

THE 'WHAT' AND 'WHY' OF LOVE'S REASONS*

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1. The question

We can be said to love many things. These include people (people in general, but also people with whom we have a special relationship like parents, siblings, children, friends, romantic partners, spouses...), non-human animals (dogs, cats, horses, snakes...) objects (rings, shoes, paintings...), activities (eating, dancing, playing guitar, watching movies...), ideas (truth, justice, wisdom...), and so on. Though to say that we love some of these things amounts to little more than the claim that we *like* them, in many cases something more, and in other cases something quite different, is being claimed. The question is what that more or different thing amounts to, and what reasons for action we have in virtue of loving someone or something in that more or different way.

This question will appear more or less urgent depending on what you think our fundamental reasons for action are. In what follows I begin by describing the most view of what these fundamental reasons are, and I explain why that view makes the question very urgent indeed. It turns out that there are two main ways in which loving someone could provide reasons for action. One of these makes it difficult to see how we could love anything other than rational beings, and how our love among rational beings could be selective in the way it is, giving us reasons to do things for those we love that we don't have to others we don't. The other, though it makes it easy to see how our love could be selective among rational beings, and how it could extend to things besides rational beings, makes it difficult to see how our loving someone or something could amount to anything other than merely liking them or it.

With the problem squarely in view, I go on to describe an account of the nature of love which, when combined with the account given of our fundamental reasons for action, makes it clear why we can love such a vast array of objects, why our love can be selective, and why loving someone or something differs in an important way from merely liking them or it. The account I provide of love falls short of a set of necessary and sufficient conditions. Instead it is an account of love in what I think of as the paradigm cases of loving someone or something. In order to move from the account provided to an account of necessary and sufficient conditions we would need to add a condition that says something like '*...and anything sufficiently similar to the paradigm cases is also a case of loving someone or something*'. Unsurprisingly, on my view love therefore admits of many borderline cases. This is as it should be, given that there are so many borderline cases of love. I then explain what derivative reasons for action we have in virtue of loving someone or something in this way.

2. What fundamental reasons for action do we have?

The view of reasons for action I find most plausible can be summed up in the following claims which I here present without argument, as I have given the arguments elsewhere (Smith "Deontological Moral Obligations", "Agents and Patients", "Constitutivist Theory").

- (a) An agent has a reason to act so as to bring about a certain outcome if and only if: (i) she has the abilities and conceptual sophistication required to conceive of herself as having the option to bring that outcome about, and (ii) that outcome is desirable_{her}.
(Premise.)

(b) The outcome of an agent's acting in a certain way is desirable_{that agent} if and only if that agent's ideal counterpart desires that that outcome obtains. (Premise.)

(c) The desires an agent's ideal counterpart has are those that that agent would have in the nearest possible world in which she has and exercises maximal capacities to have knowledge of the world in which she lives and realize her desires in that world. (Premise.)

(d) Because of the potential for conflict in the exercise of these two capacities, agents' ideal counterparts must have: (i) a conflict-resolving dominant desire that they do not interfere with any agent's exercise of their capacities to have knowledge of the world in which they live or realize their desires (on condition that the realization of those desires would not lead them to interfere)— for short, a dominant desire not to interfere; (ii) a conflict-resolving dominant desire to help ensure that agents have knowledge-acquisition and desire-realization capacities to realize—for short, a dominant desire to help; and (iii) whatever other desires those agents happen to have. (Premise.)

(e) It is desirable_{each agent} that that agent helps and does not interfere, and, insofar as it is consistent with helping and not interfering, that she does whatever she desires to do. (From (b), (c) and (d).)

(f) All agents have dominant reasons to help and not interfere, and, conditional on their doing that, reasons to do whatever they desire to do. (From (a) and (e).)

As may be clear, this view of the reasons for action is similar to, but also in some respects different from, Kant's views. Let me spell out these similarities and differences, as these will be important in what follows.

Kant tells us that having respect for persons is a matter of believing that those who can set ends for themselves are never to be treated merely as means, but also always as ends (Kant *Groundwork*). Treating such beings as ends is in turn, *inter alia*, a matter of believing that there are reasons to leave them free to lead lives of their own choosing—this looks a lot like believing that there are beings we have reasons not to interfere with, one of the reasons for action delivered up by the quite general account of reasons just outlined—and it is also, *inter alia*, a matter of believing that those who can set ends for themselves are owed the basic wherewithal to live lives of their own choosing—this looks a lot like believing that there are beings we have reasons to help, the second of the two reasons for action delivered up by our quite general account of reasons. The account of reasons for action just outlined thus seems to be in basic agreement with Kant. We have respect for beings when we believe that they are among the class of beings who we have dominant reasons to help and not interfere with, and we show such beings no disrespect when, so long as we act on those dominant reasons, we do whatever we want to do.

The equation isn't perfect, however, and it is worthwhile emphasizing why this is so. Kant's own idea of having respect for persons is an attitude that can only be taken towards beings with a rational nature that includes not just possession of minimal desiderative and epistemic capacities that qualify someone as an agent, albeit a very non-ideal one, but also the much more sophisticated capacity for reflective self-control: that is, the capacity to have reasons and respond to them. In our terms, such a being wouldn't just be one that we have dominant reasons to help and not interfere with, but would also have dominant reasons to help and not interfere with others herself—remember again the conceptual sophistication required for an agent to have

reasons for action spelled out in (a). Non-human animals, infants, and the severely disabled, though agents in our sense, lack this sophisticated capacity, and so cannot be objects of respect of the kind Kant has in mind.

Our account of respect, by contrast, suggests a rather different picture. All beings with desiderative and epistemic capacities are agents, and simply in virtue of being agents, they merit respect: we have reasons to help and not interfere with all of them, including those who lack the specific capacity for reflective self-control. Possession of the capacity for reflective self-control turns out to be significant, on our account, not because it is a condition of someone's being an object of respect, but rather because, on the one hand, it is a condition of someone's being able to have respect for others, and hence someone of whom we can have such expectations, and, on the other, because whether or not beings have the capacity for reflective self-control turns out to affect what it would be to help and not interfere with them. Possession of the capacity for reflective self-control is thus of great significance on our account of respect, but it does not have the significance it has for Kant.

3. Love and respect

Where do the reasons we have in virtue of loving someone or something fit into this picture? One obvious place is among the conditional reasons we have to do whatever we want to do. As already noted, if loving someone or something were simply a matter of liking them or it, then given that liking certain people or things gives rise to desires concerning outcomes that involve them, we would in turn have conditional reasons to satisfy those desires. This would explain both why we can love so many different kinds of things, and why loving someone or something is selective in the way that it is. I will have more to say about the idea that loving amounts to liking presently. For now, however, I want to focus on the other possibility, the possibility that loves fits in via its connection with respect.

We saw at the very beginning that one of the things we can be said to love is *people in general*. The idea that we should love people in general has a long and venerable history, a history that goes back at least to the Greek conception of *agape*, and, via the Greeks, to the Christian view that we should love everyone because Jesus loves us, and because we owe it to him to follow his example. But it is also an idea that surfaced in a more secular mode in the 1960s among those who rejected the prevailing norms in Western societies, norms that seemed to them to legitimize the domination of women by men, blacks by whites, homosexuals by heterosexuals, the indigenous by colonizers, socialists by capitalists, and so on. The Beatles performance of "All You Need is Love" on BBC's *Our World* in 1967, a performance that was watched by over 400 million people in twenty-five countries as part of the world's first global television link, was perhaps the most salient expression of that more secular idea of love as an attitude we should have towards people in general.

Love in this more secular sense would seem to amount to no more or less than the idea that rational beings, no matter what their differences, merit respect. We love others as we love ourselves, on this view, to the extent that we take the condition of the rational permissibility of the satisfaction of our own desires to be that that satisfaction doesn't come at the cost of deceiving or manipulating others, or failing to do what's required to enable them to have the wherewithal to lead their lives in the way they wish. But while it seems very plausible to suppose that this is one of the forms that love can take, it seems quite wrong to suppose that it exhausts the forms it can take. Perhaps we can and should love people in general, but if we do, then there

must also be a more selective sense in which we can and are permitted to love more selectively in the way we love our family and friends. The aspiration to find a single account of love that captures all of the paradigm cases would in that case be dashed. There would have to be at least two distinct accounts of love.

David Velleman in effect suggests that this isn't so because love in the more selective sense is a response to the very same thing to which respect is a response.

The Kantian view is that respect is a mode of valuation that the very capacity for valuation must pay to instances of itself. My view is that love is a mode of valuation that this capacity may also pay to instances of itself. I regard respect and love as the required minimum and optional maximum responses to one and the same value... In my view, love for others is possible when we find in them a capacity for valuation like ours, which can be constrained by respect for ours, and which therefore makes our emotional defenses against them feel unnecessary. That's why our capacity for valuation, when facing instances of itself, feels able to respond in the manner constitutive of love, by suspending our emotional defenses. Love, like respect, is the heart's response to the realization that it is not alone. (Velleman "Love", 366).

Velleman's idea needs some unpacking.

To begin, it is important to remember that respect already rationalizes a suspension of our emotional defenses. If we respect others in the way we should, then when they have been wronged, we will not be indifferent to how they have been treated. We will be indignant on their behalf, and may even join with them in a righteous demand for justice. We show no-one disrespect in feeling these emotions, and would in fact show disrespect if we failed to express solidarity in some form with those who have been wronged. These emotions are thus permissible. The upshot is that even love of the non-selective kind, the kind that is no different from respect, has at least this much by way of permissible emotional vulnerability packed into it. If Velleman is right that love of the more selective kind is a matter of permissible emotional vulnerability to those we respect, then there must be more to that permissible vulnerability than love as respect already requires.

Here is a suggestion as to what that more might be. Think of the difference between how you feel when a stranger is wronged, and how you feel when a loved one is wronged. Though you may be equally indignant on behalf of the stranger and the loved one, you suffer along with the one you love in a way that you don't suffer along with a stranger. Our sense of our own life's going well or badly is bound up with how the life of those we love is going, not so with how strangers' lives are going. Barry Manilow makes just the point in the chorus of *I Can't Smile Without You*

I feel sad when you're sad
I feel glad when you're glad

My suggestion is thus that love of the more selective kind Velleman has in mind is a matter of our lowering our emotional defenses towards others in the quite specific sense of allowing our weal and woe to be bound up with theirs. We show no one disrespect in not lowering our emotional defenses towards them in this way, or almost no one—I will discuss an exception in the final section—so it is permissible for us to allow ourselves to become emotionally vulnerable to some in this way, but not to others. This, I take it, is why Velleman thinks that love is the

optional maximum response to the same value to which respect is the required minimum response.

How plausible is this suggestion? One question to ask is whether emotional vulnerability of the kind described is necessary for love in the more selective sense. Another is whether it is sufficient. The idea that it is sufficient is very plausible indeed, so plausible as to be almost platitudinous (compare Frankfurt *Reasons of Love*, 61). But even if it is sufficient, that doesn't imply that love simply consists in emotional vulnerability to those with a capacity for valuation like ours. For all that the sufficiency claim tells us, something deeper might explain the emotional vulnerability, and love might consist in the thing that provides that deeper explanation. This is in fact Frankfurt's view. As he sees things, our weal and woe is bound up with the weal and woe of those we love because we care about them, and loving someone should therefore be identified with caring about them. Loving thus differs from liking not because the objects of love and the objects of respect are one and the same, but rather because in caring for someone, as distinct from liking them, we identify with them, where identification gets spelled out in terms of a second-order volition that constrains the will (Frankfurt "Concept of a Person", "Identification", "Faintest Passion"). I will say more about this presently.

Now consider whether allowing our weal and woe to be bound up with the weal and woe of those with a capacity for valuation like ours is necessary for love. Velleman thinks that it is necessary because possession of this capacity by those we love is required for "our emotional defenses against them...[to]...feel unnecessary." It is, however, quite obviously false that we never allow our weal and woe to be bound up with those who lack a capacity for valuation like ours. Many of us allow our weal and woe to be bound up with that of infants, the severely disabled, those with advanced dementia or Alzheimer's disease, and non-human animals, none of whom have a capacity for valuation like ours. There are risks involved in our doing so, of course, but we regularly act as if the benefits make the risk worthwhile. Doing so thus isn't impossible.

Nor does it seem to be irrational to allow our weal and woe to be bound up with those who lack a capacity for evaluation like ours. Remember again what we have a reason to do, given our quite general account of reasons for action. We have a reason to do whatever we desire to do, so long as our doing so doesn't prevent us from helping and not interfering. Having and acting on an emotional attachment to an infant, someone who is severely disabled, someone with advanced dementia or Alzheimer's disease, and a non-human animal is something that many of us desire. Since our having and acting on such an attachment often won't prevent us from helping or not interfering, it is therefore often the case that there is a conditional reason for many of us to have and act on such emotional attachments. Velleman's restriction of permissible emotional vulnerability of the kind he thinks constitutes love to those with a capacity for valuation like ours, those we must respect, would thus seem to be unmotivated.

Indeed, if love is a matter of allowing our weal and woe to be bound up with the weal and woe of others, then it seems that love needn't be an attitude that we have towards people at all. Remember again all of the things we can be said to love. To focus on just one example, some of us love paintings. Our sense of our life's going well or badly is bound up with the preservation of paintings, opportunities to look at them, affectively responding to them, discussing them with others and making them more widely understood, and so on. In an admittedly somewhat loose sense, how things are going for us is therefore bound up with how things are going for the paintings, and we are glad that this is so. Given that we have a conditional reason to do whatever

we desire to do, it therefore seems that many of us therefore have a conditional reason to have and act on such an attachment to paintings as well.

We began this section with the observation that love in one sense seems to be no different from respect. But since love in this sense is non-selective, an attitude we can and should have towards everyone, it would seem to follow that love in the selective sense must be entirely different. The search for a single conception of love that captures all of the paradigm cases would thus appear to be hopeless. Velleman's account of love in the selective sense as a response to the very same value as respect—the value of the capacity for valuation like ours—promised to restore more unity to our conception of love. But on examination his account turned out not to be very plausible. Love does indeed seem to involve emotional vulnerability to the beloved, but there is no reason to suppose that love consists in that emotional vulnerability, and nor is there any reason to suppose that we can or should only be emotionally vulnerable to those who themselves have the capacity to respect others.

4. Love in the selective sense

Niko Kolodny provides us with an alternative way of spelling out the difference between respect, on the one hand, and love in the more selective sense, on the other, a way that has the great virtue of allowing that love in the selective sense isn't restricted to those with a capacity for valuation like ours (Kolodny "Love"). Though he packages his view as a unified account of love, as it turns out that there is no such thing as love-as-respect on his view, it seems to me best to ignore this feature of his view. As we will see, he is better read as explaining what the difference between love-as-respect and love in the more selective sense consists in. The question on which we will focus is therefore whether this explanation is a good one.

According to Kolodny,

... love is a psychological state for which there are reasons, and these reasons are interpersonal relationships. More specifically, love is a kind of valuing. Valuing X, in general, involves (i) being vulnerable to certain emotions regarding X, and (ii) believing that one has reasons both for this vulnerability to X and for actions regarding X... In other words, love consists (a) in seeing a relationship in which one is involved as a reason for valuing both one's relationship and the person with whom one has that relationship, and (b) in valuing that relationship and person accordingly. (Kolodny "Love", 150)

Kolodny interprets this to mean that the lover must believe that he has reasons to act in the interest of the beloved and in the interest of his *historical* relationship with them, where those reasons are furnished by the historical relationship itself (Kolodny "Love", 148). He also interprets it to mean that the lover must be vulnerable to a range of favourable and unfavourable emotions in response to his beliefs about how his beloved and his historical relationship with them are faring, where the reasonableness of these emotions depends on the reasonableness of his beliefs. This is why, according to Kolodny, the weal and woe of the lover and that of his beloved are bound up together.

Kolodny's account of love purports to explain why love in the selective sense differs from respect. We can and must respect everyone, but we can only love those with whom we have an interpersonal relationship with a history, because it is the historical nature of our interpersonal relationship that provides the reasons for our consequent emotional vulnerability. Moreover, it also purports to explain why love is an attitude we can only have towards people. Love is a

response to the reasons provided by our historical interpersonal relationships, so only people can be objects of love. Finally, Kolodny's account purports to explain why, even though love is an attitude we can only have towards people, that attitude presupposes nothing about the capacities for valuation of those we love. This is because the interpersonal relationships we have with people are not constrained by their capacities for valuation. We may of course value things other than people and our historical relationships with them: for example, we may believe that features of objects, activities, and ideas are reasons for us to be emotionally vulnerable to them. But our valuing such things can't amount to our loving them, given what Kolodny take to be love's nature, so talk of our loving them must be a mere *façon de parler*. So, at any rate, Kolodny's account suggests.

Before evaluating Kolodny's account of love, we should ask whether our quite general account of reasons for action supports his idea that loving relationships are reason-giving, and, more specifically, whether it supports his idea that what is reason-giving about loving relationships is the fact that they are historical interpersonal relationships. The answer is that this idea finds no support from our general account of reasons. There are certain interpersonal relationships that are reason-giving, according to our quite general account of reasons. As we saw in the earlier account of respect, the fact that we have the relationship with certain people of being able to affect them provides us with dominant reasons to help and not interfere with them, and it also provides us with reasons to be guilty if we interfere with or fail to help them. This reason-giving interpersonal relationship is, however, a thoroughly *causal* relationship, a relationship we could have with people without having any history with them at all. It is precisely because this interpersonal relationship is reason-giving that it seems so plausible to suppose that there is such a thing as love-as-respect.

Of course, Kolodny might say so much the worse for our quite general account of reasons. Loving relationships are reason-giving in virtue of their historical nature, he might say, so if our quite general account of reasons is inconsistent with that, then so much the worse for our quite general account. But though he is right that many loving relationships are historical, he would seem to be wrong in supposing that they are all historical. If they were all historical, then this would make love at first sight with a romantic partner, the subject matter of countless romance novels and love songs, an impossibility. But love at first sight doesn't seem to be impossible. Or consider two people who have the same experience, but without the sexual attraction: they meet, click, and immediately become firm friends. The historical requirement tells us that this too is an impossibility. But, once again, it doesn't seem to be impossible. Or consider parents who love the children they bring into existence from the moment they become aware of their existence in the womb. The historical requirement says that these children cannot instantly become objects of parental love, a claim that rings very hollow indeed.

The upshot is that Kolodny's suggestion that the selectivity of love is explained by the fact that we can only love those with whom we have an historical interpersonal relationship that provides reasons for our emotional vulnerability to them seems in the end not to be very plausible. We are therefore still in need of an explanation of why we are emotionally vulnerable to those we love in the selective sense. The time has therefore come for us to return to the idea we found in Frankfurt, the idea that that explanation lies in the fact that loving someone is a matter of our caring for them, or perhaps our having some other psychological attitude or disposition towards them.

According to Frankfurt, loving someone in the selective sense is a matter of our caring for them, where our caring for them requires our identifying with them, and where identification is spelled out in terms of second-order volitions that constrain the will. This is why, as he sees things, our weal and woe gets bound up with that of those we love in the way it does. Though this sounds plausible up to a point, as is well known, Frankfurt's idea that we can spell out identification in terms of second-order volitions is fraught with problems (Watson "Free Agency"). The question is therefore whether we can do a better job of explaining what identification amounts to. Is there some other psychological state that can do the job that Frankfurt's second-order volitions cannot do?

In their account of friendship, Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett in effect argue that there is (Cocking and Kennett "Friendship", see also Baltzly and Kennett Chapter XXXX). As they see things, loving someone consists in the disposition to acquire intrinsic desires as part of a dynamic process in which the final desires of a lover and his beloved, and their self-conceptions, develop under each other's influence. The lover comes to intrinsically desire to do certain things because that fits with what the beloved intrinsically desires to do, and vice-versa; the lover comes to think that certain things are non-derivatively important to focus on, among the many non-derivatively important things that could be focused on, because that fits in with what the beloved thinks is non-derivatively important to focus on, and vice-versa; and so on. Let's follow Cocking and Kennett in calling this psychological state an underlying "receptivity to direction and interpretation" (Cocking and Kennett "Friendship", 286). Though the personalities and intrinsic desires of each may therefore be in a constant state of flux, the underlying receptivity to direction and interpretation guarantees that the lover and beloved are, quite literally, made for each other. Their interests dovetail and their self-conceptions overlap. This, accordingly, is the sense in which the lover and his beloved identify with each other, and it is their identifying with each other in this sense that explains why their weal and woe is bound up with each others, but not with that of strangers. This is why love can be selective.

In order to better understand this underlying receptivity to direction and interpretation, it might be useful to contrast it with similar dispositions from which it differs in a crucial way. Consider, for example, a symmetric version of the receptivity in question, but one that inevitably leads to conflict, rather than a dovetailing of interests. One member of the pair is disposed to intrinsically desire to do things because their desiring to do those things conflicts with the other's doing the things that they intrinsically desire to do, and he is disposed to think that certain things are non-derivatively important to focus on among the many non-derivatively important things that could be focused upon because the other thinks that those things are non-derivatively unimportant, and vice versa. In other words, each feels glad when the other feels sad, sad when they other feels glad. Is this symmetric version of the receptivity in question an instance of a loving relationship? Not at all. This looks more like mutual contempt or hatred, not at all like a loving relationship.

Or consider the asymmetric version of the receptivity in question. One member of the pair acquires intrinsic desires under the influence of the other, and these intrinsic desires underwrite emotional vulnerability of the right kind. He is glad when the other is glad, sad when the other is sad, glad when his sense of what's important is formed under the other's influence, and sad when that's not so because the other's influence is impeded. Is this love? Though it isn't the paradigmatic case of love, it seems that it might well be a case of love. Indeed, it looks a lot like *unrequited* love. And with this one-sided case in clear view, it should also be clear that the

other member of the pair needn't be a person at all. Think of the earlier example of someone who loves paintings. The disposition to acquire intrinsic desires is all on the side of the lover of the paintings, but the intrinsic desires he acquires, and his sense of what's important, are all influenced by his interactions with paintings, and by what he is led to believe it would take to preserve, admire, and discuss them. Features of the paintings themselves thus figure crucially in the explanation of what he is disposed to do. Cocking and Kennett could, it seems, easily extend their account to cover cases like this, cases in which we love objects, activities, and ideas, because they could insist that though the paradigmatic case of loving relationships are ones in which there is a symmetric receptivity to direction and interpretation that leads to a dovetailing of interests in the way discussed earlier, these other cases are non-paradigmatic cases of love, as they share the crucial similarities just described to the paradigmatic cases.

Cocking and Kennett aren't the only ones to propose an account of love that lends itself to extension to objects, activities, and ideas in this way. Alexander Nehamas's very similar account of friendship is explicitly designed to be so extended.

Even in cases where I simply enjoy your company without being your intimate friend or lover, I can exhibit a willingness to change as a result of interacting with you: the extent of such a willingness is a matter of degree. I am not inclined to spend my time with you because I already know what I want to get out of you, having a settled sense of myself and of what you can give me. Rather, I suspect that you can give me something I don't yet have a conception of, I hope that you will make me want something I have not wanted before. In doing so, I make myself emotionally and intellectually vulnerable to you. I put my identity at risk, and the risk is great because I don't yet know how you will eventually affect me—and if you feel as I do, your problems are exactly like mine. But then, as the ancient proverb said, friends have everything in common. (Nehamas "Promise of Happiness", 202)

Nehamas then goes on to suggest that the disposition to acquire desires under the influence of another person is a disposition of the very same kind as we have when we are open to the experience of art.

As long as I find someone beautiful—which is, in different degrees, a matter of love—I commit myself to its being worthwhile for that person to be—to whatever extent—part of my life and for me to be, in turn, part of their own life as well. Without that forward-looking element, and all its risks, attraction and love wither and disappear. And so, also, with art. A work we admire, a work we love, a work we find, in a word, beautiful sparks within us the same need to rush to converse with it, the same sense that it has more to offer, the same willingness to submit to it, the same desire to make it part of our life. I don't want to understate the differences, but I also don't want to lose sight of the similarities. (Nehamas "Promise of Happiness", 205)

Our talk of loving paintings is thus no mere *façon de parler* for Nehamas, and nor need it be for Cocking and Kennett.

Have Cocking and Kennett and Nehamas provided us with a way of resuscitating a view in the same ballpark as Kolodny's account of love as valuing a relationship? Not really. What is true, if they are right, is that paradigmatic loving relationships are such in virtue of their being constituted by a mutual receptivity to direction and interpretation that leads to a dovetailing of interests, and relationships with that feature are the source of reasons to satisfy the intrinsic

desires thus created. According to Cocking and Kennett and Nehamas and Kolodny, loving relationships thus give rise to reasons, but there are striking differences between their accounts of why loving relationships give rise to reasons.

For one thing, contrary to Kolodny, Cocking and Kennett and Nehamas are not committed to the loving relationships that give rise to reasons being historical. The receptivity in question could be acquired at first sight. For another, though they take such relationships to be the source of various reasons, they do not take them to be the source in Kolodny's sense. Facts about the receptivity in question does not justify anything. Rather, the receptivity is the causal source of intrinsic desires that the lover has reasons to satisfy. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Cocking and Kennett and Nehamas are not committed to loving relationships being interpersonal relationships. Rather, as we have seen, they can admit that we be receptive towards features of an object, an activity, or an idea. Love can therefore have a much larger range of objects according to the view advocated by Cocking and Kennett and Nehamas than it can on Kolodny's view, a range much more in line with what we ordinarily take to be the range of objects of love.

5. The reasons for action we have in virtue of loving someone in the selective sense

Let me now briefly describe some of the reasons for action we have in virtue of loving someone in the sense we have settled on. Before doing so, however, I must acknowledge that I here depart company from Cocking and Kennett and Nehamas. They think that the reasons we have in virtue of loving someone can conflict with our reasons to respect people—about this we are in agreement—but they also think that the relative weight of these reasons has to be decided on a case-by-case basis, and that the reasons we have in virtue of loving someone or something sometimes win. My own view is very different.

For the reasons given when I outlined the quite general theory of reasons at the beginning, our respect-based reasons to help and not interfere are always dominant, and hence our reasons to do whatever we want to do are always conditional on our not thereby being led to interfere or fail to help. Respect-based reasons thus systematically outweigh desire-based reasons. The important residual question, in my view, is not when respect-based reasons are outweighed by desire-based reasons—the answer is never—but rather whether all of the reasons sourced in our mutual receptivity to direction and interpretation are conditional desire-based reasons. Are all such reasons conditional desire-based reasons, or are some of them respect-based reasons? Somewhat surprisingly, it turns out that some of them are respect-based.

Consider first of all some examples of the conditional desire-based reasons sourced in a mutual receptivity to direction and interpretation. Romantic lovers, family members who love each other, and friends all have a mutual receptivity to direction and interpretation, and one of the things that this causes in them is a range of intrinsic desires. As Cocking and Kennett say, a lover might therefore end up having reasons to "play in a card game, go bushwalking, or go to the movies", things that they might antecedently have had no desire to do at all, and hence no reason to do (Cocking and Kennett, 284). Moreover, they might eventually end up having no intrinsic desire, and hence no reason, to do any of these things further down the track. Their mutual receptivity to direction and interpretation could eventually drive out these intrinsic desires and replace them with others. The conditional desire-based reasons we have in virtue of loving someone are therefore potentially quite different from person to person and, within a person, from time to time. Importantly, however, these reasons are all conditional. We have reasons to satisfy these intrinsic desires on condition that our doing so does not lead us to

interfere or fail to help.

Consider now some respect-based reasons sourced in a mutual receptivity to direction and interpretation. Let's begin with a very simple example. Jill acquires an intrinsic desire to learn how to play cards. Because she has this desire, her friend Jack, who is receptive to direction and interpretation by her, comes to acquire the same intrinsic desire. Once they've both learned how to play cards, each for the conditional desire-based reasons they have in virtue of intrinsically desiring to learn, they make plans to meet and play cards at a café in a week's time. Each knowingly leads the other to expect, quite reasonably, that they will be at the café in a week's time, ready and willing to play cards. As a result of having this reasonable expectation, an expectation that was also caused in each of them, albeit remotely, by their receptivity to direction and interpretation, Jill constrains her plans concerning what she will do to realize her desires in a week's time. Now suppose that some time during the next week, Jack loses his intrinsic desire to play cards. Does he still have a reason to turn up at the café, ready and willing to play cards? It seems to me that he does. After all, if Jack unexpectedly doesn't turn up, he will thereby interfere with Jill's exercise of her capacity for desire-realization, as if she'd known he wasn't going to turn up, she would have made other plans (compare Scanlon "Promises"). It therefore turns out that, even though he no longer has a conditional desire-based reason to be at the café next Friday, ready and willing to play cards, he still has a respect-based reason to do so, a respect-based reason grounded in his reason not to interfere with Jill's exercise of her desiderative capacities together with the circumstances in which he finds himself, circumstances caused by his receptivity to direction and interpretation by her.

With this case firmly in view, it should be clear that lovers will end up having respect-based reasons to do all sort of things for their beloveds that they have no reason to do for others. To take one striking example, romantic lovers often lead each other to expect that, if the fire ever goes out of their relationship, they will take steps to reignite it. It should now be clear what this might amount to, and the respect-based reasons to which it could give rise. Romantic lovers are receptive to direction and interpretation by each other, and this shared receptivity causes them to have various sexual desires concerning each other. Finding that the fire has gone out of their relationship could therefore amount either to a loss of their sexual desires, or to a loss of their shared receptivity to direction and interpretation itself, losses that one of them could easily suffer without its being suffered by the other. If during the course of their relationship, the one who suffers such a loss has knowingly led the other to reasonably expect that, should this ever happen, he would take steps to regain his sexual desires, or his receptivity—perhaps he has led her to believe that they would go to relationship counseling—then he has a respect-based reason to take those steps (compare Wallace "Duties"). To fail to do so would be to interfere with her capacity for desire-realization, as if she had known that he wouldn't take those steps, she may have made other plans. He therefore has a respect-based reason to do something for his beloved that he has no reason to do, and indeed couldn't do, for anyone else. Here lies the truth, such as it is, in Kolodny's suggestion that love consists in valuing an historical relationship.

The picture that emerges is thus one according to which, when we love, we have a complex mix of desire-based and respect-based reasons for action, where these reasons are all causally sourced in our mutual receptivity to direction and interpretation. Certain people, like romantic lovers who have knowingly given each other the reasonable expectation that they will reignite their relationship if the fire goes out, will also have respect-based reasons to do what they can to love again when they stop loving, and it is easy to imagine both respect-based and

desire-based reasons for those who don't love anyone to begin to love someone, and respect-based and desire-based reasons for people who love someone to stop loving them. I will bring this discussion to a close with a brief explanation of how reasons of these kinds might arise.

Since a mutual receptivity to direction and interpretation, whether in the guise of romantic love or friendship or having a family, is one of the primary means by which most people get to lead enjoyable lives, anyone who has a desire to lead such a life, and is not wildly atypical, will have a conditional desire-based reason to enter into a loving relationship of one or another of these kinds. Having said that, there are people who are atypical, so it is important that we do not wrongly assume that those who have no interest in being part of a loving relationship of one or another of these kinds are making some kind of mistake. Moreover, even for those who are typical, there is no guarantee that coming to love someone will leave their desire to enjoy themselves intact. Having got oneself into a loving relationship in the hope of finding enjoyment, they might end up with very little joy in their life, and they might not mind this one little bit. One of the surprising things about loving relationships is that, in virtue of their potential to transform our intrinsic desires and self-conceptions, they can be a success even when they lead lovers in totally unexpected directions. This is one of the points Nehamas emphasizes.

As regards respect-based reasons to acquire a mutual receptivity to direction and interpretation, think again about familial love. Since not having a loving familial relationship with their primary care-giver is so crippling for children, sapping them of confidence and emotional stability in ways that can last well into their adulthood, those primary care-givers who find themselves not loving the children in their care have a respect-based reason to give in to their natural tendency to love them, or, failing that, to look for something to love about them. This respect-based reason, sourced in the reason that everyone has to do what they can to make sure that people have desiderative and epistemic capacities to exercise, is a reason that makes special demands on primary care-givers, as they play a pivotal role in helping those within their care to acquire such capacities in the first place. But since not everyone is capable of developing a receptivity to direction and interpretation by children, those who find that they cannot develop such a receptivity have respect-based reasons to make arrangements for the children in their care to be brought up by someone better equipped to care for them, where this includes giving them the love that they so sorely need (for more on this see Liao *Right to be Loved*).

There are also both respect-based and conditional desire-based reasons for certain people to stop loving. Consider once again people who acquire a mutual receptivity to direction and interpretation because they desire to enjoy themselves and believe that loving someone is a means to that end. They may succeed in acquiring new desires and losing old ones under the direction and interpretation of their beloved, and they may work hard to satisfy their new desires, and yet, because they find themselves unsuccessful at doing many of the things that they now want to do, and because they have retained their desire to enjoy themselves, they may find themselves with strong conditional desire-based reasons to exit their relationship, reasons grounded in the very desire to enjoy themselves that got them into the relationship in the first place. There need be no fault in a situation like this. Lovers can simply discover themselves to be incompatible by trying and failing to make a go of things. They end up with conditional desire-based reasons to rid themselves of their mutual receptivity, reasons that are conditional on their not interfering with or failing to help anyone in the process. This is especially important to remember when one of the parties finds themselves with reasons to exit the relationship and the other doesn't. When the expectation that a relationship will continue and weather the storms has

knowingly and reasonably been created in such circumstances, apologies and compensation for losses may well be due, but staying in the relationship will not.

In other cases, though lovers may succeed in acquiring a mutual receptivity to direction and interpretation, acquire new desires and lose old ones, and feel perfectly satisfied with the situation in which they find themselves, the desires that they lose in the process might include all of those that would otherwise have motivated them to act on their respect-based reasons. Love for someone can in this way lead both the lover and beloved to be so devoted to each other that they're more than willing to interfere and fail to help with others all in the name of love for their beloved. Stories of mafia families are full of characters who love each other in this way. Of course, the desires on which such people act are not reason-giving, as we only have reasons to satisfy the desires we have in virtue of loving someone to the extent that satisfying them is consistent our helping and not interfering. But we may have the desires and act on them none-the-less. This is why, as Cocking and Kennett remind us, the fact that loving someone consists in an underlying receptivity to direction and interpretation underscores the moral danger inherent in loving someone. In such cases, there will be respect-based reasons to modify or even end the relationship, albeit respect-based reasons that the lover and beloved may have no motivation to act upon.

6. Conclusion

We began with the observation that though the claim that we love someone or something sometimes amounts to little more than the claim that we like them or it, in other cases something much more or different is being claimed. The question on which we have been focused is what this more or different thing amounts to, and what reasons for action we have when we love someone or something in this more or different way. Here is a summary of the answers we have come up with about the paradigmatic cases, which are all cases in which we love someone. Cases in which we love something have to be treated separately, as they are non-paradigmatic.

According to the quite general account of reasons for action offered here, no matter what their circumstances, everyone has reasons to help and not interfere, and beyond that, they have reasons to do whatever they intrinsically desire to do. According to the account of love in paradigmatic cases offered here, a crucial feature of the circumstances we find ourselves in when we love is that a whole range of the intrinsic desires we possess are the causal upshot of a mutual receptivity we have to direction and interpretation, a receptivity that is constitutive of our loving relationship with the person with whom we share that receptivity. None of this is true when we merely like someone. When we love someone we therefore have reasons to satisfy these intrinsic desires, at least insofar as satisfying them is consistent with our still helping and not interfering. And since our acting on these intrinsic desires may sometimes cause our beloved to have various reasonable expectations about how we will comport ourselves in the future, reasonable expectations that our beloved will rely on in making their plans, we will also have respect-based reasons to meet these reasonable expectations, respect-based reasons sourced in our reason to help and not interfere. Finally, since a loving relationship can be unsatisfying on the one hand, or satisfying but in a way that leads us to interfere with people or fail to help them on the other, we may also have both desire-based and respect-based reasons to exit the loving relationships in which we find ourselves.

Of course, the account of the reasons of love I have given is only as plausible as the view of our fundamental reasons for action described at the outset on which it is based, and many will

find that view controversial. But looking back over what's been said about the reasons for action we have in virtue of loving someone, I am struck by how utterly commonsensical it all sounds. My own inclination is to take some solace in this. Given its commonsensical implications, perhaps the view of our fundamental reasons for action described earlier shouldn't be judged to be quite so controversial after all.

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