy of being sustained, and so you *should* be willing to go to greater lengths in sustaining it—i.e., you should love your close friend preferentially, in the fourth sense.

Importantly, my justification, here, of preferential love in cases not involving parent-infant relationships should not be construed as an argument that human beings should exhibit preferential love full-stop. Rather, all I have argued is that *if* I love two people, and *if* I am relationally closer to one than to the other, then preferential love of the person I am closer to is called for by the facts that (a) my closer relationship to him is more valuable than my more distant relationship to the other person, (b) *ceteris paribus* we should choose better goods over worse if we cannot have both, and (c) such preferential love is a tendency to choose in just this way. This claim is consistent with a world in which I have only two good relationships, both are always equally close, and preferential love is never called for. In such a world there would be no sense in exhibiting preferential love for its own sake. However, in the actual world we tend to have many relationships of differing closeness that sometimes conflict with each other. Under these circumstances preferential love for those closest to us will be called for by the greater value of our relationships with them.

7.9 WHY WE SHOULD LOVE PREFERENTIALLY, PART 2: INFANT RELATIONSHIPS

What about cases involving parental relationships with infant children? Why, for example, should I love my infant child preferentially over my new friend? Since, as I argued in Chapter Six, a parent cannot achieve union with his infant child, and since closeness of union depends on there being a union in the first place, it cannot be that such cases of preferential love are called for by the fact that my union (or relationship) with my infant child is closer than my union (or relationship) with my new friend. Rather, I take it that what demands preferential love in this case is the crucial importance of the parent-infant relationship for the infant's well being.

As noted in Chapter Six, without a parent's²⁹⁷ care an infant's well-being would be gravely threatened. Since such care is a benefit of the parent-infant relationship, the relationship is very non-finally valuable, and, under ordinary conditions, it is more valuable than my relationship with my new friend. For this reason, then, I should have preferential love for my infant child over my new friend: such love is a tendency to choose a more valuable relationship over a less valuable one when I cannot choose both—a choice that practical reason tells me I should make.

We should pause here, though, since I have glossed over a layer of complexity in my last claim. Recall that love is a tendency of will toward *union* with the beloved. But, then one might worry that when I say, above, that preferential love for my infant child is a “tendency to choose a more valuable relationship over a less valuable one,” the “more valuable relationship” in play could not be a more valuable *union*, since (according to my account) I do not yet have a union with my infant at all. In other words, it might seem that the tendency toward a more valuable relationship that I have identified as “preferential love” for my infant is not actually love at all, since it could not be a tendency toward union (since union with my infant is not possible).

However, the worry here is off target. A parent's love for his infant child is (in part) a tendency toward a genuine union; it is just that the union is not (yet) extant. As such, it resembles love for someone who is dead or has severe alzheimer's disease: love's target of union cannot be achieved. However, the parental case differs from these other two in that over time (and under ordinary circumstances) the child will develop such that union between parent and child comes about, assuming the parent plays his role. In the meantime, a good parent and his infant child have a kind of relationship that is neither a *mere* familial relationship (since the parent exhibits the activities and states constitutive of union, and so there is more between the two than simply a biological or adoptive relation) nor a familial friendship (since the infant cannot exhibit the

²⁹⁷ Again, as described in Chapter Six, I take a “parent” to be a person who, either via biological relation, adoptive relation, or some other relevant set of circumstances, is primarily responsible for a child's care.

activities and states of union). Thus, a parent's preferential love for his infant child over a new friend is a tendency to choose a *future* union with his child over a present union with the friend, in cases where he cannot choose both. This choice of a future union includes choosing, here and now, the elements that *would* be constitutive of union (if the infant could reciprocate), since they are the means to that future union. Thus, it remains true to say that the parent's preferential love for his infant child over a new friend is a tendency to choose a more valuable (future) union over a less valuable (present) one, and is thereby called for.

The distinct form of normative explanation applicable in cases of preferential parental love for infants helps explain what might otherwise seem puzzling: that parents should love their children equally. If preferential parental love for children were demanded for the same reasons that preferential love is demanded in other cases—i.e., because of the closeness of the relevant relationships—once children were capable of union with their parents it might seem that parents should love preferentially those children with whom they have closer unions. Perhaps a parent is able to connect more easily with one child than another, and so his relationship with that child becomes closer than his relationship with the other. Now, if we suppose further that the parent begins to love the first child preferentially, the line of normative explanation I have offered for cases *not* involving parent-infant relationships would suggest that the parent's preferential love is as it should be. After all, his love would be a tendency to choose a closer (and hence more valuable) relationship over a more distant (and hence less valuable) relationship, which practical reason seems to counsel.

But, preferential parental love for one child over another is not, by my lights, as it should be: parents should love their children equally. But, why is that? Again the point seems to hang on the tremendous importance of the parent-child relationship for the child's well being. Not only is the parent-child relationship important for a child's well being, but it is *equally* important for

each of a parent's children. Especially when they are young, children need their parents roughly to the same extent. For this reason, a parent that tends to prioritize the good of or union with one of his children over another has gone wrong. Moreover, even as children get older, the experience of equal parental love itself—a feature of a good parent-child relationship—seems to be important for the child's sense of self-worth. For example, parental favoritism has been shown to yield anger, depression, and feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem in non-favored children.²⁹⁸ The equal importance, then, of the parent-child relationship for the well being of each of a parent's children—including the importance of equal love for each child, which is a feature of good instances of such relationships—explains why parents should love their children equally.

7.10 CONCLUSION

The aims of this chapter have been twofold. First, I aimed to complete my assessment of premise (1) of Augustine's argument, which states, "The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has." In Chapter Five I argued that the premise goes wrong by assuming that the value of a thing according to its nature is the only value to which love may properly be a response. Drawing on my pluralist account of love's proper grounds in Chapter Four, I argued that love may also properly be a response to the value of certain qualities of the beloved and to the value of a relationship between lover and beloved. Here, in Chapter Seven, I considered the idea in premise (1) that love should be *proportional* to value in some way. For example, if we broaden the kinds of value to which love is properly a response to include the value of qualities and relationships, should love be proportional to such value?

²⁹⁸ See Irving D. Harris and Kenneth I Howard, "Correlates of Perceived Parental Favoritism," *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* 146, no. 1 (1985): 45–56; Linda J. Zervas and Martin F. Sherman, "The Relationship Between Perceived Parental Favoritism and Self-Esteem," *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* 155, no. 1 (1994): 25–33.

I argued that if the proper grounds of love for two people are our good relationships with them, our love should be proportional to the relative value of the two relationships. Furthermore, since I argued in Chapter Six that the value of good relationships is generally proportional to their closeness—with the exception of parent-infant relationships—I further claimed that the degree of our love for the two people should generally be proportional to the *closeness* of the relationships we have to them. In other words, if we have a closer relationship to A than to B, we should love A more than B, i.e., we should have a tendency of will to prefer or prioritize the good of, or union with, A over B in cases where we cannot realize these aims with both. Coupled with my conclusion about the central problem with Augustine’s argument (noted above), my conclusion, here, about the proper proportionality between the degree of love and the value of relationships represents the culmination of my effort to illuminate the correct relation between love and value—a central aim of my dissertation.

Finally, I ended Chapter Seven by offering an account of *why* preferential love is called for in the cases where I have claimed that it is. For example, I offered an explanation of why we should, in general, love those we are relationally closer to more than those we are relationally more distant from. The explanation began by noting that since love is a tendency of will toward union, and since union just is a kind of good relationship, preferential love may be understood (in part) as a tendency of will to prefer or prioritize one good relationship over another. I then suggested that since closer instances of such relationships are generally more valuable than more distant ones, it follows from a basic principle of practical reason that we should (*ceteris paribus*) choose a closer relationship over a more distant one, if we cannot choose both. Finally, then, preferential love for those we are relationally closer to is called for by the fact that such love is, in part, a tendency of will to choose those closer and more valuable relationships over more distant and less valuable relationships. This conclusion answers the second question raised in

Chapter One regarding why, exactly, we should love some people more than others, and thereby settles the second and final aim of the dissertation.

CONCLUSION

Most of us think we should love some people more than others. If we did not love our own children more than a new friend, something would be wrong. However, in *De doctrina christiana* Augustine makes the following argument, which I explained in Chapter One:

- (1) The degree to which we love something should be proportional to the value it has.
- (2) Every person has equal value.
- (3) Therefore, we should love all people equally.

Obviously, Augustine's conclusion conflicts with the intuition that we should, in fact, love some people unequally or preferentially. Thus, it seems there is something wrong with his argument. Premise (1) seems like the obvious point of attack. However, as I suggested in Chapter One, the problem with the first premise is not immediately obvious. Indeed, it seems there is *some* connection between appropriate love and value. Thus, even if premise (1) turns out to be false, it is worthwhile trying to say just what is wrong with it, since that effort promises to illuminate the connection between appropriate love and value. The first aim of the dissertation, then, was to point out the central problem with Augustine's argument and thereby to illuminate this

connection. The second aim of the dissertation was to give an explanation of why we should love some people more than others.

As I claimed in Chapter Five, I take the main problem with Augustine's argument to be an unstated assumption underlying premise (1): that love for a person should be a response to the value possessed by that person as such. My argument for this claim began in Chapter Four, where I considered different views of love's "proper grounds"—those valuable features in response to which love properly arises or is sustained. David Velleman agrees with Augustine that mere personhood is love's sole proper ground.²⁹⁹ Niko Kolodny argues that only certain relationships between lover and beloved (e.g., friendships, and romantic and familial relationships) may serve as proper grounds of love.³⁰⁰ Both Velleman and Kolodny oppose the view that qualities like wit, talent, or virtue might play this role. In Chapter Four I rejected the views of Velleman and Kolodny, arguing that love's proper grounds are plural and include, in addition to mere personhood and relationships, certain valuable qualities. With the pluralist view in hand, in Chapter Five I argued that Augustine has misunderstood the connection between love and value. Love need not be a response to the value of a person as such; rather it may appropriately be a response to the value of certain qualities of the beloved, or to the value of a relationship to the beloved, neither of which necessarily constitutes his value as a person. Thus, in the end, I claim that Augustine, Velleman, and Kolodny all take too narrow a view of love's connection to value.

Having understood the main problem with Augustine's argument for equal love, we might still wonder why we should love some people preferentially. Since addressing that aim required an account of what love is, in Chapters Two and Three I gave such an account. Harry

²⁹⁹ Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion."

³⁰⁰ Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship."

Frankfurt and Eleonore Stump have argued that love consists in certain desires.³⁰¹ Velleman holds that love is a certain emotion, while Kolodny has argued that love partially consists in certain standing intentions. In Chapter Two I claimed that none of these views are adequate. I began with Thomas Aquinas's claim that love aims at two targets: the good of the beloved and union with him. I then argued that love could not consist in occurrent desires for such things, or related emotions, since love often remains steady while desires and emotions come and go. It seemed more plausible that love consists of two standing intentions: to bring about the beloved's good and to bring about union with him. However, since the lover cannot always achieve love's two targets, it seems love cannot consist of intentions either, since we only intend things that seem achievable to us. For example, if the good of your beloved includes her promotion at work and you cannot bring this about, then you cannot intend this aspect of her good. Nevertheless, love involves some motivational attitude toward such goods.

Thus, in the end, I followed Aquinas in claiming that love consists of two conditional tendencies of the will—toward the beloved's good and toward union with him. Consider, for example, love's tendency toward the beloved's good: if some aspect of the beloved's good is lacking or threatened, and if it seems both possible and appropriate for the lover to remedy the situation, then the lover will intend to do so. If it seems either impossible or inappropriate to do so, then she will merely desire it for him. If no aspect of the beloved's good is lacking or threatened, then love's tendency toward the beloved's good simply remains in the background until relevant circumstances arise. On my view, then, the occurrent desires, emotions, and intentions often associated with love are all downstream effects of love and do not constitute the attitude itself.

Given this account of love, in Chapters Six and Seven I offered an explanation of why we should love some people more than others. I began by arguing that union between lover and

³⁰¹ Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*; Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*.

beloved—a collection of states and activities that make the people “one” in some sense—is a kind of properly love-grounding relationship, or “good relationship.” Since love is (in part) a tendency of will toward such union (as argued in Chapter Two), preferential love may be understood as a tendency of will to prefer or prioritize one good relationship over another. I then argued that since closer instances of such relationships are generally more valuable than more distant ones, we should (*ceteris paribus*) generally choose a closer relationship over a more distant one, if we cannot choose both. Finally, then, preferential love for those we are relationally closer to is called for by the fact that such love is, in part, a tendency of will to choose those closer and more valuable relationships over more distant and less valuable ones.

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