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FRIENDSHIP LOVE AND ROMANTIC LOVE

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1. Introduction

While much has been written on love, the question of how romantic love differs from friendship love has rarely been explored.[1] This chapter focuses on shedding some light on this question. I begin by considering a class of views that analyze love in terms of pro-attitudes, such as desires for intimacy with the beloved, desires to advance the good of the beloved, or desires for reciprocity (e.g., Thomas 1991; LaFollette 1996; Frankfurt 1999, 2004; Rorty 2016). On such conceptions, love is a goal-oriented attitude with a specific motivational structure that shapes our preferences and guides and constrains our conduct (Frankfurt 1999: 129). These approaches, I argue, have the resources needed to account for the differences between friendship love and romantic love. Purely goal-oriented approaches to love, however, fail on account of their utilitarian gloss of our loved ones. Even when they circumvent this criticism, they make the mistake of conflating the motivational tendencies of love for its constitutive characteristics.

I then turn my attention to the view that love is an emotion. This class of views is able to accommodate the intuitive appeal of the goal-oriented approaches to love while avoiding their undesirable consequences. David Velleman (1999) presents a promising account of love as a moral emotion. However, I argue that his view must be rejected on the grounds that it lacks the resources to account for the differences between romantic love and friendship love.

I then sketch a socially situated account of love as an emotion that can accommodate the differences between romantic love and friendship love. I conclude by considering a commonly stated objection to emotion views of love, namely, the objection that because emotions are subject to norms of justification but love is not, love is not an emotion (e.g., Solomon 2002; Frankfurt 2004; Soble 2005; Zangwill 2013; Smuts 2014; de Sousa 2015; McKeever 2019; Pismenny 2018; Pismenny Prinz 2021). I argue that the objection is moot, as romantic love and friendship love are indeed subject to normativity constraints.

2. Goal-Oriented Approaches to Love

Historically, love has commonly been analyzed in terms of pro-attitudes toward the beloved, such as desires for intimacy with the beloved, desires to spend time with the beloved, desires to advance the good of the beloved, or desires for reciprocity (Thomas 1991; LaFollette 1996; Frankfurt 1999,

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2004; Jeske 2008; Ebels-Duggan 2008; Rorty 2016; Shpall 2018). On such conceptions, love is a goal-oriented attitude with a specific motivational structure that shapes our preferences and guides and constrains our conduct (Frankfurt 1999: 129). Laurence Thomas's rough characterization of love captures the gist of the goal-oriented approaches:

> Roughly (very roughly), love is feeling anchored in an intense and nonfleeting (but not necessarily permanent) desire to engage in mutual caring, sharing, and physical expression with the individual in question or, in any case, some idealized version of her or him.
>
> *1991: 470*

Although the advocates of goal-oriented approaches do not always explicitly distinguish between romantic love and friendship love, these approaches can accommodate the differences between them by linking them to different motivational structures. For example, proponents can take sexual desires to be part of the motivational structure for romantic love but not of that for friendship love.

However, the goal-oriented approaches to love face a plethora of other problems. As Velleman (1999) observes, taking such desires to be constitutive of love is incompatible with how love actually strikes us. If you love a friend deeply, you may be willing to go out of your way to help her when she needs it, but love does not characteristically feel like an urge to do our loved ones favors. Love may be coupled with a longing to be with our loved ones, but Velleman argues, you can love your cranky grandfather or hyper-competitive sister yet have no recurrent desire to spend time with either. Similar remarks apply to romantic liaisons. A romantic couple may split up, not because they no longer love each other, but because their love unleashes all-consuming, destructive emotions that wreak so much havoc in their lives that they no longer want to be together.

Velleman's primary concern about goal-oriented approaches to love, however, is that they rest on the mistaken assumption that love essentially involves desires to achieve specific results in which the beloved plays an instrumental role. This assumption runs counter to a deep-seated intuition that love involves an attitude toward the beloved as an end in themselves and not merely as a mere means for realizing one's desires. If a mother asks her son to help out in her soup kitchen while she recovers from knee surgery, and he agrees merely because he needs the community service hours required by his school, we would be hard pressed to say that he was motivated to help his mother out of love for her. As a motivational factor, his mother is merely instrumental to his desire to satisfy a school requirement.

This concern does not apply to all versions of the goal-oriented approaches. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *De Anima*, and *Rhetoric*, Aristotle argues that loving someone (*philêsis*, τὸ φιλεῖν) requires wanting what we regard as good for her sake and not for our own (NE II 4, 1155b31, 1156b9-10; NE VIII 7, 1157b28-33; De Anima 403a16-18; Rhetoric II 4, 1380b34-1381a3). Thus, as Aristotle envisaged love, loving someone may require you to sacrifice your own interests and values for the sake of the beloved. Corine Gartner (2017) mentions Aristotle's example of a mother who gives away her child, because doing so is in the child's best interest.[2] By doing so, she is sacrificing her own deep interest in being part of the child's life. But she acts as she does because she is moved by her love for her child, not her own interests.

Aristotle's conception of love as selfless and disinterested runs thick in the veins of contemporary philosophical accounts of love (LaFollette 1996; Soble 1997; Frankfurt 1999, 2004; White 2001). Also known as the "robust concern view" (Helm 2010, 2017), the contemporary version of Aristotle's view holds that loving someone requires being sufficiently motivated to promote the beloved's interests for her own sake (LaFollette 1996; Frankfurt 1999, 2004; Badhwar 2003; Abramson and Leite 2011, 2021; Rorty 2016; Pismenny and Brogaard 2021). As Harry Frankfurt puts it:

> What is essential to the lover's concern for his beloved is not only that it must be free of any self-regarding motive but that it must have no ulterior aim whatsoever. To characterize

> love as merely selfless, then, is not enough. Although the term "disinterested" is – from the point of view of rhetoric – a bit misleading in its tone and associations, it has the virtue of conveying the irrelevance to love not just of considerations that are self-regarding but of all considerations that are distinct from the interests of the beloved.
>
> *1999: 167–8*

By construing the goal of love as the promotion of the beloved's interests for her sake, the robust concern view avoids the objection that love essentially involves desires to achieve specific results in which the beloved plays a mere instrumental role. But the robust concern view is still subject to the other criticism Velleman (1999) raises for the goal-oriented approaches; namely, that they conflate the motivational tendencies of love with its constitutive characteristics.

There is a further objection to the robust concern view that cuts deeper. Unlike parental love of a child (Ferracioli 2014), romantic love and friendship love tend to elicit desires for reciprocity and emotional intimacy. As Natasha McKeever observes: "the romantic lover is not usually content to love her beloved from afar; she wants to be loved back and she wants to be near her beloved." (2019: 213) While this does not imply that, in romantic love and friendship love, we tend to treat the beloved as a *mere* means to the satisfaction of our own ends, it does suggest that the beloved normally plays an instrumental role in fulfilling our desire for love to benefit us. Thus, neither romantic love nor friendship love is selfless and disinterested in the sense envisioned by advocates of the robust concern view (cf. Wonderly 2017; McKeever 2019). In fact, as McKeever notes, the reason we are in pursuit of romantic love is that "it will contribute to [our] own well-being and happiness" (McKeever 2019: 213). This is no less true of friendship love. One reason we strive for the kinds of friendships that nurture friendship love is that they help advance our own well-being as an explicit end. So, the robust concern theory's insistence that love be disinterested and selfless makes the theory unsuitable as an account of romantic love and friendship love.

3. Love as a Moral Emotion

As we have seen, goal-oriented approaches to love crumple under scrutiny. The kernel of truth to be gleaned from these approaches is that love has causal tendencies to unleash specific motivational attitudes toward the beloved. In this respect, love is akin to paradigm emotions like fear and sadness, which come with their own unique motivational tendencies. Fear's most characteristic motivational tendency is to make us want to fight or outrun the danger we are facing, whereas sadness's most characteristic tendency is to make us want to isolate ourselves from social interaction. As an emotion's motivational tendencies are not constitutive of the emotion, there is no necessary connection between the emotion and its tendencies. For example, there is no necessary connection between fear and the fight-or-flight response. When in fear, we might simply freeze in place.

The idea that the desires commonly elicited by love are motivational tendencies rather than constituents supports the view that love is an emotion. An influential theory of love as an emotion is presented by Velleman (1999; cf. Velleman 2008).[3] Velleman assimilates love to Kantian respect – the kind of respect every person is owed in virtue of their inherent value, or dignity. Love and Kantian respect, he argues, are different ways of appreciating a person's unconditional or absolute worth, or dignity (1999: 360).

A standard distinction in the emotion literature is that among an emotion's target or proper object, its focus of concern, and its formal object. An emotion's focus of concern is the emotion's perceived cause (Ben-Ze'ev 2010; Brogaard 2020: chap. 1), whereas an emotion's formal object is what emotions of that type have in common (Kenny 1963; Ben-Ze'ev 2010; Deonna and Teroni 2012: 41).[4] The target (or proper object) is the person the emotion is directed toward (de Sousa 2014; Brogaard 2020: chap. 1). Not all emotions have a target. Sadness, for example, does not.

Following this distinction, we can say that, on Velleman's account, love's target is the beloved, its focus of concern is the beloved's manifest properties, and its formal object is the beloved's dignity. This makes love a moral emotion in the sense proposed by Alan Gibbard (1990). Gibbard's suggestion is that an emotion is moral when it takes a moral property as its formal object. As a person's dignity is a central moral property within Kantian morality, and Velleman holds that the formal object of love is a person's dignity, love is a moral emotion. In fact, as Ronald De Sousa points out, "[taking the formal object of love to be a person's dignity] makes love moral by definition, in the specific sense that it is a [proper] response to a person's essential moral nature" (De Sousa 2021: 15).

In Velleman's opinion, love and Kantian respect thus have the same formal object, but they are different attitudes with a different phenomenology. To account for the differences between the phenomenology of respect and that of love, Velleman stipulates that the two attitudes have different motivational forces. The motivational force of respect, he argues, is to deter us from using the person we respect as a mere means to an end. The motivational force of love, by contrast, is to disarm our emotional defenses against the beloved, thus making us vulnerable to them (1999: 361). Here, an emotion's motivational force, as Velleman is using the term, should be kept apart from the emotion's motivational tendencies. Unlike an emotion's motivational tendencies, which are contingently tied to the emotion, the motivational forces of love and respect are partially constitutive of these attitudes.

According to Velleman, when we suspend our preoccupation with protecting ourselves, we can allocate more attention to our beloved's needs and interests. This heightened sensitivity allows us to respond more quickly when the beloved needs our help, making us more likely to benefit those we love than those we do not love. Rather than being defining characteristics of love, our motivational tendencies – for example, our desire to benefit the beloved – are thus desires that our love unleashes once our emotional defenses toward the beloved have been suspended.

There is another way in which love differs from Kantian respect, according to Velleman. Since we are not directly acquainted with people's dignity, our respect for other people is an appreciation of an inherent worth that can only be grasped intellectually – through rational reflection. Kantian respect is thus a kind of intellectual appreciation of another person's dignity. Love, by contrast, is an embodied emotion. In Velleman's words, love is a direct response to the manifest person "embodied in flesh and blood and accessible to the senses" (1999: 371). It is the manifest person's qualities – the way she walks or talks or sips her tea – that produce love's characteristic motivational force and hence also its special phenomenology. While the manifest qualities of the flesh-and-blood person are what enables love to arrest our emotional defenses, they are not the formal targets of love. Rather, Velleman argues, the manifest qualities are "expressions or symbols of a value that isn't theirs but belongs instead to the inner—or, as Immanuel Kant would say, merely intelligible – person" (1999: 371).

Velleman's account of love has a considerable degree of initial plausibility (cf. Kennett 2008). However, his view runs into difficulties because of his unusual construal of love's formal object. One difficulty is that of accounting for the intuitive differences between romantic love and friendship love. On a commonly held view, emotions are individuated by their formal object (Kenny 1963; Deonna and Teroni 2012: 41). For example, the formal object of anger is a wrongful action, whereas the formal object of fear is a threatening or dangerous object. Those who defend this view of emotions tend to hold that the formal object plays the same role in more fine-grained individuations of emotions. Different anger-type emotions, for example, are said to have different formal objects. The formal object of resentment is a personal injustice, whereas the focus of indignation is a second-person injustice.

However, because Velleman defines love's formal object as the beloved's inherent dignity, he cannot appeal to love's formal object to differentiate between romantic love and friendship love. Nor can he differentiate between them by pointing to differences in their motivational forces. Although this is how he distinguishes between respect and love, he does not expressly attribute different motivational forces to romantic love and friendship love. As Velleman sees it, love's motivational force just is to disarm our emotional defenses to the beloved.

Furthermore, Velleman holds that love's motivational force explains why love can unleash motivational tendencies like the desire to help the beloved when needed. But because he specifies only one formal object and one motivational force for love, his account leaves it a mystery how romantic and friendship love can unleash different motivational tendencies.

To remedy this, Velleman could modify his account in such a way as to attribute different motivational forces to romantic love and friendship love. For example, to account for why romantic love tends to be associated with sexual desire, whereas friendship love does not, he could take the manifest properties of the beloved to disarm our psychological defenses to sexual intimacy in romantic love but not in friendship love.

Unfortunately, the matter is not so simple. To be able to arrest our defenses to sexual intimacy, the manifest properties of the beloved must include attributes of the beloved that cause sexual arousal. However, Velleman also holds that the manifest properties that disarm our defenses to the beloved are expressions or symbols of the beloved's inherent dignity, and it is hard to see how he could hold that we always take attributes of the beloved that cause sexual arousal to be expressions or symbols of the beloved's inherent dignity. In partriarchic societies, heterosexual cis men are prone to disregard the humanity of women who sexually arouse them, even their wife, especially if she expresses sexual desires of her own. This is the source of the Madonna–Whore complex and other dehumanizing portrayals of women as mere means to men's sexual gratification or general flourishing (Brogaard 2020: chap. 6).

Velleman's view has other glitches. The manifest properties that disarm our emotional defenses to our beloveds play two roles in Velleman's account: they are expressions or symbols of the beloved's inherent value, and they explain why we love the people we do. Yet love can have many different causal bases, and the manifest properties that explain why we love the people we do can include morally bad dispositions (Cocking and Kennett 2000). However, it is difficult to see how a person's morally bad dispositions could serve as expressions or symbols of their unconditional worth.

A third problem with Velleman's account turns on his claim that the suspension of our emotional defenses to the beloved is *(partially) constitutive* of our love (cf. Kennett 2008). It is doubtful, however, that there is a necessary connection between love and the suspension of our emotional defenses. If you discover that your long-term monogamous partner cheated on you, your trust may give out, but the indiscretion is unlikely to put an abrupt end to your love. Even so, your partner's betrayal is likely to eliminate your love's ability to suspend your emotional defenses. Love's ability to arrest our emotional defenses seems more akin to a motivational tendency than a constituent of love. But that is not how Velleman treats it.

As Velleman's account does not hold up in light of scrutiny, it should be rejected. It may be insisted, however, that we should repudiate Velleman's view only after considering the quandary that motivated him to develop it in the first place. So, let me briefly address this concern.

Velleman frames his account as a way to deal with Bernard Williams's (1981) objection to Kant's moral philosophy. Kant's moral philosophy demands that we act only on universalizable maxims, that is, maxims that can be regarded as valid for anyone similarly situated (Velleman 1999: 340). But this demand seems to conflict with the idea of acting solely for reasons of love. Consider the following lifeboat case (which is loosely based on Williams's original):

> *The Kantian's Wife*
> A Kantian can save only one of several people who are drowning – all strangers except his wife. He judges that the maxim "I will prioritize saving my drowning wife over saving a drowning stranger" is universalizable, and saves his wife. However, when he tells his wife why he saved her rather than one of the strangers, she is anything but happy. She wanted to be saved out of love.

On a standard reading of Kant, Kant holds that acting rationally requires acting only after ensuring that the categorical imperative renders the act permissible. On this reading of Kant, acting for reasons of love without checking one's action for universalizability is irrational, even if doing so would have made no difference to how you acted. In our example above, the husband would have performed the same action (viz., saved his wife), if he had acted solely for reasons of love. But if he had acted solely for reasons of love, then he would have acted irrationally, as it would have been a mere happenstance that his action satisfied Kant's imperative.

This is the backdrop against which Velleman sets forth his account of love as a proper response to the dignity in the beloved. Velleman's view of love, however, ultimately does nothing to address Williams's concern. If the husband had acted solely for reasons of love, in Velleman's sense of "love," he would still have failed to reason from Kant's categorical imperative. So, he would have acted irrationally here too.

One way to circumvent Williams's objection is to reject his intuition that there are situations that demand acting *solely* for reasons of love. Rather, it may be argued, you must always first consider whether your situation complies with Kant's categorical imperative, and if it does, only then may you choose to act for reasons of love.[5] But this proposal is absurd on its face. Morality cannot possibly demand that we stop to do ethics while our loved ones drown.

A better reply to Williams is to deny that Kant thought of his categorical imperative as a decision procedure for what to do – a method of moral deliberation – rather than a method of justifying general moral principles (Stark 1997; Baron 1991). But this is not the place to dwell on how a Kantian can respond to Williams.[6] The main point here is that Velleman's account does not ultimately help alleviate Williams's concern. We thus have good reasons for rejecting both Velleman's account of love as a proper response to the beloved's dignity and the proposition that Kantian moral philosophy requires us to see love as a proper response of this kind.

4. Love as a Socially Situated Emotion

Rather than taking love to be a way of appreciating a person's dignity, as Velleman suggests, I propose to cast love as a paradigmatic complex emotion, much like blame, grief, and contempt. In previous work, I have argued that emotions involve appraisals of a perceived, remembered, or imagined entity (Brogaard 2015, 2020; see also Tappolet 2016; Rossi and Tappolet 2018).[7] Thus, admiration portrays a person as admirable, blame renders a person as blameworthy, and contempt presents a person as contemptible. These evaluations of the perceived, remembered, or imagined objects elicit the bodily and mental changes characteristic of the specific emotions. Fear of public speaking – a complex emotional variant of primitive fear – renders speaking in public as fearsome. This assessment, in turn, (ordinarily) elicits the bodily stress response characteristic of fear. Emotions can thus be understood as perceived bodily and mental responses to a proper object picked out and evaluated in perception, memory, or imagination. This is a rough sketch of what I have called the perceived-response theory of emotions (Brogaard 2015, 2021a).

If I am right that romantic love and friendship love are paradigmatic complex emotions, then these types of love are perceived bodily and mental responses to the beloved as depicted and appraised in perception, memory, or imagination. Just as admiration renders a person as admirable, love renders a person as lovable, or worthy of love. Lovability is thus love's formal object. But different attributes can count as lovable for different lovers.

Like other complex emotions, love is not always consciously present. We can grieve a loss, envy a coworker, or appreciate literary fiction in the absence of any experienced or attended bodily responses. Likewise, we can love a person for days, months, and years and only register our bodily and mental responses to them intermittently. When love is not consciously manifested, it can take the form of a dispositional emotion, also called a "sentiment" (cf. Goldie, 2010).

We can shed further light on this proposal by briefly considering Stephen Darwall's (1977) distinction between two kinds of respect: recognition respect and appraisal respect. Recognition respect is the kind of respect owed to all people on account of their inherent worth, or dignity. It is this latter form of respect that underpins Velleman's account of love. Appraisal respect, on the other hand, is a positive appraisal of a person for her moral excellence on the whole or her excellence as engaged in a specific pursuit.

Like appraisal respect, love is an appraisal of another person, not in terms of their excellence, but rather in terms of properties we value in them (Brogaard 2015, 2021a). Furthermore, while we may love a religious figure solely for her perceived morally good qualities on the whole, we do not normally love people romantically or as friends solely on the basis of their morally good qualities. Rather, if we love someone romantically, we love them *in their role as our romantic interest or partner*, and if we love someone in the friendship sense, we love them *in their role as our friend*.

Let us pause for a minute to briefly consider Alan Soble's (2005) objection to appraisal views. Exploiting a historical distinction between love as an "appraisal" and love as "bestowal" (e.g., Singer 1984: 3–22; cf. Singer 2009, 1987), Soble argues that appraisal views of love run into a

> *Euthyphro* problem: do I love Melinda at least in part because Melinda is, so I think, beautiful, or do I think that Melinda is beautiful because I love her? The problem remains if "beautiful" is replaced by any other valuable property or set of properties, such as wit, charm, and intelligence.
>
> *Soble 2005*

This is an interesting objection, which may threaten certain appraisal views, but the appraisal view under consideration does not fall prey to it. Soble focuses on qualities such as beauty, wit, charm, and intelligence, but as the latter are highly determinable properties, they cannot serve as a causal basis for love. Rather, the causal basis of love consists of underlying, more determinate properties. Suppose Jay, who has a romantic fetish for big ears, finds big ears beautiful. Suppose further that Jay loves Clay romantically, in part, for his big ears. In the envisaged case, it is true that Jay bestows beauty on Clay, but it is not true that he bestows love on Clay. Thus, Soble's objection does not present a threat to the appraisal view under consideration.

The nature of complex emotions depends not only on biology but also on our embodied cultural and individual scripts (sometimes called "schemas") (see e.g., Barrett et al. 2010; Boiger et al. 2018). As I will use the term, scripts are structures comprising social roles, common knowledge, and norms and guidelines that shape our perception, thinking, and action and guide our interaction with others (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004: 157; Haslanger 2012: 462–3). Whereas cultural scripts are constructs of the culture in which we are embedded, individual scripts are products of individual socialization, which includes our upbringing and personal experiences.

To see how cultural scripts can mold complex emotions, consider how patriarchal cultures versus matrilineal cultures shape the contents of shame in oppositional ways. As an emotion, shame is a form of self-disgust for carrying out a shameful action. But what counts as a shameful action is culturally variable. In patriarchal cultures, the cultural script for women is centered around being subservient to men and practicing sexual modesty. Being sexually modest for a woman includes not putting herself in situations where she could get raped. Women who do get raped must have done something to cause the rape. As a consequence of this cultural script, rape victims typically feel ashamed (Bergoffen 2018).

Contrast traditional patriarchal cultures with matrilineal societies, such as the Ashanti in West Africa, the Mosuo of Southwest China, and the Minangkabau of West Sumatra in Indonesia, where the maternal role equals status and power (Sanday 1986; Watson-Franke 2002). Here, dishonoring women by engaging in domestic violence, lechery, or rape is seen as an expression of a defective masculinity. Matrilineal men's fear of shame is so strong that most of these societies meet the criteria for being rape-free.

As expected, cultural and individual scripts also shape the different motivational tendencies of romantic love and friendship love. For example, today's dominant script for romantic love dictates that romantic relationships are sexual relationships. Accordingly, sexual desire is a motivational tendency of romantic love but not of friendship love in contemporary, Western culture.

While culturally dominant, the scripted sexual component of romantic love is rejected by individuals who identify as asexuals. Asexuals lack sexual desires as conventionally defined (Bogaert, 2006). Despite their lack of sexual desires, however, they still fall in love and experience romantic love and friendship love differently (Haefner 2011): asexual romantic love typically elicits romantic attraction and a desire for romantic intimacy, but not sexual desire. Asexuals' experiences of love thus underscore the importance of distinguishing between the romantic and the sexual components of romantic love.

By contrast to romantic love, the dominant script for friendship in contemporary, Western culture dictates that friendship is non-sexual. In ancient Greek culture, on the other hand, close adult male friendships were often both romantic and sexual in nature. Most scholarship on ancient Greek homosexuality has focused on pederasty – a socially acknowledged sexual relationship between an adult male and a younger boy. But, as Thomas Hubbard (2014) argues, many pederastic relationships continued as sexual and romantic friendships long after the younger boy had reached adulthood – most famously the relationship between the *Iliad*'s epic heroes Achilles and Patroklos. While Homer makes no explicit mention of the sexual nature of Achilles and Patroklos's friendship, *Plato* characterizes their relationship as both sexual and romantic in the *Symposium*, as do other Greek writers. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* (8.4), Aristotle remarks that "many [pederastic] couples continue the relationship, if, as a result of spending time together, they come to love each other's character, because they are of similar character" (1157a 9–11; as cited in Hubbard [2014: 146]). The culturally prescribed friendship love in ancient Greece thus appears to have been much more akin to the romantic love portrayed by contemporary cultural scripts than to friendship love, as prescribed in our culture.

5. Epistemic and Normative Reasons for Love

A common argument against the view that love is an emotion turns on the widely held intuition that whereas emotions are subject to standards of justification or rationality, love is reasonless and arational (Solomon 2002; Frankfurt 2004; Soble 2005; Zangwill 2013; Smuts 2014; de Sousa 2015; McKeever 2019; Pismenny Prinz 2021). As Sam Shpall (2020) notes, love on the no-reasons view is akin to non-instrumental desire on procedural (or "Humean") approaches to practical rationality. Non-instrumental desire on these approaches is only subject to internal consistency constraints.

A commonly cited piece of evidence for the apparent asymmetry is that while we can easily provide reasons for our emotions, we are often taken aback if asked to produce reasons for love (Solomon 2002; Soble 2005; McKeever 2019). As Robert Solomon puts it, "most people are quite incoherent if not speechless about producing reasons for loving a particular person" (2002: 12). If asked "Why do you love her?", we may simply reply with "I don't know. I just do." If, however, we are asked "Why do you hate her?" or "Why do you admire her?", it would not be satisfactory to answer with "I don't know, I just do." Alan Soble remarks that "[reasonless] hate looks pathological, and we would help someone experiencing it to get over it" (2005: II). We expect people to be able to give reasons for hating or admiring another person. When people are unable to give reasons, we suspect that their hatred or admiration is inappropriate.

Further, while we can lead others to reject how they feel in response to rational argument, we cannot typically bring ourselves or others around to love or cease to love someone in this way (Smuts 2014; McKeever 2019; Pismenny 2018; Pismenny and Prinz 2021). As Natasha McKeever puts it,

> I might say, 'You should admire Jemma because she's intelligent, thoughtful, has great values, and has made it all on her own,' and there is at least some chance that you will agree. However, I cannot persuade you to love her.
>
> *2019: 210*

This difference between love and other emotions is alleged to bear on love being unresponsive to reasons.

Before addressing this objection, let us dwell for a moment on the nature of the reasons that lie at the center of this objection. The reasons we provide to justify emotions are reasons intended to establish that a given emotion fits its proper object. For example, "Jemma has admirable qualities like intelligence, thoughtfulness, and great values" is intended to establish that the speaker's admiration of Jemma fits Jemma. As Justin D'arms and Daniel Jacobsen (2000) have argued, when an emotion fits its proper object, the object can be said to possess the attributes denoted by so-called Y-able adjectives, such as "admirable," "pitiable," and "regrettable," alongside variations like "fearsome," "hateful," "blameworthy," and "disgusting":

Emotional Fit: Emotion Y fits its proper object O just in case O is Y-able

Here, statements of the form "O is Y-able" do not express the proposition that O has a disposition to be Y-ed. Rather, as D'arms and Jacobsen point out, they carry the purport that it is apt to direct Y to O. For example, "Jemma is admirable" carries the purport that it is apt to admire Jemma.

In light of this clarification, let us now turn to the alleged asymmetries between love and other emotions when it comes to reasons and rationality. I am particularly skeptical of the premise that love is all that different from other holistic emotions, such as admiration, respect, hate, and contempt. Certainly, in contemporary Western culture, friendship love is not typically a matter of falling in love. Rather, to make a mere acquaintanceship progress to a close friendship – the most natural context of friendship love – we typically embark on various intentional actions that we know will advance the acquaintanceship.[8] While unreciprocated romantic love seems to be more common than unrequited friendship love, romantic love in the context of romantic relationships follows a similar pattern. As Shpall notes, "when we narrate actual stories of romance we tend to describe processes constituted, in part, by many deliberately undertaken intentional actions, actions that contribute to escalating passion and commitment over time" (2020: 418).

But even if it is true that we find it more difficult to conjure up reasons for love compared to certain other emotions, there is no general asymmetry of this kind. Disgust is a case in point. Most of us naturally react with disgust to other people's bodily excretions and skin growths, such as vomit, cold sores, and warts. If asked to provide reasons for our disgust of vomit, cold sores, and warts, we may list the prudential concern that coming into contact with such bodily excretions and skin growths could make us sick. But most of us would be hard pressed to explain why we find other people's ear wax, dandruff, sweat, urine, semen, and menstruation disgusting. If asked why, it seems reasonable to reply with "I just do" or "It's just how I feel."

As Martha Nussbaum (2018) has argued, disgust is tied to fear of death and our own bodily decay as we get older. We associate things that remind us of our animal nature with contamination or impurity, such as corpses, rotting meat, and bodily fluids, because we fear and despise our mortal bodily humanity. But at best this explanation provides a causal reason for our disgust, not a justifying one.

Similarly, rational argument does not usually help persuade us to stop being disgusted by something that we already find repulsive. In fact, in one of their studies, Paul Rozin and colleagues asked participants to watch them sterilize a cockroach (Rozin and Fallon 1987). The subjects denied seeing any danger in eating it. Yet they refused to consume it. The experimenters then sealed a sterilized cockroach inside a digestible plastic capsule guaranteed to come out intact in the feces. But to no avail. The volunteers refused to swallow the capsule.

Attempting to persuade others to be disgusted by something that is not already repulsive to them tends to be equally pointless. If you are not already disgusted by other people's tears, for example, you are unlikely to be persuaded by argumentation. In most cases, then, no describable aspect of an object we find repulsive seems to justify our disgust. So, love is no outlier among the emotions.

A natural comeback is to try to extrapolate Soble's intuition that reasonless hate looks pathological to fit the case at hand. More specifically, our opponent may insist that our inability to provide justification for why other people's ear wax, dandruff, sweat, urine, semen, or menstruation disgusts us – or for our unwillingness to swallow a safely encapsulated cockroach – just goes to show that our disgust is unjustified. Unlike herpes sores, feces, and rotting meat, another person's ear wax, say, does not normally present a health risk to us. So, whereas our disgust of herpes sores, feces, and rotting meat is justified, our disgust of ear wax is not.

However, this reply is unsuccessful, as it appeals to prudential (or perhaps evolution-based) reasons to explain why disgust of herpes sores is justified but disgust of ear wax is not. But as D'arms and Jacobsen (2000) argue, fitness reasons and prudential/moral reasons are not on a par. An emotion can be fitting, even if it is unwise or morally wrong to feel that way, and vice versa. One of their examples concerns grief:

> [I]f you are widowed with young children, you must bring them up as best you can. Too much grief risks further harm to them, so it is incumbent upon you not to fall apart. Since the children need to go on with their lives, with as much security and as little trauma as possible, it would be wrong to indulge in the fitting amount of sorrow – the amount that accurately reflects the sadness of the situation. But this is not to suggest that the loss of a spouse isn't all that sad.
>
> *2000:* 77

D'arms and Jacobsen's example shows that moral considerations (or special relationship considerations) for or against an emotion can come apart from considerations of fit. But it is not hard to imagine a variation on their example where prudential considerations would count against grieving to an extent that would be fitting. The main point, though, is this: as emotions can be fitting but prudentially verboten, and unfitting yet prudentially permissible, showing that you will be fine after getting in close proximity to, say, another person's ear wax fails to establish that disgust of ear wax is unfitting.

Following the standard distinction between epistemic and practical rationality and reason, we can say that the fittingness of emotions provides epistemic justification for emotions, thus further eliminating the temptation to bring prudential concerns to bear on the question of an emotion's fittingness.

Ultimately, I am skeptical that settling the question of whether an emotion is fitting will even help us settle the question of whether the emotion is epistemically justified. If your admiration of Jemma is based on a fantasy, but it so happens that she has the admirable qualities your fantasy projects onto her, then your admiration is fitting, despite its fantastical nature. But arguably, it is not epistemically justified, or rational. At the very least, for an emotion to be epistemically justified, it must fit the properties on which it is based.

Prudential and moral considerations bear on the practical justification of emotions only insofar as they lead to, or prevent, the formation of intentions to perform certain actions. For example, in D'arms and Jacobsen's widow case, it is incumbent upon the widow not to grieve her loss to the extent that is fitting only insofar as her grief causes or motivates her to act immorally or imprudently or violates special relationship duties (Jeske 1998, 2001, 2008).

In a similar vein, we can say that friendship love and romantic love are epistemically unjustified, or irrational, when they do not fit the qualities of the beloved that fueled the love. If your romantic partner or friend has inherently good qualities, but your love of her is based on a projection of a fantasy onto her, your love does not fit the qualities of the beloved that fueled your love. So, your love fails to be epistemically justified.

Friendship love and romantic love are practically irrational when they motivate the lover to do something that runs counter to prudential or moral concerns or special relationship concerns. In her memoir *Crazy Love* (2009), Leslie Morgan Steiner details the domestic violence she suffered during her four-year relationship with her ex-husband Conor.[9] He choked her, punched her, banged her against a wall, knocked her down the stairs, broke glass over her face, held a gun to her head, took the keys out of the ignition on the highway. As the title of the memoir makes plain, Steiner's love is deeply irrational, verging on madness. Victims of intimate partner violence sometimes stay with their abuser out of fear of repercussions and backlash if they leave. This is not irrational. But Steiner did not stay for reasons of fear. Not initially, at least. When Conor broke a glass frame over her head, slitting open her face, her only thoughts were: "Don't let this happen. I do still love him. He is my family." Staying with an abuser for reasons of love, as Steiner did, vitiates prudential concerns (and sometimes even moral concerns).

6. Conclusion

This chapter set out to explore how romantic love differs from friendship love. I began by considering goal-oriented approaches to love. These approaches have the resources to account for the differences between friendship love and romantic love. The trouble with these approaches is that they conflate the motivational tendencies of love with its constitutive characteristics. I then turned to Velleman's account of love as a moral emotion but dismissed it on the grounds that it lacks the resources to differentiate between romantic love and friendship love. I then sketched a socially situated account of love that can accommodate these differences. I concluded by making a case for the view that both types of love are subject to normativity constraints.[10]

Related Chapters

Aristotle on the Nature and Value of Friendship; Friendship and Marriage; Friendship and Self-Interest; Friendship and the Personal Good; Friends with Benefits

Further Reading

Darwall, S. 2017. "Love's Second Personal Character: Reciprocal Holding, Beholding, and Upholding." In *Love, Reason, and Morality*, edited by E.E. Kroeker and K. Schaubroeck, 93–109. New York and London: Routledge.
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Notes

1 Some dismiss romantic love as a genuine form of love (e.g., Frankfurt 1999, 2003).
2 While *philia* and its cognates are commonly translated as friendship or friendship love, Aristotle also uses these terms to refer to love in a generic sense that includes parental love.
3 Similar views have been defended by Smith (2007) and Setiya (2014).
4 As it stands, this view entails an implausible essentialism about emotions. We reject essentialism about emotions below.
5 Velleman defends a version of this strategy, except he argues that the husband should save his wife, not for reasons of love, but for reasons of their shared history.
6 I discuss the problem of partiality at length in Brogaard (2021b).
7 For a variation on the emotion view, see Jollimore (2011, 2017).

8 Cf. Cocking and Kennett (1998) and Helm (2010), who characterize friendship in terms of an expansion, or delineation, of one's agency.

9 The example is adopted from my "Love shouldn't be blind or mad. Instead, fall rationally in love," *Psyche*. https://psyche.co/ideas/love-shouldnt-be-blind-or-mad-instead-fall-rationally-in-love

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