

The Justification of Associative Duties¹

I. Introduction

People often think that their special relationships with family, friends, comrades, and compatriots can ground moral reasons. Among these reasons, they understand some to be duties—*pro tanto* requirements that have genuine weight when they conflict with other considerations. They believe they have duties to protect one another against bad luck and bad people, and to promote each other's well-being. These associative duties are, of course, controversial. Some think they are incompatible with a commitment to moral equality. Others concede they may be justifiable, but only if they never override the demands of equality.² And yet, our ordinary understanding of such duties is that they are both justified and stringent. This paper asks: what is the underlying moral structure of associative duties? A satisfying answer to this question is crucial to resolving hard cases where associative and general duties clash: before we can weigh them against one another, we must clarify the structure of the moral reasons in play.

This paper rebuts the dominant justification for such duties, which I call the Teleological Welfarist account. This account first observes that special relationships are fundamental for human well-being, then claims that we cannot have these relationships if we do not recognize associative duties. It concludes that we should therefore recognize associative duties. Its two key commitments, then, are to the welfarist evaluation of special relationships—the claim that they matter because they make individuals' lives go better—and to the teleological claim that associative duties are justified because they realize a state of affairs in which valuable relationships obtain.

I begin by challenging the welfarist commitment of the Teleological Welfarist account. In Sections 3 and 4, I argue that this commitment renders the Teleological Welfarist incapable of justifying associative duties that have the sort of force we expect them to have. Indeed, it may not be able to ground duties at all. But welfarism is not the Teleological Welfarist's only weakness. A teleological theory of associative duties would make some acts objects of duty that plainly should not be so, and would require us to view our special relationships as contingent manifestations of value, interchangeable in the promotion of that value—an approach which is anathema to the concept of loyalty. Whether our justification for associative duties is welfarist is of secondary importance; what matters most is that it be nonteleological. In sections 5-7, I develop a nonteleological alternative to the standard view, grounded in the Appropriate Response approach to ethical theory, which resolves each of the foundational objections to the Teleological Welfarist account.

2. The Teleological Welfarist Account

The Teleological Welfarist account dominates the literature on associative duties. The question of what constitutes well-being, or welfare, is a fraught one and different theorists of associative duties have different accounts. But those who defend associative duties almost uniformly justify those duties by reference to ways in which they, and the relationships they make possible, are good for the beneficiaries. Simon Keller, in an argument for specifically filial duties, emphasizes that 'a healthy parent-child relationship adds value to the life of both parent and child for as long as it exists.'¹³ John Cottingham emphasizes that 'genuine love finds a place in almost all viable blueprints for human welfare,' arguing that special relationships are 'a major source of psychological enrichment,' and 'one of the principal satisfactions of human life,' 'one of the highest of human goods.'¹⁴ Samuel Scheffler uses the language of interests to characterize

this view (though he does not endorse it) arguing that 'people's interest in obtaining the rewards of special relationships is so strong that morality cannot possibly fail to accommodate it.'⁵ Joseph Raz argues that friendship makes an intrinsically valuable contribution to well-being, while David Miller and Andrew Mason echo Raz: Mason focuses on human flourishing; Miller argues that 'people's lives go better just by virtue of being involved in this kind of relationship.'⁶ A scholarly consensus has emerged that special relationships can ground duties because they make a crucial contribution to our well-being.⁷

On its own, however, the great value of special relationships does not justify the associative duties they are supposed to ground. We need a further claim about how the duty relates to that value. Theorists typically argue that the duties are justified because they realize a state of affairs in which valuable relationships obtain. Some philosophers think the duties are instrumental to the value; others think they are constitutive of it. Marilyn Friedman, for example, writes that partiality is 'instrumentally required as a means to achieving those morally valuable ends,' while Yael Tamir similarly argues that 'were individuals not ready to dedicate time and effort, and perhaps even occasionally set aside their own interests for the sake of their friends, they would have no friends.'⁸ Samuel Scheffler explored the argument that associative duties might be 'a precondition for the existence of a rewarding relationship,'⁹ important commitments without which the relationship could not be sustained: 'one cannot secure the other benefits of participation in interpersonal relationships without acquiring special responsibilities in the process.'¹⁰ Miller argues simply that 'a valuable form of relationship would be lost if these duties weren't acknowledged and acted upon.'¹¹

Raz has developed a complex version of the Teleological Welfarist account which boils down to the same idea. Social practice specifies that certain relationships involve duties. You cannot be recognized as a friend, for example, without acknowledging certain duties to your

friends. Since friendships are intrinsically valuable pursuits, the duties are justified because without them these relationships would not be possible.¹² Raz stresses that the duties are not instrumental to the relationship, but rather a necessary part of it; he calls this an 'internal justification' because 'it justifies the duty by reference to a good which is itself made in part by that duty.' The justification of the duty is achieved, according to Raz, 'by placing it in a wider context to which it contributes and which is good in itself. Some duties are constitutive of the good. They make activities and relationships such as friendship into the goods they are.'¹³ Mason adopts this view, emphasising that the good of the relationship includes the fulfillment of the obligations.¹⁴ Amitai Etzioni argues that 'it is like saying that if you value water, you cannot deny the merit of oxygen and the value of bonding with hydrogen.'¹⁵

While there are interesting differences between instrumental and constitutive views, they share a teleological structure. For Raz, the wider context of value, which the duty makes possible, is doing the necessary justificatory work. If the duties did not realize the state of affairs in which the relationship obtains, with its wider context of value, then the duties would not be justified. The duty is justified because it makes possible a valuable relationship. This is especially clear in Mason's development of Raz's view; Mason argues that 'when someone stands in need of help and a friend provides it, not only are the person's needs met, but there has also been a realization of the good of friendship.'¹⁶

Philosophers who defend associative duties—despite their other differences, and irrespective of their general views on teleological ethics and welfarism—have coalesced around the Teleological Welfarist account of those duties. In the remainder of this paper, I argue that this is a mistake.

3. What Sort of Duties Can the Teleological Welfarist Account Ground?

The Teleological Welfarist account has great appeal. It is simple and persuasive, especially when justifying associative duties in general. But it is flawed when put into practice. The first set of objections targets the welfarist commitment of the Teleological Welfarist account. They argue that the duties it can ground conflict with reasonable assumptions about how associative duties should look. In particular, the Teleological Welfarist account cannot ground genuinely forceful associative duties, except by an odd maneuver, which would unfortunately imply that the force of associative duties would track the number of people in the relationship that grounds them.

We can judge the force of duties along at least two axes: what other moral reasons they can override, and how much cost they can require the duty-bearer to bear. These dimensions can be called gravity and stringency respectively. For most of us, our associative duties will be among the most pervasive and stringent moral reasons that we encounter in our lives. Fulfilling our negative general duties to others is ordinarily a simple enough affair, requiring mere inaction. Rightly or wrongly, we acknowledge relatively thin positive duties to strangers. Most of our everyday moral experience, by contrast, is spent negotiating the demands of the various relationships we inhabit: as a son, brother, husband, father, friend, colleague, citizen, and so on. These demands vary in seriousness, from the comparatively trivial, to the all-encompassing. Much of the sacrifice undergone for the sake of our loved ones is not the object of a duty, but rather the very devotion and selflessness that, according to many, gives special relationships their great importance. However, the sacrifices required by associative duties sometimes may be very great, to the point of their sometimes requiring us to risk our lives. We could be excused for failing to do so, but it might still be a genuine moral failing. The obvious example is war,

and the idea that individuals may sometimes have a duty to fight to protect their loved ones. There are other tragedies, however, which might necessitate such desperate action—especially under circumstances in which life is harsher than in advanced liberal democracies.

A theory of associative duties should be able to justify a duty to risk one's life. However, if associative duties are justified by their contribution to our well-being, then it is hard to see how they could be so stringent: one's life is inclusive of all the other goods therein, so why should we risk it for one particular good? Perhaps what matters is how the relationship contributes to its other members' well-being. This response would fail, however, on two grounds. First, it could not explain how a duty to risk one's life could arise in a two-person relationship. Second, it is not plausible in its own terms: it would mean that relationships with more members, and more aggregate well-being at stake, should ground stronger duties, which, as I argue next, is untenable. Some may welcome the outcome that we can never have an associative duty to risk our lives; I think this underestimates the stringency of morality, and the severity of the situations in which we can find ourselves. Suppose your infant son is trapped in your house, as a bushfire has begun to engulf it; the risks of entering the building are such that, if the child inside were a stranger to you, you could not be morally required to try to save him. I think it very likely that your associative duty to protect your son is sufficiently stringent that you can be morally required to bear that risk to save him. There will still be a level of risk above which the attempt is supererogatory (and most parents will bear even that high a risk—that is one thing that makes the relationship so special). But that level is higher for your child than for a stranger.¹⁷

This leads us to a further objection, which argues not that the Teleological Welfarist account underestimates the forcefulness of our associative duties, but rather that it misrepresents the basis of that force. If associative duties are justified because they make

possible a valuable relationship, it should follow that a relationship comprising more members, other things equal, is more valuable than one comprising fewer, so should ground both graver and more stringent duties. Of course, sometimes relationships that appear to be among multiple people are really multiple overlapping two-person relationships. A father's relationship with his son and his daughter are two separate two-person relationships, rather than a single three-person relationship. But there are genuinely multiple-person relationships, where each member of the relationship relates to each other in a way that necessarily involves their relationship with other members. A polyamorous marriage could be like this, for example, and—less exotically—the relationship among co-citizens. My relationship with my co-citizens is not simply a binary relationship with each individual co-citizen; there is a relationship that we all share, which putatively contributes value to all of our lives.

The Teleological Welfarist account says that associative duties are justified because they are necessary to realize states of affairs in which valuable relationships obtain. Relationships are valuable in virtue of how they make people's lives go better. One relationship might be more valuable than another because it improves one person's life by a larger amount, or because it improves many people's lives by a smaller amount that is cumulatively larger. If the numbers in the relationship are great enough, then even if the contribution it makes to each individual's well-being is slight, the aggregated total might be greater than for a deep relationship. This could give the absurd result that our duties to fellow citizens, for example, are graver and more stringent than our duties to our loved ones.

The Teleological Welfarist account might avoid this problem by arguing that, for co-citizenship, the recognition by each person of his duties to his co-citizens is much more weakly correlated with the possibility of the relationship obtaining than in more intimate relationships. A few free-riders will not make much difference. However, this is a distinctive

feature of co-citizenship, and may not work for other multi-person relationships, such as polyamorous relationships. Suppose we have two relationships, A and B. Each contributes the same degree and kind of value to the lives of its members as the other. If A is genuinely between three people, while B is between two, then there is more value in A than in B. If what justifies associative duties is that they make valuable relationships possible, then the duties in A are more justified than those in B. To deny this (while retaining the Teleological Welfarist account) one would have to deny that a three-person relationship is possible, which seems unduly dogmatic, or to argue that the values in question are incomparable—but since they are, by stipulation, just the same values experienced in the lives of different people, then this constitutes a radical commitment to the interpersonal incomparability of well-being, which would seriously undermine the Teleological Welfarist account: after all, if we cannot make comparisons between people's well-being, then how can we say anything general about the ways in which special relationships make our lives go better?

Might one respond instead that, even if there is more value in the polyamorous relationship than in the biamorous one, it is divided up among its members, so the amount per duty-holder is the same? This will not work: on the Teleological Welfarist account our duties are justified because they are necessary conditions for (or constitutive of) the valuable relationship obtaining. In the polyamorous relationship each member's recognition of those duties is both a necessary condition, and constitutive, of the whole relationship obtaining. Each member's duties are therefore justified by the whole value of the relationship, not by a third share.¹⁸

4. Can the Teleological Welfarist Account Really Ground Duties?

The second set of objections argue that the Teleological Welfarist account cannot ground genuine *duties*—that is, moral reasons that are genuine requirements to act, which we are not free not to perform. I concede that not all the moral reasons grounded in special relationships are proper objects of duty. Often they are supererogatory, and the fact that people respond in this way for one another is a crucial part of the value of these relationships. There may be other associative permissions, besides supererogatory acts, which are justified, but not required. Special relationships can ground a wide range of moral and non-moral reasons, and duties are just one subset of those. Nonetheless, special relationships can ground genuine duties, and any account of those duties should explain this. There are two possibilities here. The first account justifies associative duties by appealing to their benefits to the duty-bearer.¹⁹ The second grounds the duties in your associates' interests, either alone or alongside your own.²⁰

In this section, I show that neither of these possibilities is adequate to justify associative duties that are genuine moral requirements, which we are not free not to perform.

The first argument states that associative duties are justified because they contribute to the duty-bearer's well-being. Raz, in particular, thinks that I can have duties justified by how they make my life go better.²¹

If we value our freedom, then we cannot, I think, be required to secure benefits for ourselves. To be a free person it is a prerequisite, at least, always to be permitted to reject any benefit that one might otherwise secure for oneself, through one's own efforts. Such benefits cannot, therefore, be grounds for genuine moral requirements, because if I can refuse the benefit, then I can refuse the requirement. Consider suicide. Of course some Kantians and theists will disagree, but I think it quite plausible that if ending my life hurts nobody else, then I have a right to do so—at least, there is no good reason, grounded in the importance of my

well-being, against suicide.²² Besides suicide, the same also goes for risking one's life: if I want to pursue extreme sports, where I endanger my life, then if it affects nobody else I have every right to do so (arguably, I may do so even if my death would affect others). I can wager my well-being whenever I want to. If I can wager or threaten my whole well-being, then why should I not refuse any given constituent benefit, which goes towards that well-being?

Suppose, for example, that A has a duty to provide B with benefit x. That A has this duty means that he cannot choose whether to provide B with x. If he could do so, then he would not have that duty. However, if B rejects the benefit x, he can waive A's performance of the duty, provided it does not correspond to an inalienable right. Now, suppose instead that B has a duty to provide himself with benefit x. As the beneficiary of the duty, again, B may waive its performance, by rejecting the benefit. However, if he can waive its performance, then he can choose whether to provide himself with the benefit, and he does not have the duty at all. If the beneficiary and the duty-bearer are the same person, there is no difference between the duty-bearer choosing not to perform the 'duty,' and the beneficiary choosing to waive its performance. And if B can choose whether to perform the 'duty,' then it is not a duty. This means that B can only have duties to himself that are grounded in inalienable rights. It is not enough, therefore, for the Teleological Welfarist account to show that special relationships make an important contribution to our well-being; it must also show that we have an inalienable right to these goods. But this is implausible both in itself and in its consequences. Is a lonely person, who does not have any special relationships, missing something to which he has an inalienable right? Is he failing to perform his duties to himself? This seems unlikely.

On the second account, associative duties are justified by the relationship's value to the beneficiary of the duty. This raises further problems, however. What follows if the beneficiary of an associative duty rejects the benefit both of the performance of the specific duty, and of

the special relationship as a whole? Suppose, for example, that a rebellious (adult) son rejects his relationship with his father. On this version of the Teleological Welfarist account, the father's associative duties to his son are grounded in his son's interests in the special relationship between them, and the specific interest protected by the duty. Since the son has rejected the special relationship, this would seem to vitiate the duty. Its performance is no longer of benefit to the son; therefore it is no longer necessary. This does not seem right: while relationships can obviously become so strained that they are no longer grounds of associative duties, and of course there are abusive relationships that cannot justify any duties at all, it nonetheless seems true that a son cannot wipe his father's moral slate clean by rejecting their relationship.

The Teleological Welfarist account might respond that, though the son thinks the relationship is not in his interests, in fact it is, and this is what grounds the continued duties. This would work were the son not yet old enough to be responsible for his own well-being, and to make judgments of these matters independently. But once he has reached the age of majority, he has a right to refuse benefits that he does not want to benefit from, whether they are objectively in his interests or not.²³

Perhaps the son has an inalienable right that his father perform this duty, so while he can refuse the benefit of the special relationship, he cannot waive the performance of duties grounded in that benefit. Just as some think I may kill myself but not (without further reason) consent to be killed, so too can the son refuse to acknowledge his special relationship, but he cannot prevent his father from having duties to him. This solution, however, is both odd in itself—inalienable rights should surely be rarer than this—but it also seems to misidentify the proper object of our concern. If someone asks me to kill him, because he wants to commit suicide but is too scared, then should I refuse on the grounds of his interest in living? I think

not. He is a better judge than I am of his own well-being, and he has rejected that interest; if I refuse to help, he will eventually either find someone else who will or pluck up the courage to do it himself. What makes it wrong is that, in virtue of our common humanity, there are certain ways I ought not to treat other people, even if they consent to them.

Likewise, if the son rejects the interest in the special relationship, it seems wrong to view that as the continuing grounds of his father's duty. Instead there are certain ways a father ought and ought not to treat his son, in virtue of their special relationship, whether or not the son rejects the benefit of the relationship. This suggests, again, that some additional element is at work in justifying the associative duty, which is irreducible to the associates' interests, and therefore incompatible with the Teleological Welfarist account.

5. Against the Teleological Thesis

The foregoing objections make a strong argument against the Teleological Welfarist account, but they could be resolved by ditching either, or both, of the account's two key assumptions. We could reject either its teleological approach to justification, or its welfarism, or both, and we could work out a response to each of these problems. If there were some additional value in special relationships, over and above the contribution they make to our well-being, it would be much easier to accommodate the possibility that they could ground duties that are both genuine moral requirements, and can sometimes require the ultimate sacrifice. The polyamorous relationships objection would be somewhat harder to resolve, but the impersonal value of special relationships—that is, value which does not reduce to individual well-being—need not track the numbers of participants there are in those relationships, so this could still be done. There are metaethical problems with the notion of impersonal value underlying this thesis, and while I think they are probably overstated, they are too complex to discuss here.²⁴

However, they need not be explored, as there remain fundamental problems with the Teleological Welfarist account, whatever conception of value it deploys. I present three such objections in this section, and conclude that the Teleological Welfarist account is hampered as much by its teleology as by its welfarism.

My first objection is that the Teleological Welfarist account is constitutively unable to justify associative duties that could lead to the termination of the relationship that grounds them. Such cases will undoubtedly be rare, but we can imagine examples where loyalty would require us to risk the very relationship to which we are being loyal. Suppose, for example, you know that your best friend's father, on whom she dotes, is involved in crimes that have already, and will again, put her life in danger, but which she either knows nothing about or turns a blind eye to (you suspect the latter). On the one hand you have a general duty to tell the police, and an associative duty to your friend to keep quiet; but you also seem to have an associative duty to your friend to inform the police, or to help her see that she needs to inform the police, because otherwise she is at risk of either suffering from, or perhaps even becoming an accessory to, her father's crimes. Since she loves her father so much, you know that she will hate you if you inform on him, and still more if you make her do so. There is a real risk that your relationship will not survive the fall-out. And yet, it does seem that your duty to your friend is to take that risk.²⁵ The Teleological Welfarist account, however, cannot make sense of this scenario. If associative duties are justified because they realize a valuable relationship, then they can never work against the continuation of that relationship. Moreover, this is true however we conceive the value of special relationships, whether as contributions to well-being, or as independently valuable.

As well as ruling out some duties that we need to accommodate, the Teleological Welfarist account risks justifying some associative duties that it should not justify. Duties are

justified because they are necessary for the relationship to obtain. However, many different forms of conduct are equally essential to this goal: are they all also objects of duties? Consider love in romantic relationships. These are extremely valuable relationships; for many people they give life meaning. Since they are constituted by love, we can say that if one or other party falls out of love with the other, the relationship can no longer exist. This would seem, therefore, to be a paradigm case for the Teleological Welfarist account: there is a lot of value at stake, and a given form of conduct is not only a precondition of realising that value, it is also itself constitutive of it. Does this mean, then, that we have a duty to love? While some might defend this view, it is *prima facie* implausible.²⁶ Moreover, think of all the different dimensions of special relationships that make up their value—the attentiveness, fun, and sharing of moments in one another's life. Each of these contributes to the realization of the relationship, and some of them are necessary constituents: should they also be objects of duty? The Teleological Welfarist account risks making the implausible move, that every form of conduct constitutive of our most valuable relationships is actually an object of duty. Interestingly, this would mean that there was no Razian 'wider context of value' to justify the duties, when set in the context of the relationship. There would only be duties. This might lead to a vicious circularity in reasoning, where the duties are not justified by the value of the relationship, but by the value of the other duties, which are justified in the same, circular way. This is not an attractive conclusion, which suggests, again, that something else must be at work in justifying associative duties, besides the features identified by the Teleological Welfarist account. Moreover, it cannot be resolved by altering our conception of what has value—it is a problem with the underlying teleological commitments of the theory itself.

Lastly, we do not ordinarily think it permissible to breach one duty to prevent someone else breaching two identical duties—whatever the nature of those duties. This holds doubly true

for associative duties, where the idea that I should betray one friend to prevent you from committing two identical betrayals is straightforwardly anathema—not only because they are duties at stake, but because our special relationships should not be treated like interchangeable baseball cards, to be traded off against one another, with a view to achieving the best overall realization of those good relationships.²⁷ Even the act of weighing one against the other would crucially fail to recognize their moral significance, and yet the Teleological Welfarist account is committed to this implausible approach. If our goal is to realize the value in special relationships, then we should seek the best realization of that value possible, irrespective of how it plays out for our particular relationships.

The problems with this approach are particularly apparent in the context of war. Suppose that we have associative duties to protect our compatriots, both *qua* compatriots, and in virtue of the other relationships that we share with some of them, in a time of war. Suppose further, as I argue elsewhere, that these duties can clash with, and sometimes override, the general duties that we must breach to fight a war.²⁸ If all this were true, and our associative duties were justified according to the Teleological Welfarist account, then we would face a rather awkward problem. In any given war, while we have associative duties to protect our compatriots, grounded in the value of the various relationships that those duties realize, our opponents will also have such duties, also grounded in valuable relationships.

On the Teleological Welfarist account, we should ensure the optimal realization of valuable relationships, whether our own, or our opponents.' Before deciding whether to fight for our relationships, or theirs, we must work out whose are most valuable. Perhaps this is the right way to go about things, and whenever a conflict flares up, we should establish which side is the worthier, with respect to the values that we think worth defending, and we should defend the worthiest manifestation of those values. That this is my country, my nation, my

political community, and these are my family, my friends, my comrades, and so on, should be irrelevant to my decision. If, for example, a flawed but stable democracy were invaded by a paragon of liberal democracy, with the intention of remedying the defects in the former's political institutions, citizens of that state should concede the legitimacy of the attack and forego the defense of their state.

This does not strike me as a plausible account of the ethics of war. It *does* seem to matter that this is my country and these are my relationships, even if they are no more valuable. The duties grounded in our special relationships cannot be reduced to the teleological reason of promoting the value of those relationships, without rendering them unrecognizable as associative duties.

This objection applies irrespective of the conception of value that we adopt. Of course, we could massage our conception of value to make it track our nonteleological intuitions, suggesting that the quantum of value only actually increases when these intuitions are properly served, but there would be little point in this move: its teleological aspect would be an unnecessary gloss on the more fundamental nonteleological reasoning.

It is worth considering one last attempt to revive the Teleological Welfarist account.²⁹ What if one concedes these points, but argues that in order to enjoy valuable relationships you need to be stably disposed to recognize associative duties, even in individual cases where a simple teleological approach would suggest that you ought not to? In other words, one could adopt a disposition-teleological view, in contrast with the act-teleological view that is the primary focus of my criticisms here. Even if the value of special relationships would be better served on particular occasions by disregarding our associative duties, overall we do better by adopting a stable disposition to affirm those duties.

This dispositional approach saves the teleological view by denying that we should act on it. It posits that we ought to do whatever a nonteleological account of associative duties says we ought to do, and that only then will we in fact best realize the value of special relationships. This makes it both less threatening to nonteleological views, and less interesting: its teleological component does no substantive theoretical work, instead just offering an imprimatur of success on some nonteleological theory. This is the familiar self-effacing objection to various forms of rule consequentialism.

The dispositional view also raises a more general worry about precisely what dispositions are, and what work they are supposed to do. There is compelling research that questions the very existence of stable dispositions, but even if we do not accept that, we must surely concede that a disposition to ϕ in circumstances C does not entail that you will ϕ in all cases of C.³⁰ Dispositions do not necessitate action. A disposition to recognize an associative duty is not, therefore, enough to justify an associative duty: duties are exceptionless; if you have a duty to ϕ in circumstances C, then you always have that duty, whether you are disposed to do it or not, and whether you act on your disposition or not.

Additionally, a more general worry about all forms of disposition- or rule-consequentialism can be raised here. Suppose it were true that, in order to enjoy valuable relationships, we must be disposed to recognize associative duties even when they appear to contradict the teleological justification for our associative duties. We must be disposed to act in ways that are teleologically counterproductive, in order to have the relationships at all. As per my examples above, this means: we must be disposed to risk our lives to save our loved ones; to continue to recognize duties even to loved ones who reject our relationship; to do things in their interests that risk ending the relationship; to honour the relationships we have rather than seek to maximize our number of valuable relationships and so on. Why, when it comes to

the crunch, ought we to obey our dispositions rather than do what best serves the value that purportedly justifies the duty? We can choose whether to act on our dispositions. By hypothesis, the value is best served in this instance by acting against the disposition. Perhaps, in the long run, the value is best served by acting on the disposition in most cases, but this is consistent with it being permissible to act against the disposition in at least some cases. To deny this, one would have to argue that unless you act on the disposition at all times, you will necessarily act against it in some cases where you thereby fail to serve the justifying value. But this is implausible. That I betray one friend in a way that is teleologically justified does not mean I will necessarily betray any others, still less that I will betray others in a way that is not teleologically justified. I can (and do) fail to be a good father, husband or friend, on some occasions, without this making it impossible for me to have valuable relationships.

6. Ethics and Appropriate Responses

Our standard method for defending associative duties seems incompatible with some core judgments about the nature of those duties. I now try to resolve these objections by developing an alternative account of the justification of associative duties, grounded in a particular ethical framework. Since I will only introduce, but not defend, that framework, I leave the subsequent account a hostage to fortune.³¹ However, if this theory delivers a plausible account of our associative duties, then that in itself can contribute to its justification.

I will adopt, then, the Appropriate Response view of ethical reasoning.³² This is best introduced by contrasting it with one of the most common alternatives, the Standard Teleological view. The Standard Teleological view can be characterized in different ways, but I want to draw attention to two main features. First, it predicates value primarily of states of affairs or occurrences: what is valuable is that a friendship exists, that a person experiences a

moment of pleasure, or that a stranger has treated one with kindness. Second, for the Standard Teleological view value is quantitative: if we must choose between a state of affairs that realizes x amount of value, and one realising $2x$, then it is wrong to choose the former.

These two features create a logic that is hard to resist. First, if we care about states of affairs, and think that value is quantitative, then we should care about whole states of affairs, since it is always possible that value realized in the aspect of the state of affairs on which you are focusing could be outweighed by value-bearers which you are not presently considering. Second, if a state of affairs comprises the whole state of the world realized by a given action, and if value is objective, then it follows that a state of affairs should have the same value irrespective of one's position within it: value should be agent-neutral.³³ The difference between my breaching a general duty, then, and your breaching two identical duties, is solely quantitative—there is no basis for acknowledging that one of them is my action, and the other yours. Third, we should always choose the best overall state of affairs. The Standard Teleological view creates a strong case, then, for viewing value as an agent-neutral property of whole states of affairs, which should be maximized.

According to the Appropriate Response view, value is more complicated than this. To say that x is valuable is to say that it has a number of properties to which a given response, recognizable as a form of valuing, is appropriate.³⁴ A response is appropriate when the properties of x are good reasons for that response.³⁵ We recognize many different responses as forms of valuing. Traditionally, the principal appropriate responses were attitudinal: for x to be valuable is for its properties to provide good reasons for admiring x , loving x , wishing x could be realized in your own life, respecting x etc.³⁶ And indeed, a good way of showing that some x is valuable is to show that its properties are proper objects, say, of admiration.³⁷ However, attitudes are not the only form of appropriate response to something that is valuable. Whether

because attitudes are, as a requirement of self-understanding, conative, or more directly, the Appropriate Response view posits that, when x is valuable, the properties of x not only provide good reasons for certain attitudes, but also for specific types of action.³⁸ As with the attitudinal responses, these actions are as varied as the different ways we can conceive of valuing. Where the Standard Teleologist believes we should only promote what has value, the Appropriate Response view recognizes a number of other valuing responses, including but not limited to promotion.³⁹ To say that x is valuable may be to say that its properties are good reasons for promoting, protecting, preserving, celebrating, emulating, or experiencing x, among many other possibilities. The task of ethical reasoning, on the Appropriate Response view, is not only to establish what is valuable, and how significant it is, but also to show *how it is appropriately valued*. To act wrongly is not to fail to maximize value, but rather to fail to respond to specific reason-giving properties appropriately (though this may sometimes include failing to promote them).

Where the Standard Teleological view focuses on whole states of affairs, the Appropriate Response view can be more selective. Since we do not think of the reasons given by valuable properties quantitatively, some properties might give reasons that prevent other properties, which would ordinarily give reasons, from being considered. Where the Standard Teleological view sees value as a property of a whole state of affairs, the latter sees it as shorthand for identifying the reasons that some specific person, relationship, or object gives one. While the Standard Teleological view is propelled towards agent-neutrality—the view that the overall value realized within a state of affairs is independent of the identity of the person appraising it—the Appropriate Response view naturally accommodates agent-relativity. What matters, on this view, is that whoever's conduct is being assessed (the agent) should respond appropriately to the specific reasons given by a specific object. On the Standard Teleological

view, when a property is valuable, it contributes a given sum of value to the state of affairs in which it is realized, and this gives anyone able to do so just the same reason to realize that state of affairs. But when a property is valuable on the Appropriate Response view, what counts as appropriately responding to that property can vary depending on the identity of the agent. What is an appropriate response for me to some property *p* may well not be an appropriate response for you. In virtue of our valuable relationship, among other things, it is appropriate for me to honour my mother. But my valuable relationship with my mother does not make it appropriate for you to honour her.⁴⁰

Moreover, I can only respond to a given valuable property on my own behalf; I cannot do so for another person. What matters is that each person considering his options thinks how best he can respond to the reasons that confront him. Hence I am not compelled to view, for example, my betrayal of my friend as no more to be avoided than your betrayal of your two identical friendships. That said, the Appropriate Response view is also consistent with some properties giving agent-neutral reasons for action.

7. The Appropriate Response View of Associative Duties⁴¹

The next step is to show exactly how we would produce an account of associative duties within the Appropriate Response View. I proceed in four stages. First, I ask what sort of response to valuable properties duties are; second, I ask which sorts of properties can ground these responses; third, I ask whether special relationships have those properties; and finally what sorts of duties they can ground.

According to the Appropriate Response view, to recognize a duty is to recognize a special type of reason, with a number of distinctive features. While other reasons besides duties may evince some of these features, when they are all present we have a duty, not just an

ordinary reason. It is important to stress that appropriately responding to a value does not always require recognising a duty. It is only where these specific features combine that a duty is present. Special relationships surely ground many other reasons besides duties.

On my account, duties have at least four key elements. First, they specify a decision frame. Reasons that constitute duties ordinarily exclude other reasons from the relevant decision frame—the factors that should be taken into consideration. The idea of a decision frame is familiar in the ethics of war: it is commonly argued that some outcomes simply are not relevant to determining whether a war is proportionate, for example.⁴² Thus, a war may have the positive side-effect of improving welfare rights in the invaded country. However, this should not tell in favor of going to war, because (unless the injustice is grave indeed) you may not kill people to achieve this sort of goal. Duties take the same form; they exclude some other reasons from consideration.⁴³

Second, duties are presumptively decisive. Reasons that ground duties are likely to override other reasons (unless those other reasons also ground duties). Their being duties is a sign of their relative importance. If I have a duty to help my brother, but a reason grounded in self-interest to watch a football game instead, then I ought to help my brother. To acknowledge that a reason is a duty is to admit that it has force.

Third, this force remains even when the duty is overridden. This is an important point: there are some reasons which, when trumped by other reasons, lose their force. If I have a reason to watch Ipswich in the F.A. Cup final on my 16-inch TV, and a reason to watch the match on my 24-inch TV, the latter reason eliminates the former. I simply have no reason to watch the match on my small screen, when I can watch it on the big screen. The goals achieved by each action are the same, only one realizes them better than the other does. Duties are not like this. In other work, for example, I argue that associative duties to protect can override

general duties not to harm, in some wars. If this is true, then the fact that the former duties can override the latter does nothing to diminish the importance of the latter. They remain a reason against fighting, an injustice that we commit, even if they are all things considered justified.

Finally, duties are not subject to the will of the duty-bearer: he cannot permissibly choose not to perform them. If I have a duty to do x , then I am not free, morally speaking, not to do x . This is what makes duties moral requirements. Obviously, however, there are different ways in which duties can be requirements: sometimes, to have a duty to do x is to have a duty to do x right now, for this particular beneficiary; other times to have this duty is to be required to do x for somebody, at some stage. This is usually called the distinction between perfect and imperfect duties. Either way, what matters is that the duty is not something that you can simply choose not to perform. You can permissibly breach a duty only when required to do so by another, stronger moral reason.

Given this analysis of the sorts of reasons that duties are, what sorts of properties can ground duties? A relationship x , for example, could only ground duties if its properties, x^{1-n} , could directly give reasons for action, independently of any other properties to which they conduce. This is similar to saying that they are non-instrumentally valuable. This is, first, because otherwise the reasons grounded in x^{1-n} would not necessarily retain their force when overridden. If x^{1-n} only give reasons insofar as they are conducive to y , then if some z better serves y , but at the expense of x , there is no cost in ignoring the reasons given by x^{1-n} . Second, if x^{1-n} do not directly ground moral reasons, then those reasons are properly attributed to the properties that do in fact ground them. If special relationships were only important insofar as they contributed to economic growth, then any reasons they could give would derive from the importance of economic growth, not their own reason-giving properties. Third, since duties are very weighty reasons, both demanding of their bearer, and potentially overriding or excluding

other moral reasons, it goes without saying that for a relationship to ground duties it would have to be very morally important. So it must be able to give direct, strong moral reasons.

To determine whether a relationship can ground duties, we need to know about more than the nature of its properties. We also need to show that the recognition of associative duties counts as an appropriate response to those properties. It is possible that they could give direct and weighty moral reasons, but not ground associative duties. Within the subset of mistaken responses to a valuable relationship, not all are breaches of duty. For example, when attending a ruby wedding anniversary of a still happily married couple, it is undoubtedly appropriate to respond with a sense of respect, and perhaps even awe. Failure to do so would be a mistake, on this account, but would not be a breach of duty. Moreover, it is not simply the strongest reasons that should be the objects of duty: it must also look like a duty, insofar as it can be the object of a moral requirement. We may sometimes have extremely weighty reasons, grounded in the value of a relationship, which are not objects of a duty, because they are constitutively unsuited to being the objects of duty. They are dependent for their meaning on being voluntary.

So duties can be grounded in relationships if they can give direct moral reasons, which take the specific shape of associative duties. This is similar to the Teleological Welfarist view that associative duties are constitutive of the non-instrumentally valuable relationships that justify them. The difference is in the direction of justification. They think that the duties are justified because they make a valuable sort of relationship possible; I think they are justified because they are an appropriate response to the valuable properties of that relationship. This means that our arguments for any specific associative duty will look quite similar—we will attempt to show the great non-instrumental significance of the relationship, and then to show why there is a strong internal connection between the relationship and this particular duty.

Despite this similarity, the difference between us is fundamental. Their view justifies the duties by the value that they realize; mine justifies the duties by the values to which they respond. Their version is teleological, and therefore vulnerable to the objections mooted above; mine is not (as I show below). Additionally, mine can much more readily accommodate the agent-relativity of most associative duties. I noted above that what counts as an appropriate response to a given valuable property can differ depending on the identity of the responder. There are ways in which a member of a relationship can respond appropriately, which do not extend to non-members. And perhaps more seriously, there are ways a member of a relationship can respond inappropriately, which are not available to outsiders. The paradigm case of this is betrayal. You can only betray those with whom you are in a special relationship; another person's response to the value of my relationship with my wife cannot be understood as betrayal in the same way.

Can special relationships directly ground the right sort of reasons? Are they important enough to be sources of duties? This question should be asked of specific relationships, and specific duties. Some general observations are, however, appropriate.

The Teleological Welfarists have amply demonstrated the moral importance of special relationships. I see no reason to deny their arguments about the contributions these relationships make to individual well-being. Special relationships are instrumentally important, insofar as they help make us into better, more sympathetic people, as well as provide us with much fun and solace. They are also, however, of direct significance: some of the properties of special relationships directly ground reasons for action, which are in no way dependent on the relationships' contribution to some other good. For example, one of the valuable properties of special relationships is the altruism they inherently involve.⁴⁴ Being in a special relationship means caring about someone else's well-being for its own sake: you care about how her life

goes, not because it makes your life better if her life is better, though that is true as well, but because you want her to have a good life. This property strikes me as being extremely important: indeed, I think the devotion and self-sacrifice that form a regular, everyday part of our most intimate relationships are among the noblest achievements of which people are capable. Moreover, unlike many other excellences beloved of philosophers, they are achievements that almost everyone can hope, in principle, to realize. That this relationship is a stable realization of altruism seems to be part of the reason for protecting the relationship, and taking actions that promote it. It gives us moral reasons directly, of which some may take the form of duties.

Take another example: the relationship among liberal co-citizens. On my account, this relationship consists in the stable doing of justice over time. Liberal co-citizens create and perpetuate institutions that do justice among them. The valuable properties of liberal co-citizenship are manifold, and I will not discuss them all here. But one among them is that to realize, or even approximate, justice in a world where many people, within and without these institutions, either unintentionally or intentionally work to make such a relationship impossible, is a tremendous achievement. The relationship of liberal co-citizenship commands respect and admiration not only because relationships of justice are intrinsically valuable, but because they are so hard to achieve.⁴⁵ It is also an important contributor to individual well-being, both instrumentally—insofar as it secures members' interests—and non-instrumentally, since simply being a citizen of such a state makes one's life go better, in particular insofar as one's rights are securely protected against infringement.⁴⁶

Prima facie, special relationships seem important enough to ground duties: whether they actually do so will depend on whether any such reasons count as appropriate responses to those relationships. To show this, we have to argue that failing to recognize the duty is failing to

understand the value of the relationship that supposedly grounds it. It is important to remember, as I have emphasized throughout, that not all the reasons grounded in special relationships will take the particular form of duties. Some will be less weighty; some will not create decision frames; some will be voluntary. Consider the example of love: we may well have reasons to love a person, grounded in the special relationship between us. This reason, however, cannot become a duty to love, because it cannot meet the non-voluntary criterion.⁴⁷ It is vital to the communicative significance of love that it be voluntary. Love is a gift that is either freely given, or cannot be given at all.

Associative duties, then, will only be a subset of the reasons that special relationships can ground. The specific duties grounded in any given relationship will depend on what counts as an appropriate response to the properties of that relationship. There will be a clear link between the properties of the relationship and the specific duty it requires. This will ordinarily mean at least a duty to protect and preserve a special relationship—though, as indicated in the objection from ill-fated loyalty above, this will not always be true. Although it is hard to generalize, I think we can identify one type of associative duty that is almost always an appropriate response to our deep personal relationships.⁴⁸

Suppose A and B share a deep personal relationship of the kind that paradigmatically grounds associative duties. For A to respond appropriately to the valuable properties of that relationship, he must give greater weight to B's interests in his deliberations than if their relationship did not obtain. That is precisely what it means to view a relationship (and one's associate) as special. The special relationship acts as a moral amplifier.

In my view, special relationships amplify both the gravity and stringency of our general duties: in virtue of his relationship with B, A must bear greater costs to serve B's interests than he would if there were no relationship: his duties to B are more stringent. And in virtue of that

relationship, A's duties to B are more likely to override other moral considerations than if they were not owed to an associate: his duties to B are graver.

Elsewhere I defend the claim about gravity; here I will illustrate that about stringency. Suppose that A is at the beach and sees B struggling in the water, looking likely to drown. If A had no connection with B, then he might be required to take on x cost in order to save him. But if B is someone with whom A shares a valuable relationship—his son, say—then the cost that he ought to bear will be greater than x . So, suppose B is caught in a rip, and A judges that he would be risking his life to try to save B. This would not be morally required were B a stranger (suppose), but may be required if A is his father, and they have a valuable relationship. This will of course depend on further details—A's prospects of saving B must be sufficiently high, for example—but the basic point should be clear.

Sometimes this amplification is best described by saying that A's duty to B is more stringent if they share a valuable relationship; sometimes the amplification results in a duty obtaining which would otherwise be absent. What explains this amplification? Suppose you fail to perform a duty owed to your associate which you would have owed even in the absence of the relationship. You retain the reasons which apply in virtue of your shared humanity—you have damaged the interest protected by the duty, and disregarded the victim's moral standing. But you have also betrayed a friend and disregarded the value of the relationship between you. This additional reason (discussed in greater detail below) amplifies the force of the reasons you already have.

The adoption of the Appropriate Response view of associative duties helps us solve the objections to the Teleological Welfarist account presented above.

The first set of objections argued that the Teleological Welfarist account could not properly explain the forcefulness that we think associative duties can have, while the second set questioned whether it could explain how duties can be genuine moral requirements. If we can justify associative duties on the Appropriate Response view, these problems should be resolved, because this approach can explain what the additional reasons against breaching an associative duty are, which capture the injunction that they should be able sometimes to trump both our freedom, and our general duties.

The Appropriate Response view can recognize that the damage to the victim's interest is part of what makes breaching a duty wrong, but it also identifies an additional problem: misrecognition of the valuable properties concerned. Our actions, according to this view, convey meaning as well as having results: for example, if I destroy something holy, I have not only created the state of affairs where that holy thing does not exist, I have also desecrated it. My action has expressed an inappropriate response to the holy thing; the wrongness of what I have done is captured both in its destruction, and in the attitude my response expressed towards it. Likewise, performing our general duties to others is one way of appropriately responding to their valuable properties.⁴⁹ When we breach these duties, we undoubtedly do damage to their interests—which is bad in itself, and a reason against the breach—but we also respond inappropriately to them, by imputing, in our action, their lack of moral importance. If we regard persons as having equal value, as members of a universal moral community, our duties follow from this equal membership in the moral community. When we breach these duties, we express the exclusion of the victim from that moral community. Our action not only harms but also wrongs him, by expressing this derogation from, or misrecognition of, his moral status.

It is this misrecognition, then, which constitutes the additional reason against breaching a general duty, and which suggests a way to explain the corresponding element in breaches of associative duty as well. Performing our duties to associates is a way of responding appropriately to them as members of the special relationships that they share with us. Undoubtedly, to breach an associative duty is to produce an outcome that is bad in various ways—for example, to damage the relationship between us. But it is also, crucially, an inappropriate response, expressing that derogation from the value of our relationship. To breach a general duty is both to harm and to wrong the victim, damaging his interest and expressing disrespect for his fundamental value. To breach an associative duty is also to harm and to wrong the victim, damaging his interest and betraying the special value of your relationship.

A theory of associative duties grounded in the Appropriate Response view can better capture the forcefulness of those duties, since the moral reasons against breaching a duty incorporate the significance of betrayal, not just their impact on interests, so there is nothing to rule out the possibility that a betrayal might sometimes be so unthinkable as to justify a duty to risk one's life. Moreover, since we are concerned with meanings, not just with quanta of value, there is no reason to think that A's betrayal of his only partner is any less freighted with inappropriate meaning than B's betrayal of his two partners, *qua* betrayal—so the polyamorous relationships objection is likewise resolved.

The Appropriate Response view also meets the desideratum that our theory of associative duties should ground genuine moral requirements. It is not solely my son's interest in this relationship that matters, but the attitude that I should express to him as his father. We can also resolve the self-regarding objection, which asks how a duty can be grounded solely in benefits that I can realize for myself. We know that the ground of the associative duty is not

simply the benefit that the relationship realizes for its members, but the necessity of responding appropriately to that value. (Incidentally, this might also explain why suicide might be wrong, when it seems so hard to justify this on a Teleological Welfarist account. Committing suicide may involve misrecognition of one's own moral status, which offers reasons against suicide over and above those grounded in the promotion of one's well-being).

Unsurprisingly, the Appropriate Response view also equips us to respond to the remaining objections, which focus on the teleological commitment of the Teleological Welfarist account. Since our goal is not simply to promote the grounding relationship, we can have associative duties that damage or even end that relationship. Endangering a valuable property may sometimes be the appropriate way to respond to it. Likewise, there is no reason why the Appropriate Response approach should mandate implausible duties to love. Associative duties will just be some among many reasons that a valuable relationship can ground, and there is no reason to think that all, or even most, of these reasons will take the form of duties. Finally, the substitutability objection is also no longer a problem, since the Appropriate Response view is concerned that *I* should respond appropriately to the value, rather than that I should view relationships and betrayals thereof as neutral occurrences to be weighed against one another.

8. Conclusion

We have arrived at an account of associative duties that can adequately meet the desiderata identified in the objections against the Teleological Welfarist account. Special relationships provide forceful moral reasons grounded directly in their own properties. Some among these reasons have the distinctive structure of duties: they specify decision frames, are presumptively decisive, non-voluntary, and retain their force when overridden. To respond inappropriately to

these reasons is not only to bring about the state of affairs where this special relationship suffers damage, and people's lives go worse it is also to act wrongly, to express in one's actions the wrong attitude towards those valuable properties. Just as a breach of a general duty imputes disrespect for the victim's status as a member of the equal moral community, so a breach of an associative duty imputes a betrayal of one's associate as a member of this valuable special relationship.⁵⁰ This betrayal explains why special relationships can ground genuinely weighty duties, which we are not free not to perform; it also explains why we ought not to treat our valuable relationships as goods to be promoted, at the cost of sacrificing some. As a theory of the structure of associative duties, the Appropriate Response account has clear advantages over the Teleological Welfarist account. Its full defense, of course, depends on the success of the Appropriate Response approach to ethical theory more generally. My aim in this paper was simply to illustrate its plausibility in the specific subfield of associative duties.

¹ This paper began life as part of my D.Phil., and like all my work on that project benefited greatly from the influence and comments of Henry Shue, David Miller, David Rodin and Jeff McMahan. Thanks also to Dov Fox, and the members of the Nuffield Political Theory workshop, for comments. The paper has much improved through the good offices of two anonymous referees, to both of whom thanks. Work on the paper was supported by an Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Researcher Award.

² I criticize both of these views in 'Do Associative Duties Really Not Matter?,' *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 17/1 (2009), 90-101.

³ Simon Keller, 'Four Theories of Filial Duty,' *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 56/223 (2006), 254-74, 265.

⁴ John Cottingham, 'Partiality, Favouritism and Morality,' *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 36/144 (1986), 357-73, 369.

⁵ Samuel Scheffler, *Boundaries and Allegiances: Problems of Justice and Responsibility in Liberal Thought*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 59. See also Scheffler, *Boundaries*, 93. Much of the book is an exploration of a view that Scheffler does not endorse; his own view is closer to the appropriate response view, as noted below.

⁶ Joseph Raz, 'Liberating Duties,' *Law and Philosophy*, 8/1 (1989), 3-21, 14-15; David Miller, 'Reasonable Partiality Towards Compatriots,' *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 8/1 (2005), 63-81, 65; Andrew Mason, *Community*,

Solidarity and Belonging: Levels of Community and Their Normative Significance, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 99ff. For other writers who emphasize 'human flourishing,' see Jonathan Seglow, 'Associative Duties and Global Distributive Justice,' *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, 4; Scheffler, *Boundaries*, 107; Harry Brighouse and Adam Swift, 'Parents' Rights and the Value of the Family,' *Ethics*, 117/1 (2006), 80-108, 95.

⁷ For other expressions of the same view, see: John Cottingham, 'Ethics and Impartiality,' *Philosophical Studies*, 43/1 (1983), 83-99, 89-90; Marilyn Friedman, 'The Practice of Partiality,' *Ethics*, 101/4 (1991), 818-35, 820; Michael O. Hardimon, 'Role Obligations,' *The Journal of Philosophy*, 91/7 (1994), 333-63, 353; John Horton, 'In Defense of Associative Political Obligations: Part One,' *Political Studies*, 54/3 (2006), 427-43, 437-8; Jeff McMahan, 'The Limits of National Partiality,' in Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan (eds.), *The Morality of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 107-38, 118, 24.

⁸ Friedman, 'The Practice of Partiality,' 820; Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 97. Other instrumentalists include Amitai Etzioni, 'Are Particularistic Obligations Justified? A Communitarian Examination,' *The Review of Politics*, 64/4 (2002), 573-98, 596.

⁹ Scheffler, *Boundaries*, 59.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 93.

¹¹ Miller, 'Reasonable Partiality,' 65.

¹² Raz, 'Liberating Duties,' 20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 20-1.

¹⁴ Mason, *Community, Solidarity, and Belonging*, 108-9. See also Horton, 'In Defense of Associative Political Obligations: Part One,' 436-8; John Horton, 'In Defense of Associative Political Obligations: Part Two,' *Political Studies*, 55/1 (2007), 1-19, 7.

¹⁵ Etzioni, 'Are Particularistic Obligations Justified?' 587.

¹⁶ Andrew Mason, 'Special Obligations to Compatriots,' *Ethics*, 107/3 (1997), 427-47, 446.

¹⁷ Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing for clarification on this point.

¹⁸ Thanks again to the referees for this journal, for inviting me to develop this objection.

¹⁹ Raz, 'Liberating Duties.' Also see e.g. Mason, *Community, Solidarity, and Belonging*, 108-09; Miller, 'Reasonable Partiality,' 66-67. Scheffler did much to popularize this view, though it was not one he advocated. Cf. Scheffler, *Boundaries*, 59-61.

²⁰ Keller, 'Four Theories of Filial Duty.'

²¹ Raz, 'Liberating Duties.' For a similar view see Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 98.

²² Shifting to a nonteleological approach might remedy this, enabling us to accommodate the viewpoint that suicide is in fact wrong, even other things equal.

²³ Thanks to a referee for raising this point.

²⁴ See, for example Roger Crisp, 'Equality, Priority, and Compassion,' *Ethics*, 113/4 (2003), 745-63; Mason, *Community, Solidarity, and Belonging*; Andrew Moore and Roger Crisp, 'Welfarism in Moral Theory,' *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 74/4 (1996), 598-613; Larry S. Temkin, 'Harmful Goods, Harmless Bads,' in R. G. Frey and Christopher W. Morris (eds.), *Value, Welfare, and Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 290-324; Larry S. Temkin, 'Equality, Priority, and the Levelling Down Objection,' in Matthew Clayton and Andrew Williams (eds.), *The Ideal of Equality* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 126-61.

²⁵ The scenario is taken from a pivotal moment in season two of teen drama *Dawson's Creek*.

²⁶ Although not to everybody—contrast S. Matthew Liao, 'The Right of Children to Be Loved,' *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 14/4 (2006), 420-40.

²⁷ This point is often made in objection to teleological ethics. Cf. Elizabeth Anderson, *Value in Ethics and Economics*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1993), 73; Thomas Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, (London: Belknap Press, 1998), 89; Jussi Suikkanen, 'Reasons and Value—in Defense of the Buck-Passing Account,' *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 7/5 (2005), 513-35, 589.

²⁸ Seth Lazar, 'The Responsibility Dilemma for Killing in War: A Review Essay,' *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 38/2 (2010), 180-213.

²⁹ This suggestion is owed to an anonymous referee, to whom thanks.

³⁰ See, in particular, the situationist critique of virtue ethics, as per John Doris, *Lack of Character* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

³¹ For objections to the Appropriate Response view, see Roger Crisp, 'Value, Reasons and the Structure of Justification: How to Avoid Passing the Buck,' *Analysis*, 65/285 (2005), 80-85; Jonathan Dancy, 'Should We Pass the Buck?' in Anthony O'Hear (ed.), *Philosophy, the Good, the True and the Beautiful* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 159-75; Wlodek Rabinowicz and Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen, 'The Strike of the Demon: On Fitting Pro-Attitudes and Value,' *Ethics*, 114/3 (2004), 391-423. For a persuasive response, see Jonas Olson,

'Buck-Passing and the Consequentialism/Deontology Distinction,' *Printed from: Homage à Wlodek. Philosophical Papers Dedicated to Wlodek Rabinowicz*. Eds. T. Rønnow-Rasmussen, B. Petersson, J. Josefsson & D. Egonsson, 2007. www.fil.lu.se/HomageaWlodek, (2007); Suikkanen, 'Reasons and Value—in Defense of the Buck-Passing Account.' For a recent defence of this approach against the wrong kind of reasons objection, see Jonathan Way, 'Transmission and the Wrong Kind of Reason,' *Ethics* 122/3 (2012), 489-515.

³² My principal sources for this conception of the Appropriate Response view—which has also been called the 'fitting attitudes' view, the 'buck-passing' view, and, by Anderson, an expressive theory of rational action—are Anderson and Scanlon, as well as various commentators on their work. The view obviously has deeper roots, with Brentano and A. C. Ewing usually considered the principal modern sources. Anderson, *Value*; Franz Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, (London: Routledge, 1969); A. C. Ewing, *The Definition of Good*, (London: Routledge, 1947); A. C. Ewing, *Second Thoughts in Moral Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 1959); Scanlon, *What We Owe*.

³³ On agent-neutrality and agent-relativity, see Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), Chapter 9. Note that some think an agent-relative teleology is possible: Robert F. Card, 'Consequentialism, Teleology, and the New Friendship Critique,' *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 85/2 (2004), 149-72; Douglas W. Portmore, 'Combining Teleological Ethics with Evaluator Relativism: A Promising Result,' *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 86/1 (2005), 95-113; Peter Railton, 'Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality,' *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 13/2 (1984), 134-71; Amartya Sen, 'Rights and Agency,' *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 11/1 (1982), 3-39; Michael A. Slote, *Common-Sense Morality and Consequentialism*, (London: Routledge, 1985).

³⁴ Scanlon, *What We Owe*, 95-6. Scanlon emphasizes the importance of concentrating on our responses to valuable properties, rather than our responses to value as such. I endorse this view.

³⁵ Anderson, *Value*, 1-2; Scanlon, *What We Owe*, 95-6.

³⁶ Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*; Ewing, *The Definition of Good*.

³⁷ This contrasts with the standard teleological method of showing that some x is valuable, which is usually predicated on comparisons of the quantity of value in possible worlds with and without x, with all other things held equal. See Railton, 'Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality,' 190-1, fn. 21.

³⁸ Anderson, *Value*, 11, 17; Scanlon, *What We Owe*, 95.

³⁹ Anderson, *Value*, 33; Scanlon, *What We Owe*, 88, 101.

⁴⁰ Thanks to the referees for pressing for further development of this point.

⁴¹ Although they conceive their respective views differently, the forebears of the appropriate response view of associative duties are Scheffler, *Boundaries and Allegiances*, chapter 6, and Niko Kolodny, 'Love as Valuing a Relationship,' *Philosophical Review* 112/2 (2003), 135-189.

⁴² Thomas Hurka, 'Proportionality in the Morality of War,' *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 33/1 (2005), 34-66; Jeff McMahan, *The Ethics of Killing in War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁴³ Anderson, *Value*, 23, see also 37; Scanlon, *What We Owe*, 84.

⁴⁴ Lawrence A. Blum, *Friendship, Altruism and Morality*, (London: Routledge, 1980); Cottingham, 'Partiality, Favouritism and Morality,' 369.

⁴⁵ Clearly the difficulty of achieving this relationship contributes value only on condition that the relationship is itself valuable. The mere fact that ϕ was hard does not give reason to promote it, if ϕ is itself pernicious.

⁴⁶ I argue for this conclusion in 'A Liberal Defense of (Some) Duties to Compatriots,' *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 27/3 (2010), 180-213. For a congenial view, see Philip Pettit, *On the People's Terms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2012).

⁴⁷ The notion that love is a way of valuing a relationship is owed to Kolodny, 'Love as Valuing a Relationship.'

⁴⁸ The ensuing discussion draws on my 'Associative Duties and the Ethics of Killing in War,' *Journal of Practical Ethics* 1/1 (2013), 3-48.

⁴⁹ Compare Scanlon: 'The idea of valuing human life and the idea of respecting one's duties and other people's rights ought to be closely related, if not the very same thing.' Scanlon, *What We Owe*, 106.

⁵⁰ It's interesting to note that you can't betray a relationship that you are not part of: what counts as an appropriate response to the value of a relationship depends on whether you are a member of that relationship or not. The reasons that a relationship gives will be different depending on whether one is a member of the relationship or not.