The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Love
Edited by Christopher Grau and Aaron Smuts

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The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Love: Introduction

Christopher Grau and Aaron Smuts

1. Introduction*

While a serious interest from philosophers in the topic of love goes back to the birth of philosophy, and courses on philosophy of love, sex, and friendship have been consistently popular and widespread, philosophy of love remained a somewhat marginal subfield for many years. We believe this period has passed, and the field has entered a new and promising phase of growth. Accordingly, the time for an *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Love* has arrived.

Philosophy of Love is not typically an Area of Specialization (AOS) for an academic philosopher. Those who do focus their research on the topic typically think of themselves as working in some other major area along with a special interest in the topic. And this is likely a good thing. The philosophers who contribute to this volume specialize in many different areas (ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, history of philosophy), and as a result they bring a great deal of viewpoint diversity to the collection. Most have written on love before, but a few have not. Those who haven't broached the topic were chosen because they are leading figures in their own particular areas of specialization. This handbook is divided into five general sections: varieties of love, justifications for love, explanations of love, love and value, philosophers of love, and a final section exploring intersections between love and a variety of other domains. What follows are brief considerations of each chapter.

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*Aaron Smuts passed away far too young of cancer while this project was concluding. He played a crucial role in helping to craft the shape of the volume and in providing valuable feedback to contributors. Had time allowed he would have played a larger role in co-authoring this introduction. As it stands, he helped write the introductory paragraphs and some summaries for the "justifications for love" section.

2. Varieties of Love

Philosophers who work on the topic of love, like philosophers of anything else, tend to disagree. For example, when we speak of love, how narrowly or broadly are we intending to speak? While it is quite common to talk of loving both a child and ice cream, some philosophers will discount the latter as simply "loose talk" while others will think that any philosophical account which cannot encompass love of objects is thereby incomplete. In this volume you'll find Susan Wolf's account to be quite general. While she focuses on love of persons in her contribution "Love: The Basic Questions", she ends up offering an account that can accommodate love of one's work, love of music, or even love of a tree. Briefly, her view takes love to have at its core a deep and personal concern for the beloved for *their own sake*. Wolf argues that such an account can best make sense of the many ways in which love seems to provide us with the sort of ground-level projects that give us reasons to *be* in the world (more colloquially: reasons to get out of the bed in the morning). In loving we are investing in something outside of ourselves in a way that makes our own lives significantly more meaningful than they might otherwise be.

As the titles suggests, Berit Brogaard's contribution "Romantic Love for a Reason" has a narrower focus: romantic love. By her lights such love is best construed as a "complex emotion", i.e., an emotion which can itself involve an array of other emotions. This complex emotion can be rational when it involves proper fit, a fit which is conditional on the qualities of the beloved, specifically those qualities which can affect our wellbeing. She does acknowledge that romantic love is less likely to be responsive to reasons than, say, friendship, but she nevertheless insists that romance, like some other "passions", can be responsive to reflection in a way that allows for a reason to play a very significant role.

In “Parental Love” Norvin Richards offers a discussion of the ways in which a parent’s love for a child brings with it singular responsibilities. Fundamentally, he recognizes that proper parental love ought to involve a concern for one’s child that is quite distinct both from the sort of love on might have for a spouse or friend and the sort of love a child should have for a parent. The nature of parenthood is such that parental love involves *expectations* for the child and a degree of *control* over the child which would be rather smothering if applied in other sorts of relationships. The parent is in some key sense in charge of the child, and good parental love acknowledges this without limiting the child’s freedom in a pernicious manner. Good parental love also adapts as time goes on – Richards wisely notes that a parent’s bond ought to involve a gradual relinquishing of control that tracks the increasing independence of the child as that child matures to adulthood, concluding that, “What parents should actually want is to have their child love them in a way in which they are progressively less central to him as he matures toward adulthood.”

In “Love and Animals”, Tony Milligan addresses the possibility of love among non-human animals. Facing head on the objection that any such love might be foreclosed by the lack of rationality among “mere brutes”, Milligan argues both that excessively rationalist theories of love are probably misguided but also that many non-human animals are capable of greater intelligence and rationality than is typically acknowledged. At the very least Milligan thinks we can reasonably evaluate such love in terms of appropriateness and depth. He suggests that a capacity for *reciprocity* should be regarded as something like a sufficient condition for appropriate animal love. Intriguingly, he also discusses how the capacity of many animals to *mourn* reveals just the sort of reciprocity that can provide the groundwork for genuine bonds of

love. Milligan's thesis has important implications for a variety of popular theories of love that appeal to higher order cognitive functions that most animals lack. If animals can love, then these theories are not just wrong but, more deeply, missing a deep part of our relations with animals and their mutual relations with one another.

In the final essay of this first section, "The Ordinary Concept of True Love", Brian D. Earp, Daniel Do, and Joshua Knobe offer an empirical and philosophical investigation into the nature of true love. While one might naturally think that when we speak of "true love" we are speaking of paradigmatic or prototypical love, their studies reveal that it is more common for people to be doing something more complex: it appears our talk of true love is usually gesturing at the *realness* of a love bond while also often evaluating how *good* or *valuable* we take the love to be. (They do not attempt to diagnose just what we mean when we claim "realness" in this context, though they raise the possibility it could be connected to our concept of a "true self".) They suggest that the results of their empirical work help us understand the disagreements we might have over what counts as true love, e.g., sometimes it appears we are agreeing that true love must be *real* but disagreeing regarding how our criteria for realness fit a particular case. So, two people might agree that true love cannot involve an immoral partner, but they might disagree over whether a particular partner counts as immoral. At other times we may well be questioning those criteria altogether, such as if one were to insist that immorality is no barrier to a bond of love being true. Empirically investigating what we really mean when we employ our ordinary concept of true love is shown to shed philosophical light not just on the nature of such love but also the nature of our disputes over the concept's application.

3. Justifications for Love

A key focus of discussion among philosophers of love is the degree to which love can be thought of as rational. No doubt this particular issue has gripped philosophers more than others because philosophy in general is focused on demarcating the rational from the irrational and "legitimate" reasoning or action from illegitimate. Given the rationalistic basis of the field, it is not surprising that many philosophers are reluctant to cede any part of their lives to irrationality or arationality, especially in our loving attachments, which typically make up a very significant portion of our lives. As one might expect, this topic is thoroughly investigated in several essays here dedicated to the topic of reasons for love in this section, but it also arises in several other essays that have their primary focus elsewhere (such as the essays from Brogaard and Miligan already mentioned, as well as later essays from Kreft and Ben Zeev & Krebs). As it turns out, whether and to what degree love is rational is a topic few philosophers who consider love can resist at least considering, and for good reason: much seems to hang in the balance. The rationality or irrationality of love has ramifications for how we think about love's relationship to morality as well as it's connections to meaning in life.

In "Love, Value, and Reasons" Katy Abramson and Adam Leite offer a sophisticated defense of the view that romantic love and the bonds of friendship are based on reasons, and that these reasons typically involve reference to the good qualities of the beloved. They elaborate on the ways in which love consists of a particular sort of *valuing orientation* toward the beloved. Understanding love as a way of valuing helps to illuminate the fundamental role *character* plays in love: both the character of the lover (which is in part comprised of their valuing orientation) and the character of the beloved (whose valuable character traits attract

the lover). Abramson and Leite also clarify the *types* of reasons at play when we love, arguing that “reasons for love”, “reasons of love”, and the relation between them are illuminated by understanding love as a valuing orientation. They argue that once we appreciate the complexity and range of reasons involved in love and the nuanced way in which our valuations permeate love many standard objections to both “reasons for love” views and “quality” views fall by the wayside -- especially the common thought that such views can’t makes sense of the unique specificity of the beloved.

In “The No-Reasons View”, Aaron Smuts defends the claim that love cannot be rationally justified, since it significantly involves arational processes. Merely admiring someone's virtue and beauty is not the same as loving them. The brute chemical aspects of love remove it from the space of reasons. Importantly, however, Smuts argues that even though love cannot be rationally assessed, our responses to love can be. For example, while it may not make sense to judge one particular loving attachment as *in itself* more rationally appropriate than another, it can be quite reasonable to judge a love relationship as irrational in the sense that it is imprudent when it is not, all things considered, in the lover’s best interests.

Troy Jollimore, in "Love as 'Something in Between'", defends a moderately rationalistic view according to which love is governed at least in part by reasons. Common attempts to rationally justify romantic love run into significant problems, including the problem of trading up. If the properties of the beloved justified our love, it would seem that we would be rationally required to trade up if a person with a greater set of those properties were available. This strikes many as absurd. Jollimore attempts to avoid this and related problems by appealing in part to *nondeontic* reasons. These are reasons that make something appropriate, but not

required. I might have reasons to go to the movies or to a concert. Neither is prohibited. Both are permissible and neither is commanded by reason. (I wouldn't be irrational to go to the movies over the concert.) Jollimore argues that once we recognize the role deontic reasons like these play in love we can see how love is best construed as a *partly* rational phenomenon, which is perhaps all we should expect from it given the messy complexities of the world in which we live and love.

4. Explanations of Love

We quite naturally talk of love as an emotion alongside prototypical emotions like fear or hope, but perhaps such talk is fundamentally mistaken? Pismenny and Prinz think so, and in their chapter "Is Love an Emotion?" they answer with a resounding "No". Why not? Well, there are a number of significant differences between love and standard emotions, e.g., emotions tend to have formal objects, hinge on bodily perceptions, and have aptness conditions. Love, lacking these key features, is instead best construed as a "syndrome", i.e., a collection of thoughts, behaviors and emotions which cluster together in ways that often involve significant cultural factors (which is not to deny that there is also a strong biological role in shaping love across cultures). Pismenny and Prinz recognize that the concept of "syndrome" usually brings with it connotation of psychiatric disorders (and the stigmas attached to such disorders), but they argue that this should not prevent us from recognizing the many ways in love does seem to share structural features with paradigmatic syndromes (such as depression). And if we are being honest with ourselves, we will admit that talk of one being "crazy" for their beloved and "madly" in love is quite common. While such talk is of course in a sense loose, if they are right it

nonetheless hints at revealing commonalities between love and some mental disorders, which is not to say love isn't also often an extremely beneficial and valuable part of our lives.

While Pismenny and Prinz offer up an analysis of love primarily in psychological terms, Hichem Naar focuses instead on the *ontology* of love. Starting from this rather abstract position Naar finds reasons to reject an account of love as a pattern, a process, or an event. In part because love appears to lack temporal parts (in contrast to a process or event), Naar concludes that love is best categorized as a state, and in particular a *dispositional* state. This approach has a number of advantages: it can accommodate the complexity of love, including its historical nature as well as the fact that love is the sort of thing one can come to *discover* one is in.

Michael Ruse considers the role that evolutionary theory can play in helping us grapple with the complexities of both sex and love. Distinguishing between the early lustful phases of romantic love and subsequent long-term commitments, Ruse suggests that both make sense evolutionarily: while the initial drive to couple and reproduce needs no elaborate explanation, the extended pair-bonding that happens with humans can be explained in terms of the vulnerability of our youth as well as the relatively small numbers of offspring we typically produce. Evolution also helps us understand other features of love, including why there may be gender differences in who "strays" from a relationship. Extending his discussion to same-sex relationships, he suggests several hypotheses for why homosexual bonds, which on first glance might not seem to make sense from an evolutionary perspective, are plausibly construed as potentially adaptive.

In "Love and Time" Aaron Ben-Ze'ev and Angelika Krebs consider the phenomenon of love with a special focus on the role time plays in shaping our romantic bonds. The key question

which drives their essay is, “can romantic love actually last the test of time?” Acknowledging that many acute emotions are fleeting, they conceptualize love as something different, an enduring “sentiment” which can involve significant profundity and which by its very nature is *dialogical*, unfolding over time and through change. Their dialogical model of love finds support in an analysis of Michael Haneke’s *Amour*, a film which sensitively and powerfully explores the manner by which one elderly couple grapples with the vicissitudes of age.

5. Love and Value

In this section love’s relation to a variety of domains of value (personal, moral, economic) is explored. In “Love and Caring”, Agnieszka Jaworska and Monique Wonderly attempt to sort out the specific relation between caring and love. It is uncontroversial that love appears to be a variety of care, but while all lovers might be carers there are clearly forms of care which do not amount to love. (Consider, for example, the typical caring relation between a teacher and a student.) Canvasing several recent theoretical accounts of love (from Frankfurt, Helm, Bagley, and others) Jaworksa and Wonderly find most either too demanding or too idiosyncratic to provide an adequate demarcation between love and the other varieties of care. These theories do rightly emphasize that love involves *intimacy*; Jaworska and Wonderly pursue that thread to develop an account by which love’s defining features involve a variety of forms of intimacy which have in common the capacity to provide meaning but also a distinctive type of emotional *vulnerability* to which a lover is necessarily subject. It is this vulnerability, more than anything else, which they posit as the distinguishing feature of the species of care we call love.

In “Love and Autonomy”, Nora Kreft considers widely held worries that the bond of love is one that by its very nature stifles the autonomy of the individual in love. While acknowledging that there are real risks here, Kreft presents an account of ideal love as “deep conversation” which not only avoids the constraints on autonomy that some non-ideal love relations might bring but in fact allows for an enhancement of individual autonomy. If we understand autonomy as taking an active stance towards one’s mental states, love as “deep conversation” can be liberatory for both parties, fostering not just intimacy but personal growth. Lest one balk at this model of love centered on conversation as overly intellectualistic, Kreft makes clear she is working with a broad notion of conversation here, one which can accommodate not just Socratic dialogue but activities as diverse as singing to a baby and having sex as forms of conversation that can cultivate autonomy.

Quite a few moral philosophers have expressed worries that there may be something inherent in morality that conflicts with the partiality of love. One way of putting this worry is to speak of morality’s tendency to *alienate* a person from their true motives by imposing a demand of abstraction and reflection such that the reasons dictated by morality clash with the reasons which flow from love. In “Love, Morality, and Alienation”, Julia Driver argues that this worry is sensible but can be adequately addressed. Acknowledging the force of criticisms from philosophers like Michael Stocker, Bernard Williams, and Susan Wolf, Driver considers a variety of responses and eventually concludes that we should extend the sort of “indirect” approach put forward by Peter Railton such that we come to distinguish between the sort of reflection needed to satisfy justificatory criteria and the rather different norms that ought to be in place in the realm of practical deliberation. The appropriate method of practical deliberation need not

be one in which justificatory reasons are referenced, and so worries about "one thought too many" tainting the moral agent's mindset are overblown. Along the way Driver also illuminatingly points out that those who see morality and love as exclusive domains seem to forget the many important ways in which moral deliberation naturally arises *within* love relationships. (Consider, for example, the way in which it would be clearly *morally* inappropriate to treat one's child as one treats a stranger.) Highlighting the nuanced ways in which love and morality are intertwined, Driver concludes that worries about an inherent or inevitable clash are ultimately misplaced.

In "Love and Economics" Patricia Marino analyzes the ways in which both traditional and more recent work in economic theory intersects with philosophical views on love and care. Recognizing the apparent tension between the solely self-interest rational agent of classical economics and the fundamentally other-directed nature of love, Marino considers attempts to finesse such tension through economic models that seek to absorb altruistic and other-regarding concerns as forms of enlightened self-interest or through operating with a more general conception of preferences which does not distinguish between self-interest and other motivations. While some such modifications can perhaps avoid particular difficulties (like those of "double counting") these approaches remain lacking in various ways. Marino carefully considers how even the most sophisticated attempts to tackle the key tension seem to still leave themselves open to worries about unfairness, exploitation, and injustice by not adequately capturing the fundamental role love plays in our lives. This suggests that there is significant room for further work on these important yet still neglected issues.

6. Philosophers of Love

Of all the "philosophers of love" considered in this section, Plato is the one about which there has been the most discussion and analysis by contemporary philosophers. Not looking to retread familiar ground, Iakovos Vasiliou's essay "Plato, Socrates, and Love" investigates an underexplored question raised by Plato's writings on love: what, if anything, do these texts have to teach us about *Plato's own love for Socrates*? Focusing in particular on the *Symposium* and *Phaedo*, Vasiliou carefully traces out the ways in which the structure of these dialogues can teach us lessons about what is surely the most famous friendship in the history of philosophy. What some scholars have viewed as a sign of disrespect from Plato – his willingness to use Socrates as a mouthpiece for his own views – Vasiliou instead takes to be one of several signs in these writings that Plato is showing a genuine love for his former teacher. In addition, Vasiliou argues that the *absence* (or at least near absence) of Plato from these writings demonstrates that Plato is both displaying his confidence in his positions while distinguishing himself from the other characters in the dialogues who are perhaps not philosophizing (or loving) as well as they should.

In "Aristotle on the Love of Friends" Neera Badhwar and Russell Jones offer an account of Aristotle's views on friendship that responds to common worries that his view of love in this domain is too idealistic, too moralistic, and too narrow. Aristotle's seemingly rigid requirements for his preferred category of friendship ("virtue" or "character" friendship) are best construed not as an out-of-touch fantasy of perfection that can never be reached, but rather as showcasing an ideal toward which it is reasonable for us to strive even though we know that we will likely fall short. The authors point to textual evidence suggesting Aristotle was quite aware

that most friendships fall short of his ideal. Acknowledging that virtue often comes in degrees, Aristotle allowed that the imperfectly virtuous exist, and he accordingly accommodates imperfectly virtuous friendships as well (that are nonetheless "character" friendships). Badhwar and Jones also demonstrate that Aristotle had a broad enough conception of virtue (encompassing even seemingly non-moral traits such as wit) to allay worries that his conception of friendship love is problematically moralistic. In addition, though it is clear enough that Aristotle held false and blinkered views on the nature of women, Badhwar and Jones argue that this need not stop us from fruitfully applying his many insights about the love of friends to marriage relationships.

Focusing in particular on the *Works of Love*, John Lippitt offers an original analysis of Kierkegaard's distinctive account of "Kjerlighed" (Christian or neighborly love) in his contribution "Kierkegaard on Love". Lippitt distinguishes this manner of love from a common notion of agape (as a sort of generalized benevolence), explaining that Kjerlighed is not nearly as opposed to "preferential" or partial bonds of love as often assumed. Indeed, properly understood Kierkegaard urges us not to avoid partial bonds of eros or friendship (or even self love) but instead to imbue them with Kjerlighed such that they can reach their full potential and avoid corruption. Lippitt also argues that Kierkegaard's notion of neighborly love is best construed as involving a sort of "vision" and appreciation of particularity that Troy Jollimore (following Iris Murdoch) has argued is the fundamental feature of romantic love. What it is to love well is in part to look closely and carefully, and this sort of openness and "loving attention" is for Kierkegaard a duty we owe not just to our romantic partners or family members but all human beings.

In “Schopenhauer on Love” Fiona Ellis tackles Schopenhauer’s famously gloomy view of romantic love as almost entirely ego driven and as something which must be put aside so as to allow for potential salvation through the pursuit of a particularly demanding and ascetic version of “agape”. Following Stephen Post and others, Ellis endorses a less brutal conception of both forms of love, one which emphasizes the ways in which both eros and agape involve significant reciprocity. She goes on to criticize Schopenhauer’s confining notion of desire as well as his unwillingness to acknowledge the nuances and complexity of romantic attachment. Ellis ends by suggesting that Schopenhauer’s own insights on mysticism and our need to transcend the will provide tools that can be usefully applied to move beyond his rather rigid metaphysical framework.

Merleau-Ponty only wrote specifically about love in a few places, but in “Merleau-Ponty on Love”, Todd May makes the case that nonetheless Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological approach, with its emphasis on introspection and felt bodily states (an “ontology of corporal entwinement”) can provide valuable insights into the nature of love, insights which offer a useful corrective to some of the less experience-centered analytic theories of love that have come to dominate recent discussions of the topic. Putting Merleau-Ponty’s ideas in dialogue with contemporary philosophical accounts from Nozick, Helm, and Kolodny, May highlights the manner in which Merleau-Ponty’s description-focused approach and his emphasis on the role of “sedimentation” can enrich our understanding of the historicity of love, the complex relationship that exists between love and trust, and the dangers of false love.

In “Simone de Beauvoir on Love” Skye Cleary considers Beauvoir’s groundbreaking writings on love and the role she believed authenticity should play in our love relationships. Not

surprisingly given her existentialist background, Beauvoir argued that "generous" or authentic loving requires a very high degree of freedom and individual autonomy, and she emphasized the many ways in which women in particular have been prevented from exercising such freedom by social, legal, and economic structures. This emphasis on background conditions which might inhibit autonomy led Beauvoir to be suspicious of traditional models of parenthood and marriage, though as Cleary points out she did conceive of authentic marriage relations as *possible*, if not likely. Cleary concludes her essay with a consideration of Beauvoir's writings on lesbian relationships, which she saw as providing a possible model of greater authenticity and equality in love because not being free to marry (at least until recently in some societies) meant that some same-sex relationships existed free from the oppressive societal structures that traditional marriage imposes.

Iris Murdoch is often given substantial credit for love gradually becoming a topic of respectable conversation among analytic philosophers, and Niklas Forsberg's contribution "Iris Murdoch on Love" makes clear just how pervasive a role love played in Murdoch's philosophy (and how pervasive a role she believed it played in our thought generally, whether we are aware of it or not). Forsberg eloquently explores how Murdoch's unconventional Platonism allows us, if we will let it, to come to appreciate the fundamental connections between loving attention, the importance of resisting the ubiquitous temptations of egoism and self-absorption, the pursuit of the Good, and the manner in which the Good functions as an essential metaphor for perfection in our thought. Forsberg's analysis highlights how Murdoch's commitment to shaking us free of our complacent ideologies makes her philosophical work more radical and transformative than has generally been recognized. Rather than provide us with another theory

of love, Murdoch has revealed to us the inevitable and vital role love already has in our lives and our concepts.

7. Intersections

As if to make Murdoch's point about the multiplicity of ways in which love permeates our thinking, the final section of this handbook consists of contributors demonstrating how philosophical work on love can constructively intersect with a quite diverse range of topics. Elizabeth Brake's chapter "Love and the Law" explores the ways in which our attitudes regarding love have influenced legal thinking as well as the ways in which our laws have over time functioned to both constrain and liberate our abilities to express and pursue our loves. Demonstrating how the state has "nudged" us toward those relationship structures it prefers through a variety of incentives, protections, and punishments, Brake traces the history of theorists (both conservative and radical) who have argued for changes in the laws that address our love relationships. Arguing that a complete separation of the law from the romantic sphere is both impractical and unwise, Brake concludes that the legal protections and support provided by mechanisms like marriage can be defended as conducive to flourishing love relationships. However, she suggests that the demands of equity and justice may well require an expansion of accessibility such that the benefits of marriage-like entitlements come to be open to a much wider variety of loving relationships.

In "Sex and Love" Raja Halwani acknowledges that sexual desire plays a crucial role in the early stages of romantic love, but he emphasizes that there is nonetheless an inherent tension between sex and love. This is primarily because, on Halwani's account, while love has at

its core a nature which is other-regarding, sexual desire is essentially and exclusively self-interested. Halwani also argues that we would do well to keep distinct two forms of romantic love: an early sexually-charged love and a later companionate form which need not involve sex. Tracing out the complex relations between sexual desire and both varieties of romantic love, Halwani poses some fascinating and challenging questions, such as: does one have sexual obligations to a romantic partner? And more controversially, if we recognize the universality of sexual desires (and so of sexual needs), might an individual have sexual obligations towards friends or even strangers? Halwani's essay is exploratory rather than dogmatic and encourages us to think more deeply both about the differences between sexual desire and love and the normative ramifications which flow from a proper appreciation of these differences.

In "Love, Jealousy, and Compersion" Ronald de Sousa surveys philosophical discussions of jealousy and concludes that, despite some robust recent defenses of the green-eyed monster, it is an emotion which typically does much more harm than good. He then proposes a surprising remedy to this state of affairs: what if jealousy could be transformed into something beneficial, even liberatory? Presenting "compersion" (enjoyment taken from a partner receiving sexual pleasure from another) as the flipside of jealousy, de Sousa argues that we would do well to take seriously the possibility of altering our emotional dispositions to feel such compersion when possible. He attempts to defuse skepticism here through drawing an analogy with pain, highlighting a helpful distinction between a sensation component and a motivation component within painful experience. Similarly, he argues that it should be possible to transmute what was once an experience of jealousy (with its aversive motivational elements) to a much less damaging capacity to feel joyful compersion. If this is right, then at least some of the standard

objections to non-monogamous and polyamorous lifestyles stand in need of reconsideration. De Sousa ends with a consideration of the many practical advantages such a transfiguration of our manner of loving could have for the individual and for society.

Infidelity is widely recognized as both immoral and harmful, but what, exactly, is the nature of the harm inflicted when one partner is unfaithful to another? Noel Carroll explores this and related questions in his chapter "Love and Infidelity". It is clear enough that those who "cheat" often lie to their partners in the process and thereby disrespect them, but is there more that can be said about the wrongness of an affair? Carroll argues that when such infidelity is revealed it can wreak havoc on the betrayed partner's self-conception. This is because in serious romantic relationships one's sense of self is fundamentally altered by the relationship: the continual joint agency typical of such partnerships brings with it the transformation of both lovers over time and the creation of what Carroll calls a "we-identity". Given this process, infidelity (when recognized) cannot help undermining the selfhood of the person cheated on in a manner that can cause tremendous psychological harm. But what about the case where the infidelity remains successfully concealed? Should we embrace a "what I don't know can't hurt me" attitude here such that a secret affair is seen as a victimless crime? Carroll thinks not, pointing out that not all harms need be felt to be genuine. Whether they know it or not the betrayed partner has been deprived of significant life choices (including the choice to end their relationship with their partner) in a way that is clearly morally problematic.

Sophie Grace Chappell begins her contribution "Love and Knowledge" with a consideration of some of the more influential taxonomies of love offered by C.S. Lewis and Anders Nygren. Finding them lacking, she surveys more recent treatments and their roots in the

pioneering work of Williams, Strawson, and Murdoch, ultimately offering an account of her own such that love involves a desire for the well-being of the beloved conjoined with a desire that the lover plays some significant role in bringing about that well-being. On this account love also essentially entails commitment, selectiveness, contingency, and intimacy. Chappell then moves on to a consideration of just what sort of knowledge is involved in love, arguing that knowledge of persons is best construed as a kind of *objectual* knowledge distinct from the three traditional categories of knowledge (i.e., knowing how, knowing that, and knowing what something is like). This fourth type of objectual knowing is shown to have several parallels with love, and Chappell highlights in particular its fundamentally *exploratory* nature: our knowledge of objects, like our love of particular persons, involves a quest that is never quite complete, one in which mastery is simply not the point.

In "Love and Literature" Kathleen Higgins takes Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* as a case study in the multiple ways that literature can instruct us in the nature of love, the perils of loving poorly, and the creativity that is conducive to healthy loving. Higgins cites Ronald de Sousa's work on love as involving "paradigm scenarios" to help us understand why literature in particular can be such an effective tool in this realm: emotions like love have their own narrational structure, so it should not surprise us that stories can help shape our understanding of love. Illustrating the ways in which Kundera's novel is remarkably astute at capturing the specificity of love, Higgins goes on to draw some general lessons regarding the manner in which literature can edify us: it can (in an admirably non-moralistic way) expose us to motives which may not be our own, it can help us better understand our own motivations, it can remind us of the inherent quirkiness of love, it can broaden our conceptual

resources through showing us new models of love (and lovers), and perhaps most importantly it can show us that in love, as in literature, realism is compatible with poetry.

While also touching upon issues within Buddhism and Islam concerning the special nature of religiously infused love, John Cottingham's chapter "Love and Religion" takes as its focus a key philosophical puzzle at the heart of the Judeo-Christian tradition: love seems like the sort of thing that paradigmatically *cannot* be chosen and yet the scriptural sources are unambiguous: the bible *commands* that we love our neighbor as we love God and ourselves. While a Kantian interpretation of the relevant love as mere generalized beneficence can probably escape philosophical worries about "oughts" implying "cans", Cottingham convincingly argues that such a glossing of the texts involves significant distortion. The love we are obligated to embody here is no mere feeling of goodwill, but rather a pervasive mindset of compassion and care. For many this will seem like simply too much to ask (even when it is God is doing the asking) but Cottingham points out that the ethic being promoted is perhaps not so implausible when it is properly understood as *transformative* in nature, and when we appreciate that such a transformative ethic cannot easily stand apart from religious conception of grace and a spiritual vision of love as deeply connected to our cosmic significance.

Also exploring questions involving the relationship between love and choice, Derk Pereboom's chapter "Love and Freedom" considers the many issues that arise when we examine the role that free will ought to play in authentic loving. Pointing out that the philosophical difficulties one faces in determining the proper relations between love and free choice hinge in large part on the conceptions of freedom and desert one presupposes, Pereboom canvasses recent influential accounts and considers the prospects for making sense

of love given libertarian incompatibilism, Frankfurt-style structured will accounts, and "reasons-responsive" approaches. He then considers the prospects for genuine love given his own position, a version of incompatibilism that is skeptical of free will. Can love withstand the challenge of reactive attitudes called for by such an approach? And what of the moral components of love relationships which seem to bring with them obligations that presuppose desert and free will? Pereboom argues that though his revisionary framework is not without hurdles, a recognizable conception of personal love can survive, one that need not involve merit or duty and in which resentment is replaced by sadness and gratitude supplanted with joy.

We saw in Tony Milligan's contribution to this volume ("Love and Animals") his claim that philosophers should take seriously the connection between a capacity for a creature to *love* and its capacity to *mourn*. In Dan Moller's chapter "Love and the Rationality of Grief" we are offered a comprehensive consideration of the relevance of our capacity to grieve for evaluating the depth of our love. Drawing on a consistent body of empirical work that has demonstrated a surprisingly degree of resiliency in our response to the deaths of loved ones, Moller considers several possible diagnoses: the conventional view that this resiliency is indeed appropriate, a less conventional position that even the relatively small amount of grief we typically demonstrate is regrettable and perhaps ought to be reduced when possible, and Moller's own bold view that such data reveals a serious inadequacy on our part for failing to appropriately acknowledge the depth of our loss. Moller is sensitive to the fact that our capacity for resilience appears to be an entirely natural and pervasive phenomenon (i.e., it does not reveal itself just when we face a death), but nonetheless he reminds us that what is *natural* is never thereby automatically also *good,* and he presents a compelling case that our tendency to not face up to

the disproportionate nature of our grief is unfortunate even if adaptive. He concludes with a plea that we try harder to both remain cognizant of this shortcoming of ours and work to move beyond it so that we can cultivate an emotional response which is more closely proportional to the tremendous importance loved ones have in our lives.

In the final chapter of this section, "Love and Enhancement Technology" Brian Earp explores the ethical issues that arise when we consider various ways of enhancing our love relationships through biotechnology. Acknowledging the inherently controversial nature of "love drugs" and the like, he attempts to defuse some of our concerns in part by discussing the numerous ways in which people are *already* successfully engaging with biotechnological enhancements (such as the use of MDMA or testosterone supplements to enhance libido). Embracing a "dual-nature" theory which recognizes both biological and societal/environmental influences on love, Earp recognizes the reluctance of many to want to intervene in romantic bonds which are often taken to be unchosen and natural, but he argues that the potential benefits to be gained are substantial. Recall Ronald de Sousa's discussion of jealousy in Chapter 27 and consider the harms we inflict on our lovers and on ourselves that might be prevented if a safe and effective jealousy-suppressing drug was widely available. Earp reports that some existing OCD medications seem to already show potential in this area. Alternatively, for those less inclined to pursue the non-monogamous or polyamorous lifestyles that such drugs might facilitate, Earp suggests that other biomedical interventions could foster monogamous bonds (either though reducing temptations to stray or by enhancing feelings of intimacy). Earp concludes that whatever our preferred patterns of attachment or particular sexual proclivities, there is much for us to potentially gain through the judicious use of developing biotechnologies

so long as we are careful to weigh the costs against the gains and recognize the complex interplay between “nature” and “nurture” that our loves inevitably manifest.

Conclusion

Given the extremely broad nature of love as a topic and the inherent constraints on a single-volume handbook aspirations to comprehensiveness (let alone completeness) are naïve; however, we have done our best to bring together contributors who can fruitfully explore more than a few of the key issues, debates, and historical figures expected to appear in a general overview of the subject. Where one might see a gap, we hope it will encourage other philosophers to produce additional scholarship to help supplement this collection. As noted at the outset, the subfield of philosophy of love is currently developing rapidly, and we welcome the increasing variety of approaches and philosophical sensibilities showing themselves in recent work. It has been terrific to see philosophical writings on love go “mainstream” (along with many other previously neglected subfields like aesthetics, philosophy of race, and environmental ethics) and it is our hope that this volume will help lay the groundwork for much additional reflection on love’s many philosophical dimensions.