

The Many Facets of Love

The Many Facets of Love Philosophical Explorations

Edited by

Thomas Jay Oord



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The Many Facets of Love: Philosophical Explorations, edited by Thomas Jay Oord

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Dedication:

To all who explore the many facets of love...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	ix
Chapter One	
Three Views of Love: Egoism, Disinterest, and Harmonism	
Alan Vincelette	1
Chapter Two	
Second Selves and Genuine Others: Kierkegaard and Aristotle	
on Friendship and Self-Love	
John Lippitt	11
Chapter Three	
Process Answers to Love Questions	
Thomas Jay Oord	20
Chapter Four	
Divine Paradox and Harmony: Whitehead and Jung on the Love of God	
Young Woon Ko	31
Chapter Five	
Process, Parturition, and Perfect Love: Diotima’s Rather Non-Platonic	
Metaphysic of Eros	
Donald Wayne Viney.....	41
Chapter Six	
Love, Pattern Experience, and the Problem of Evil	
By Adam Green	50
Chapter Seven	
Championing Divine Love and Solving the Problem of Evil	
Thomas Jay Oord	59

Chapter Eight	
The Impassible Suffered: Divine Love and the Doctrine of Divine Impassibility	
By Kent Dunnington	66
Chapter Nine	
Is Love an Affection or an Emotion? Looking at Wesley's Heart Language in a New Light	
Gregory S. Clapper	75
Chapter Ten	
Love, Depression, and Empathy: Demotivating the Problem of Other Minds	
Brint Montgomery.....	85
Chapter Eleven	
Metaphysics of the Person: Love as Foundation and Fulfillment	
By Maria Fedoryka	96
Chapter Twelve	
Political <i>Philia</i> and Sacramental Love	
Eric Manchester	104
Chapter Thirteen	
The Duty to Love in a Just, Deliberative Democracy: Habermas and Kierkegaard on Political Morality	
Mark G. Thames	114
Chapter Fourteen	
The Light that Charity Knows: Tsong-ka-pa and Maximus the Confessor On Love	
H.S. Horton-Parker	122
Chapter Fifteen	
Naturalism: A Crude Instrument in the Search for a Beloved?	
By Teri Merrick	131
Endnotes.....	140
Index	164

INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare wrote famously that love is a many splendored thing. He should have added that love is multi-faceted.

Poets, theologians, romantics, scientists, and revolutionaries alike have explored the many facets of love. Some have considered love a decision, others proclaimed it a feeling, and still others insist that both decisions and feelings are part of love.

Some have suggested that love is blind, by which they mean that it takes nothing into account but its recipient. Others have said that love must be universally aware – or at least aware of a broad context.

A venerable history has emerged that explores the facets of love by referring to ancient Greek words, *agape*, *eros*, and *philia*. Some doubt that self-love is a genuine love. Others declare that love for others is possible only after one loves oneself. Those who explore the relationship love has with sex, romance, desire, and passion are legion. And a few have suggested that the highest love of all is between friends.

In the quest to explore various facets of love, many have waxed eloquent on the nature of divine love. Some argue, in fact, that only God can express love; creatures are incapable of loving. Others maintain the both God and creatures express love, and they speculate as to which facets of love are shared in common.

In recent years, most scholars have suggested that creaturely love requires relations. Many theists have added that God's love is relational. But the new espousal of divine relatedness flies in the face of ancient traditions of divine impassibility.

Judging by the wide use of the word and the high praise it receives, we might think that philosophers have thoroughly analyzed love. But this is not the case. In fact, Irving Singer argues that “the analysis of love has been neglected more than almost any other subject in philosophy” (1987, xi).¹

This book takes a step toward rectifying the neglect of a philosophical analysis of love. It brings together fifteen philosophical perspectives that explore some of love's most important facets. Most of the essays have theistic or religious concerns in mind.

The book begins with Alan Vincelette's essay that explores the motive of love. An egoistic view of love suggests that we love others purely for our own personal gain. Disinterested love, by contrast, views love as self-sacrificial,

with no element of self-interest. What Vincelette calls a “harmonistic” view of love involves both self-interest and other-directed love. In this harmonistic view, one loves God and other humans for their own sakes. But the lover also gains when doing so. Vincelette’s essay is also appropriate as the lead for this book, because he notes important historical contributions in love scholarship.

John Lippitt continues the exploration of love as self-oriented or other-oriented by addressing the thought of Soren Kierkegaard. Scholars of Kierkegaard argue that he does not rule out erotic love or friendship, but he warns against the ways in which we often turn the other into “another me.” Friendship love might help, says Lippett, to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate forms of self-love. He notes that philosophers such as Aristotle, Cicero, Thomas Aquinas and Montaigne have described the friend in ways that sound like “another me.” But Lippett contends that differences between friends and responsiveness towards those differences are important for understanding friendship love.

The contemporary process philosophical tradition provides helpful resources for philosophical discussions of the facets of love. In his first essay, Thomas Jay Oord answers from a process perspective ten questions about important facets of love. Oord is an active participant in a field of interdisciplinary research he calls the love-and-science symbiosis. He argues that the process vision will be more influential in providing answers to theoretical and existential questions emerging from work in the love-and-science symbiosis than it has been in providing answers to questions in the science-and-religion dialogue. Oord also defines love as acting intentionally, in sympathetic response to others (including God), to promote overall well-being.

Young Woon Ko the love of God as developed by Alfred North Whitehead and Carl Gustav Jung. Both develop their arguments in the correlation of the opposites—the subject and object, the conscious and the unconscious, God and the world, good and evil. From their perspectives, their opposites are not antagonistic but relational and thereby become the conditions of creative transformation. Woon Ko argues that God’s love is based on wholeness within particularistic diversity. God’s love is the creative activity to transform and overcome the limited character of ego-consciousness by intensifying the harmony of the opposites in creative advance.

Donald Viney continues exploring process related themes by addressing the view of Diotima of Mantinea, as described in Plato’s *Symposium*. Diotima uses the language of divine immutability, recollection, and the theory of Forms. She implies that a merely possessive love is self-defeating. Mortal creatures long to possess the beautiful forever, but their mortality makes this impossible. The desire for immortality is satisfied by giving “birth in beauty, whether of body or of soul” for those who remember us after our death. The

trajectory of Diotima's thinking, says Viney, brings her to the threshold of the idea that perfect love involves ideal forms of both activity and passivity.

Adam Green examines an important facet of talking sensibly about divine love. Green notes that the experience of God as loving is usually seen as that which is at stake in the philosophical problem of evil and not as a significant contributor toward that debate's resolution. By contrast, Green argues that the experience of God as loving turns the tide in the debate over evil. He engages Richard Swinburne's claim that a theist can only preserve justification for belief in God if possessing an adequate theodicy. But Green says that a theist who often experiences God's love can defuse Swinburne's argument that an adequate theodicy must be discovered.

In his second essay, Thomas Jay Oord offers a solution to the problem of evil that affirms divine love unequivocally. Oord's solution relies upon the claim that God is a relational being who necessarily relates to the world. As one necessarily related to creatures, God cannot withdraw or override the freedom this loving God necessarily gives to others. This solution absolves God from the charge of culpability for failing to prevent genuine evils. Oord's denial of the Gnostic-derived doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* plays an important part in his argument.

Many contemporary scholars have taken issue with the traditional claim of God's impassibility and would agree with Oord that God is affected by others because relational. Some have argued that only a God who is passible can be worthy of Christian faith after Auschwitz. These arguments are frequently motivated by the view that the perfect love of God requires God to suffer with suffering creatures. A God who does not so suffer would be "distant" and "cold," to use metaphors invoked in arguments against impassibility.

Kent Dunnington begs to differ. Dunnington argues that the doctrine of divine impassibility is integral to any adequate account of the triune Love that creates the world, moves the stars, and redeems humanity from suffering. He says that a passible God would be unable to do any of these things, and therefore this could not be the God who is Love.

Gregory S. Clapper turns our attention to the role that emotions play in love. He reviews some of the important literature on the subject of emotions and affections, including the work of Thomas Dixon, Martha Nussbaum, and Robert C. Roberts. In this contemporary work, a reviving of a more fully-orbed understanding of the affections of the heart is present. And this reviving allows one to appreciate theological expressions of love made by older theologians like John Wesley. It was Wesley, for instance, who talked about the central importance of "heart religion," and Wesley championed love as the central category of Christianity.

From Clapper's essay on the heart of love we move to Brint Montgomery's essay on the role of one's head. Montgomery believes that a powerful argument that can be brought against the ability to love. That argument begins with the claim that to love one another is, among other things, to understand and empathize with some other person's feelings. But the Problem of Other Minds states that we do not have access to another's mental states. Hence, we are unable to understand and empathize with another person's feelings. And this means that we are unable to love one another. Montgomery believes that the second segment of the argument – that we don't have access to another's mental states -- should be questioned. Recent results in MRI and related methods of brain scanning give at least limited access to the states of minds of others. These results provide a justified basis for to the claim that we can love one another.

Talk of heart and mind lead naturally to ask about the nature of the person who loves. Maria Fedoryka addresses what it means to be a contingent person. Fedoryka argues that we should consider it a privilege to exist in a loving "metaphysical embrace" with God. In agreement with philosopher-theologians such as Bonaventure, she claims that a philosophical analysis of contingent being leads to the metaphysical centrality of love in the being of the human person. Her personalist philosophy plays an important role in exploring this facet of love as personal fulfillment.

With Eric Manchester's essay, we turn from looking at the person who loves to the kind of communities that promote love. Manchester argues that the political philosophies of Aristotelian communitarianism, classical democratic liberalism, and socialism all fall short, in various ways, of establishing true brotherly love. In addition, none of these models are able to produce love of any kind between humanity and God. Borrowing insights from John Wesley's theological understanding of politics, Manchester examines how the sacramental life of the Church overcomes the shortcomings of other political theories. Wesley's thought provides the proper integration of *philia* with *agape* and *eros* between human persons, as well as between humanity and God.

Mark G. Thames continues probing this facet of the community's role in love. He argues that deontological political theories are realistically utopian. Despite their optimism, says Thames, these theories strive only to attain appropriate respect between peer adults whose equality is construed as potential rivalry. These theories typically say little about community-building, care, trust, or love. Thames considers love minimally as the welcome of strangers, and this goes beyond what most political theories require. He argues that universal obligations to extend welcoming are on a par with obligations to fairness as initial conditions for social life of any sort.

H.S. Horton-Parker explores love as compassion by comparing two traditions in which compassion plays an integral role. The two traditions he chooses are Tibetan Buddhism and Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Both depict compassion (*maitri/karuna* and *agape* respectively) functioning as the bridge between the stages of renunciation and realization. Horton-Parker considers why it appears that compassion serves as an epistemic bridge to ultimate transformation. His speculation centers on the phenomenological similarity between the ontoform pathos of *karuna* and the deiform pathos of *agape*.

Teri Merrick brings the book to a close with a chapter on methodological naturalism. Generally speaking, naturalism is the view that the methods of empirical science are our best, perhaps only, methods for obtaining knowledge. Merrick reshapes this debate by introducing a new question: Is naturalism compatible with fostering appreciative love for the created order? She argues that naturalism's operating paradigm for evaluating explanations is well-tailored to achieve the goal of scientific inquiry championed by Francis Bacon in the 17th century. But it systematically weeds out explanations more likely to induce appreciative love for the phenomena. Merrick concludes by looking to C.S. Lewis' *The Four Loves* and Henri Nouwen's *Life of the Beloved* for attitudes and practices that inquirers should adopt.

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¹ Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), xi.

CHAPTER ONE

THREE VIEWS OF LOVE: EGOISM, DISINTEREST, AND HARMONISM

ALAN VINCELETTE

The Egoistic View of Love

Although Christian ethics is often noted for its support of altruism and self-sacrifice, somewhat surprisingly there have existed many Christian proponents of a purely egoistic view of love. According to this egoistic view, we love God and others purely for the sake of self-interest, typically the fear of hell or the hope and desire of heaven. The Modern Anglican philosophers Abraham Tucker and William Paley are representative of this egoistic view.¹

The Anglican Abraham Tucker (1705-1774) in his *The Light of Nature Pursued* (1768-1777) argues that the motivation of all of our actions is self-satisfaction: “each man’s own satisfaction, interest, or happiness, is the *primum mobile* or the first spring of all his schemes and all his actions.” And what brings us satisfaction is the doing of virtuous deeds, from which we receive satisfaction on earth and rewards in heaven from God.²

The Anglican priest William Paley (1743-1805) similarly argues that all virtue is based on self-interest in his *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785). Paley defines virtue as “the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness.” Thus the ultimate motivation for virtue is the expectation of an eternal reward in the life to come: “As we should not be obliged to obey the laws, or the magistrate unless rewards or punishments, pleasure or pain, some how or other depended upon our obedience; neither could we, without the same reason, be obliged to practice virtue, obey the commands of God, do what is right, or to anything else.”³

This egoistic view of love had a long history in the Christian Church. It is found in the medieval thinker Hugh of St. Victor (1090-1141) in his *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith* (c. 1134) who claims that:

You do not love Him [God] unto His own good, but you love Him unto your own good ... Therefore, when you love God, you love for yourself. It is your good that you love, and you love for your good, because He is your good whom you love ... What is it to love, unless to desire and to wish to have and to possess and to enjoy?⁴

Yet it goes back to such thinkers as Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, Paulinus of Nola, Salvian of Marseilles, Valerian of Cimiez, and Maximus of Turin.⁵ These thinkers developed a theory of pious usury wherein one is motivated to give alms to other humans because in this way one will find a reward in heaven (indeed for the amount of alms one gives to the poor God will pay one back in heaven with an equal amount of rewards plus interest). So we find Valerian (d. c. 460) claiming in regard to the giving of alms that “Clearly, as often as we succor the wretched, we give to ourselves. The dispensing of our resources is our gain. For, if you consider again the hope of future reward, whatever is given to the poor is reckoned as a profit.”⁶ And Maximus (fl. 390-410) likewise exhorts:

... we give out the money of this world in order to acquire eternal riches ... For what does our feeding the poor, our covering the naked, our visiting the imprisoned have as its aim if not that money given out on their behalf not be lost but be increased, and that this business, so to speak, gain interest for the giver?⁷

Finally, our love of God is also quite selfish for these authors. We love God, according to them, out of the motives of fear of hell and hope of heaven. Lactantius (c. 250-325) even asserts that virtue with its call for much rejection of pleasure, self-denial, suffering, and even death, all in order to benefit others, only makes sense if done for a future eternal reward.⁸

The Disinterested View of Love

The disinterested view of love is at the opposite spectrum of the egoistic view and holds that all love should be purely for the sake of others. We should not have our self-interest in view at all when we love others.

The disinterested view of love had an early proponent in the American Congregationalist Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803). Hopkins, in his *A Dialogue Between a Calvinist and a Semi-Calvinist* (c. 1785-1790), took a Calvinist position and argued that a Christian’s love must be so unselfish (i.e. from “disinterested benevolence”) that the Christian is willing to be damned for the greater glory of God: “But to him who loves God supremely, and desires his glory above all things, it is so far from being impossible to be willing to be damned, on supposition this is most for God’s glory, that he could not will or choose anything else.” This being the case Hopkins asserts in his *The Nature of*

Holiness (1773) that “Self-love is, in its whole nature and in every degree of it, enmity against God.”⁹

The disinterested view of love though is perhaps best known from the treatise *Eros and Agape* (1930-1936) by the Swedish Lutheran Bishop Anders Nygren (1890-1978). Nygren, in this work, argued that Christianity must be based on a purely disinterested form of love-*agape*. Such an agapic love is spontaneous and unconditional, theocentric, self-giving and self-sacrificial. Christianity therefore must forgo any thought of a love which is need and desire-based, egocentric, and acquisitive-*eros*. Nygren professes “Agape ... excludes all self-love. Christianity does not recognize self-love as a legitimate form of love. Christian love moves in two directions, towards God and towards its neighbor; and in self-love it finds its chief adversary, which must be fought and conquered.”¹⁰

This disinterested view of love also had a long history in the Christian religion and is found in such early authors as Clement of Alexandria, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, John Cassian, and Theodoret of Cyrus.¹¹ Such thinkers in the first place argued that one should give alms to other people and show them love not for personal advantage but rather out of an other-directed love. For example, Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) claims that a person should give alms to others not from seeking a reward (either from the recipient of our gift or from God) but rather out of loving communication or imitation of Christ.¹²

Secondly, these disinterested-minded Christians also held that we should love God for God’s own sake and not out of fear of hell or hope of heaven. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) accordingly argues that a true lover of God loves God purely out of the spontaneous goodness of the heart, and not out of fear or for a reward. Clement even believes that:

Could we, then, suppose any one proposing to [him] whether he would choose the knowledge of God or everlasting salvation; and if these, which are entirely identical, were separable, he would without the least hesitation choose the knowledge of God ... This, then, is the perfect man’s first form of doing good, when it is done not for any advantage in what pertains to him, but because he judges it right to do good ... doing good, neither for glory, nor, as the philosophers say, from reputation, nor from reward either from men or God; but so as to pass life after the image and likeness of the Lord.¹³

Indeed, there soon developed a very common threefold hierarchy of divine lovers in the Patristic period (the slave who loves out of fear of hell, the hireling or mercenary who loves out of hope of reward, and the son or friend of God who loves for the sake of virtue itself) as found for instance in the Cappadocians Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa. Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329-390) proclaims: “I know of three classes among the saved;

the slaves, the hired servants, the sons. If you are a slave, be afraid of the whip, if you are a hired servant, look only to receive your hire; if you are more than this, a son, revere Him [God] as a Father, and work that which is good, because it is good to obey a Father; and even though no reward should come of it for you, this is itself a reward, that you please your Father.”¹⁴

At its most disinterested this developed into the view that a true Christian is one who is willing to love God even if by doing so one will end up in hell (an impossible supposition they admitted). This view appears in John Chrysostom, John Cassian, and Theodoret of Cyrus. Chrysostom (349-407) hence asserts that like Paul we must never abandon love of God, even if by loving God we were to go to hell, or if in giving up love of God we could attain heaven:

and one thing he [Paul] feared, and that was falling from his love for Him [Christ]. For this thing was in itself more dreadful than hell, as to abide in it was more desirable than the Kingdom ... And he [Paul] out of desire of Him [Christ] would take up with falling into hell, and being banished from the Kingdom, if the choice between the two were put to him.¹⁵

This disinterested view of love has an extensive later history and is found in the Middle Ages in Pierre Abelard (1079-1142) and Duns Scotus (1266-1308).¹⁶ Yet it was really in the mystics of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance where we find multiple and dramatic presentations of the disinterested theory of love. For in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance a debate about the propriety of seeking spiritual consolations (the joy and sweetness we find in loving God, virtue, prayer, attending Church, and the sacraments) broke out, and many of the mystics held that it is impure to seek consolations in love.

This view first appears in the late medieval thinkers Angela of Foligno, Marguerite Porete, Hadewijch, Meister Eckhart, Heinrich Suso, and Johannes Tauler. Accordingly, Hadewijch (Thirteenth Century) claims that virtue and not sweetness is the proof of love. So “wise souls ... seek only Love’s will. ... If they are in consolation let it be as Love wills; if they are disconsolate, again as love wills.”¹⁷ In the same vein Eckhart (c. 1260-1323) argues that we must not seek our own advantage but love God for God’s own sake. For “Some people want to ... love him [God] as they love their cow—they love their cow for the milk and cheese and profit it makes them. This is how it is with people who love God for the sake of outward wealth or inward comfort. They do not rightly love God when they love him for their own advantage.”¹⁸ Moreover, Eckhart argues that a truly disinterested love will not seek ease or pleasure or consolation but only to do God’s will. Hence Eckhart claims that a person should “.. learn to take himself out of himself, to keep nothing for himself, to seek nothing, not profit or

delight or inward joy or sweetness or reward or the kingdom of heaven or his own will.”¹⁹ Our only consolation can be to suffer for the sake of God. In fact, true servants of God will abide by the will of God even if it means their own damnation.²⁰

Now in the Renaissance mystics such as the New Devout Thomas à Kempis, the Spanish Carmelite Teresa of Avila, the Spanish Franciscan Juan de los Ángeles, and the Spanish Jesuits Alphonse Rodriguez, Diego Alvarez de Paz, and Francis de Sales argued that God must be loved whether we find joy in doing so, or whether we find only aridity (i.e. lack of consolation), or even desolation (i.e. presence of suffering).

Thus the Spanish Jesuit Alfonso [Alphonsus] Rodriguez (c. 1538-1616) in the Eighth Treatise of his book *Practice of Perfection and Religious Virtues* (1609) argues that spiritual consolations are useful for beginners and can aid the soul in its quest to serve God. Yet it is also the case that if we dwell on these spiritual consolations and desire them solely for our own satisfaction we display an improper form of spiritual self-love. Indeed as Rodriguez puts it, people who are selfish only love God in times of prosperity and consolation and are like selfish little dogs who are only content as long as they are eating a piece of bread. Accordingly, “... the servant of God should not seek spiritual consolation to rest therein, but because by this spiritual refreshment the soul is animated and nourished to labor in the way of virtue and hold fast thereto. In this way delights are not desired as delights, but for the greater glory of God.” Thus Rodriguez claims: “Holiness and perfection do not consist in these consolations ... Our advancement consists in true love of God, in union and entire conformity with the will of God, for bitter and for sweet, for adversity as for prosperity. We ought to take from the hand of God the cross of dereliction as we take the delight of consolation, giving thanks for both.”²¹

This view is perhaps best presented by Francis de Sales (1567-1622) though who argues that the soul with a holy indifference must love the God of consolations not the consolations of God. It must seek God only for the love of His beauty and not desire of enjoying God. We must therefore not seek consolation, comfort, convenience, and have our spiritual life only be spring or summer and full of candy. Otherwise we will not love God any more when sweetness disappears such as kids who when given bread with honey on it suck away the honey and throw away the bread. Instead we must love God in winter, that is in dryness and suffering. We must love God as a deaf musician sings for His prince taking no delight in such singing; we must love God even when we are only given dry crusty bread that is without savor or even distasteful.²²

Other Renaissance mystics such as Catherine of Siena, Luis de Blois [Blosius], Miguel de Molinos, and François Fénelon stretched this disinterest even further and claimed that the purest form of love is one wherein one desires

only desolation and pain from God so that one can be sure of having a pure and unselfish love. Hence according to these thinkers we must despise joy and consolations and seek only desolation (even eternal torment if that is God's will) so that we may better love God.

Luis de Blois (1506-1566), for example, argues that perfection is not found in consolation and sweetness, but in self-denial and resignation to God's will. Hence perfect people do not ask God for sensible comfort but are ready to remain without consolation for the rest of their lives (or suffer the very pains of hell) if that is God's will. For in all things we must let God work in us and give to us what He wishes, when He wishes, and how He wishes.²³

This extremely disinterested view of love is perhaps best known from the Quietists. Miguel de Molinos (1640-1697) holds that true devotion is accompanied by temptation, dryness, affliction, and darkness and not pleasure, sweetness, and delight; the latter are wrongly thought to be favors of God but are instead obstacles to spiritual progress. Thus we must seek to avoid all consolations as they are horrible. And François Fénelon (1651-1715) asserts that we seek God truly and for Himself when we seek trials and dryness (i.e. aridity) and not comforts (if we do embrace consolations it must be only because it is God's will and not that it pleases us). For we can be sure we are holding on to God for Himself when He deals roughly with us and not when he sends us consolations. We must then resemble the grown up son who loves his father for Himself and doesn't need presents rather than the baby who loves its mother because her hands are full of toys, bonbons, and sugarplums; for God with consolations is God with His gifts, but God surrounded with darkness, privation, and desolation is God alone and these vicissitudes melt selfishness away. Indeed Fénelon claims that the same service means much more to God when we perform it without pleasure and with distaste. He points out that I do very little for my friend when I go to visit him because I love walking, have excellent legs, and take great pleasure in using them. But if I become gouty and every step that I take involves a great deal of pain, then here the same visits that I formerly made to my friend, and which he did not think much of, become signs of a very deep friendship (and the more pain I have in coming to visit him, the more he appreciates it). Similarly, with God, says, Fénelon, one step taken in that pain is more meritorious than a hundred steps taken in pleasure.²⁴

The Harmonistic View of Love

The harmonistic theory of love argues that the love of God and humans involves both self-interest and a love of others for themselves. One loves God and other humans for their own sakes but yet one also finds one's own good in doing so. This view is found in many contemporary Anglican and Catholic

authors such as the Anglican Clive Staples Lewis and the Jesuit Martin D'Arcy. It is also found in the Methodist John Wesley.

John Wesley (1703-1781) holds that Christians are called to deny themselves and their own will and instead make the will of God their only rule of action. Wesley states "We must do, not our own will, but the will of God. For our intention is not to please ourselves, but God." Christian love then is "in itself generous and disinterested, springing from no view of advantage to himself, from no regard to profit or praise; no, nor even the pleasure of loving ... is absolutely, essentially different from self-love, even of the most allowable kind." Still, Wesley holds that the love of God (and neighbor) brings the Christian happiness and joy and rewards in heaven. Indeed Wesley claims that for the Methodist, God is "the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul ... He is therefore happy in God; yea, always happy, as having in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, and over-flowing his soul with peace and joy." Wesley even defines love on this basis when he writes "Now, what is it to love God, but to delight in him, to rejoice in his will, to desire continually to please him, to seek and find our happiness in him, and to thirst day and night for a fuller enjoyment of him?" Accordingly, Wesley answers the question of whether a life of religion is a life of misery by claiming "Is it misery to love God? ... Nay, it is the truest happiness; indeed, the only true happiness which is to be found under the sun."²⁵

The Anglican C. S. Lewis (1898-1963) in his work *The Four Loves* (1960) distinguishes between a Need-love and a Gift-love. Need-love is the kind of love a lonely or frightened child has for its mother. Need-love is thus a love based on satisfaction of our needs, a self-interested love. Gift-love is the kind of love a father has who works for his family to provide for them even after he is gone, or of a devoted mother or beneficent teacher. It is a love that desires to give to others. Lewis argues that both of these forms of love are good and present in our love of God. Moreover, Lewis states that our love for God is very largely or even entirely a Need-love, for our whole being by its very nature is one vast need crying out for God to remedy it. Hence Lewis claims "Need-love ... either coincides with or at least makes a main ingredient in man's highest, healthiest, and most realistic spiritual condition." As Lewis stated, only a silly creature would boast before God, "I'm no beggar. I love you disinterestedly." Yet humans also have a gift-love for God. While "Need-love cries to God from our poverty; Gift-love longs to serve, or even to suffer for God." By this gift love we become wholly disinterested and desire what is best for the beloved.²⁶

The English Jesuit Martin D'Arcy (1888-1976) argues that human love should consist of two elements, a self-centered one and an other-centered one, in his *The Mind and Heart of Love* (1954). For on the one hand we must love others for themselves, and yet at the same time we must also recognize that we

find our good in doing this. There is thus an aspect of love which is *eros* or *animus*-taking, dominating, possessive, selfish, inward-looking, concerned with the individual and self-realization; and an aspect of love which is *agape* or *anima*-giving, submissive, sacrificing and surrendering, unselfish, outward-looking, concerned for the whole. For D'Arcy both of these aspects of love must be present or our love will be stunted in one way or another. D'Arcy is thus critical of those such as Nygren who claim that love must banish all self-interest, for humans have natural desires for happiness and the perfection of their being, and a love in which the self did not enter would be no love at all. Yet on the other hand he also rejects the egoistic view that a lover is living at the highest pitch of his selfhood when he forgets himself to think only of the beloved. Hence he summarizes his position by saying:

... there is a love which is self-regarding and a love which is self-sacrificing, and these two loves can be gathered up in the general expression of 'giving and taking.' ... The first is set on self-realization and proceeds with Aristotelian backing to argue that man must by his very nature love himself even when loving others. The second shies away from such an idea and prefers fusion with the beloved and death to itself. The two have, however, to live together.²⁷

This harmonistic view of love goes back to the two most important early Christian authors, Augustine and Aquinas. It is found in the Cistercians Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and Aelred of Rievaulx (1110-67), and the Franciscan Bonaventure (c. 1218-1274) as well.²⁸

Augustine (354-430) argues that the love of others must be motivated by unselfish concerns. Yet Augustine also points out that by loving others in an unselfish manner we acquire our good and happiness. He writes: "When we take pity upon a man and care for him, it is for his advantage that we do so; but somehow or other our own advantage follows by a sort of natural consequence, for God does not leave the mercy we show to him who needs it to go without reward. Now this is our highest reward, that we should fully enjoy Him [God], and that all who enjoy Him should enjoy one another in Him."²⁹ In a similar manner, Augustine claims that God must not be loved solely for an eternal reward but instead in a gratuitous manner and for Himself. Yet what this means is that God is to be loved not for something external to God but rather because God Himself is our joy and happiness and in whom we can rest; thus a true love of God, or charity, is enjoyment of God for His own sake. Augustine writes: "What then, is there no reward belonging to God? None except Himself. The reward belonging to God, is God Himself. This he loveth, this he esteemeth; if any other thing he shall have loved, the love will not be chaste."³⁰

Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274) argues that we love God and other people (naturally and supernaturally) in two ways. First insofar as we find our

own good in doing so with a love of concupiscence (*amor concupiscentiae*), and secondly we love others above ourselves and for their own sakes with a love of friendship (*amor amicitiae*). Aquinas thus asserts that we love God and other humans primarily for themselves but that in a secondary sense it is proper to love them for ourselves:

Now there are four kinds of cause: final, formal, efficient, and material ... Accordingly, as regards the first three ways, we love God, not for anything else, but for Himself. ... On the fourth way, however, He can be loved for something else, because we are disposed by certain things to advance in His love, for instance, by favors bestowed by Him, by the rewards we hope to receive from Him, or even by the punishments which we are minded to avoid through Him.³¹

In the Renaissance several authors also took a harmonistic position in regard to spiritual consolations (following the path of earlier medieval thinkers such as Bernard of Clairvaux): this position is found in thinkers such as Francisco de Osuna and Alonso de Orozco.

The Spanish Franciscan mystic Francisco de Osuna (c. 1492-1540) is perhaps the most able Renaissance defender of spiritual consolations and he wrote about this topic in The Twelfth Treatise of his *The Third Spiritual Alphabet* (1527). Now it is true, De Osuna admits, that spiritual consolations can be desired out of a mere craving to taste pleasure for the sake of pleasure, and this is improper. Yet consolations can also be desired in order to love and serve God better. Consequently, De Osuna argues that spiritual consolations (when properly desired) are a very good thing and to be sought with all our being. For God wishes to bestow joy and sweetness upon those devout people who love Him; hence we must not only see the crosses that torment us and be blind to the consolations that gladden us. Indeed spiritual delight is a sign that we have attained God, the object of our love, and that we are loving God properly; for no one delights in what one does not love. Accordingly De Osuna remarks: "If you taste God, you have in your soul the greatest possible sign of God's supreme love and so you should not let anyone frighten you by saying it is self-love."³² De Osuna concludes then that spiritual consolations are fine as long as we do not desire them for their own sake, but rather for the sake of God: "So let us emulate the just and seek the Lord together with his consolation ... let us not separate him from his sweetness. As we believe he is both God and man, let us seek God and his sweetness at one, and as his humanity is one way to approach God, so his sweetness is another that encourages and spurs us on to fly to him.." To think otherwise, and to reject spiritual consolations, is to think that the human being can endure spiritual affliction with no comfort whatsoever, as if the wheels of carts could turn unhoiled by even one drop of consolation.

The Augustinian Alonso de Orozco (1500-1591) also defends the appropriateness of spiritual consolations in his *Treatise on the Sweetness of God* (1576). He argues that someone who loves God properly (and is not in sin) can find great sweetness in prayer and the love of God; although we must not be someone who only loves God for sweetness and withdraws from prayer when we no longer feel it. Such people are like those who want to feel the warmth of the fire before the wood is kindled. Rather, one must often suffer quite a bit of smoke (i.e. aridity) at the beginning of serving God in order to experience the ultimate pleasure of the flame.³³

Conclusion

Within the history of Christianity we find three distinct views in regard to the motivation for our love of other humans and God: the egoistic, the disinterested, and the harmonistic. The egoistic view is found in several Modern Anglican thinkers, and it suggests that the sole reason we love other humans and God is the reward of heaven. The disinterested view of love, common to many Lutherans and Calvinists, claims that the love of God and neighbor must be so completely disinterested that it has no element of self-regard. Such a love is accordingly self-sacrificial. Lastly, the harmonistic view of love found in Catholic, Anglican, and Wesleyan traditions suggests that the love of God and others involves both self-interest and other-centered motivations. This view combines the egoistic and disinterested views. The harmonist view says that one must love God and other humans for themselves, but one also finds one's own good and happiness in such love.

This harmonistic view of love was held by such prominent thinkers as Augustine, Aquinas, and Wesley, and to my mind is the proper view of love. When we love other humans and God, what draws forth our love (i.e. motivates it) is the value we perceive in the object loved. We grasp the rightness and appropriateness of loving others, and as a result we love them for their own sakes. Yet, such a love of others fulfills one's very being. For loving others is what we are called to do and it brings one great happiness and joy. The intrinsic goodness of others motivates our love, but this love of others can also be appreciated as good for ourselves.

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CHAPTER TWO

SECOND SELVES AND GENUINE OTHERS: KIERKEGAARD AND ARISTOTLE ON FRIENDSHIP AND SELF-LOVE

JOHN LIPPITT

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”³⁴ Yet inside and outside the Christian tradition, philosophers have worried about self-love. In particular, friendship has sometimes been regarded as a form of illegitimate self-love. Søren Kierkegaard has often been viewed as an enemy of friendship, on the grounds that in *Works of Love* he allegedly sets up a stark contrast between the natural loves (erotic love and friendship) on one hand, and love for God and neighbor on the other, ultimately arguing that the former should be replaced by the latter.

Numerous critics, such as Theodor Adorno and K. E. Løgstrup,³⁵ have attacked Kierkegaard for this. In three recent books on the philosophy of friendship, Kierkegaard is still presented as being friendship’s unequivocal enemy. Lorraine Smith Pangle, for instance, informs her reader that “Kierkegaard, with bold intransigence, rejects friendship as unchristian.”³⁶ Sandra Lynch repeats the charge that “Kierkegaard opposes friendship ... to ‘love of neighbor’,”³⁷ and claims that he “dismiss[es] friendship and love altogether, as essentially forms of idolatry or self-love” ... “Since friendship is preferential, it is by definition selfish, on this view.”³⁸ Mark Vernon is more polemical: he dismisses Kierkegaard’s analysis as “one man’s rant,” again claiming that Kierkegaard’s is “an outright rejection of friendship as such” and that for him “neighbor-love is wholly different from friendship.”³⁹ (He also reminds us that Kierkegaard’s name means “graveyard”, so that he can joke: “True to his name, Mr Kierkegaard does his best to bury friendship.”⁴⁰) All three critics, in other words, make essentially the same charge against Kierkegaard as did his critics of the 1940s and 1950s.

Kierkegaard is still commonly presented as holding either or both of the following views:

1. Since erotic love and friendship are preferential, rather than universal, they fail the test of love of the neighbor and should therefore ultimately be dismissed.
2. Since one's beloved or closest friend is simply one neighbor amongst many, one's love for one's partner or friend is ultimately no different from one's love for the stranger.

And yet in *Works of Love*, there are numerous passages which praise both erotic love [*Elskov*] and friendship [*Venskab*]. Kierkegaard describes erotic love as “undeniably life’s most beautiful happiness”⁴¹ and friendship as “the greatest temporal good.”⁴² Moreover, *Works of Love* has recently attracted a number of impressive advocates, most notably Jamie Ferreira, who argues convincingly that the standard view of Kierkegaard as an enemy of friendship is a serious over-simplification.⁴³

In this article, I want to address an important dimension of Kierkegaard’s worries about friendship as a form of preferential love, and to consider, if there is anything in them, what aspects of friendship we would need to emphasize to avoid these worries. Ferreira claims that Kierkegaard neither dismisses erotic love and friendship, nor argues that the way we relate to a spouse or a friend need be qualitatively identical to the way in which we relate to the neighbor who is a stranger. Contrary to Lynch’s claim above, what Kierkegaard actually says is that “the selfishness *in* preferential love”⁴⁴ should be rooted out, not the preferential love itself. Erotic love and friendship *are*, for Kierkegaard, ultimately forms of self-love. But according to Ferreira, it is crucial to see that Kierkegaard’s case draws upon a distinction between *selfish* and *legitimate* forms of self-love.⁴⁵ What he is opposing is the former, not the latter. But what form could such a distinction take?

In the second deliberation of *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard claims that without properly loving the self, it would not be possible to love the neighbor.⁴⁶ And this deliberation gives us an important clue to where he sees the difference between legitimate and selfish self-love as lying. He describes the neighbor as being “what thinkers call ‘the other,’ that by which the selfishness in self-love is to be tested.”⁴⁷ Selfish self-love is where the other is seen simply as an extension of the self; in which the other’s alterity is not respected. Legitimate self-love is where this alterity *is* respected: a genuine relation between two people is possible because there are two genuine selves to be in relation. Instead of reducing the friend or lover simply to what is good for me, I relate to them as a genuine other. In a nutshell, then, Kierkegaard’s real objection is to the way in which we often turn the other into “another me.”⁴⁸

Kierkegaard presents erotic love and friendship as being those forms of love celebrated by “the poet”, and anticipates an objection that since for the poet

erotic love inheres in (selfless?) devotion to the beloved, the charge of self-love must be misplaced. “But how can *devotion* and *unlimited giving of oneself* be *self-love*?” he asks. His answer: “when it is devotion to the *other I*, the *other self*.”⁴⁹ His view, then, seems to be that erotic love and friendship are forms of self-love insofar as the friend is an *extension of the self*.

Several philosophers - most famously Aristotle, but also Cicero, Thomas Aquinas and Montaigne - describe the friend as a second or other self. This sounds as if it might fall foul of Kierkegaard’s “reduction to me” objection. In this context, I shall consider the charge (made recently by Lynch, for example) that many philosophical accounts of friendship (including Aristotle’s) place an excessive focus on *similarities* rather than *differences* between friends. Not enough has been said about what a focus on differences would add. I begin to fill this lacuna by arguing for the importance of supplementing the so-called “mirror” view of friendship derived from Aristotle with the “drawing” view argued for recently by Dean Cocking and Jeannette Kennett.⁵⁰ Placing such a dimension of friendship centre stage, I argue, goes a significant way towards addressing Kierkegaard’s worry about the way in which friendship might involve a form of illegitimate self-love.⁵¹

First, a preliminary. We might wonder *why* Kierkegaard lumps erotic love and friendship together here. Whereas we are all familiar with the myths of romantic love – that there is one person for each of us; our “soul mate” – this idea of exclusivity seems to jar with our ordinary understanding of friendship. Certainly, not *everyone* could be my friend, but I can surely have more than one of them. Yet quite prevalent in the philosophical literature on friendship is an idealized view of what friendship involves. Lynch notes that the most influential classic views of friendship, which tend to focus on relationships between virtuous men, view friendship, at its best, as being characterized by union of feeling on all subjects.

For Cicero, for example, man “is ever on the search for that companion, whose heart’s blood he may so mingle with his own that they become virtually one person instead of two.”⁵² He defines friendship as “complete sympathy in all matters of importance, plus goodwill and affection.”⁵³ The apotheosis of this view, however, comes in Montaigne, in his eulogy for his friendship with Etienne de la Boétie. In such a friendship – which, Montaigne claims, was “so entire and so perfect that ... it is a lot if fortune can do it once in three centuries”⁵⁴ – the two friends share a perfect harmony in world-view: “our souls mingle and blend with each other so completely that they efface the seam that joined them, and cannot find it again.”⁵⁵ Of la Boétie’s death, he writes: “I was already so formed and accustomed to being a second self everywhere that only half of me seems alive now.”⁵⁶

Against this background, it becomes easier to see why Kierkegaard conjoins the friend with the lover: for instance, why he talks about “when the lover *or friend* is able to love only this one single person in the whole world.”⁵⁷ The Montaigne passages also make it easier to see why Kierkegaard would make the following charge:

erotic love and friendship are the very peak of self-esteem, the I intoxicated in the other I. The more securely one I and another I join to become one I, the more this united I selfishly cuts itself off from everyone else. At the peak of erotic love and friendship, the two actually do become one self, one I.⁵⁸

When friendship is this kind of mutual intoxication, the threat to non-preferential love of the neighbor is obvious.

Having clarified why Kierkegaard’s conjoining erotic love and friendship may not be as strange as it first appears, let us return to the key question: in what sense is the beloved or friend supposed to be an extension of the self?

The most famous description of the friend as a “second self” appears in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*.⁵⁹ Aristotle’s discussion is closely linked to his treatment of friendship as being rooted in likeness or similarity. Although near the start of his discussion he mentions the idea of opposites attracting, shortly afterwards he asserts that “every friendship ... is in accordance with some likeness”⁶⁰ and later repeats that “like is friend to like.”⁶¹ Perfect or complete friendship – as opposed to his two lower varieties of friendship, those of pleasure and utility – occurs between “good people alike in virtue.”⁶² Moreover, Aristotle claims that in relationships between lovers, it is likeness in character that is most likely to sustain a relationship once “youth fades.”⁶³ He does recognize the possibility of friendships between unequals, but overall concludes that “equality - and likeness - is friendship, and especially the likeness of those alike in virtue.”⁶⁴ Friendship between men with contrary needs, such as the rich and poor, is treated as mere utility friendship.⁶⁵ Aristotle’s predominant focus in discussing friendships between unequals and those that are not alike is on problems that are likely to arise from these dissimilarities. Of people unlike in virtue, he comments:

How could they be friends if they neither approved of the same things nor enjoyed and disliked the same things? For not even with regard to each other will these pertain, but without this ... they cannot be friends, since they are incapable of sharing in a way of life.⁶⁶

Ceteris paribus, the picture seems to be that the more alike two people are, the better are their chances of a lasting friendship.

But is this true? Noting the prevalence in the philosophy of friendship to emphasize “shared concerns, shared character traits, even complete fusion on all matters” Lynch argues that such conceptions of friendship (recall in particular Montaigne) are idealized. This approach fails to take sufficient account of the “otherness” of the friend: Lynch argues that “the friend in traditional concepts of friendship becomes an impossible idea – a reflection of oneself and perhaps even of one’s own narcissism – but never a challenge or threat; that is, never a genuine other.”⁶⁷

His focus on similarity makes it natural for Aristotle to introduce his much celebrated metaphor of the friend as a *mirror* of the self. Perhaps the clearest expression of this is in the *Magna Moralia*, where we are told:

we are not able to see what we are from ourselves ... as then when we wish to see our own face, we do so by looking into the mirror, in the same way when we wish to know ourselves we can obtain that knowledge by looking at our friend. For the friend is, as we assert, a second self. If, then, it is pleasant to know oneself, and it is not possible to know this without having some one else for a friend, the self-sufficing man will require friendship in order to know himself.⁶⁸

The overall idea is that I can see myself in the mirror of my friend only because my friend is in the critical respects *like me*.

Is Aristotle guilty of Lynch’s charge of placing an excessive focus on similarity? Here Aristotle commentators disagree, not least because they disagree on exactly which aspect of the ambiguous phrase “another self” should be emphasized. Pangle puts the issue thus:

As *another* self, is the friend loved mainly as a reflection or extension of oneself, or as a *separate* being with *different* qualities? Again, as another *self*, is he loved as belonging to oneself, or as a true, independent end?⁶⁹

To see more clearly the problem at issue here, consider an important section of *Works of Love* not discussed by Kierkegaard’s critics. In the deliberation “Our duty to love the people we see”, Kierkegaard insists on the duty to love people “as they are”,⁷⁰ “to love precisely the person one sees.”⁷¹ What is at stake here, Ferreira points out, is that “we are prone to love the self-generated image of the other person, but ... this is not the same as loving the actual other person at all.”⁷² In Kierkegaard’s words,

in loving the actual individual person it is important that one does not substitute an imaginary idea of how we think or could wish that this person should be. The one who does this does not love the person he sees but again something unseen, his own idea or something similar.⁷³

A rather common instance of this is romantic infatuation, neatly described by John Armstrong as “using another person as a prop in a fantasy about ourselves.”⁷⁴

To avoid this problem, I suggest that we can build on what Lynch says to show that what Cocking and Kennett call the “mirror” view of friendship derived from Aristotle needs to be complemented by what they call the “drawing” view. The “drawing” view, I claim, shows something about why a friendship in which there are important differences between friends can have a value that friendships of perfect unity and harmony lack. A. W. Price suggests: “A potential aspect of my personality may respond to an aspect of yours not by mimicking it, but by complementing it. Lives are shared through exchanging as well as embracing thoughts.”⁷⁵ The “drawing” view puts some useful flesh on the bones of this intuition. And, as mentioned earlier, it goes some way towards dispelling Kierkegaard’s concern that friendship might involve a form of illegitimate self-love.

Cocking and Kennett criticize both the “mirror” view of friendship (in which what marks companion friendship is the great extent to which we see ourselves in the friend) and what they call the “secrets” view (in which companion friendship is marked by the extent to which we are prepared to disclose ourselves to our close friends). For their “drawing” view, characteristic of being a close friend of another is being “receptive to being directed and interpreted and so in these ways drawn by the other.”⁷⁶ Their claim is that people can be companion friends “precisely with respect to the ways in which they are dissimilar”,⁷⁷ such as where each provides a useful corrective to the other. Consider the example of:

two friends, one of whom is deeply cautious and the other rather reckless. These friends recognize the contrast between their characters, and this contrast plays a significant role in structuring their relationship. The cautious one knows that she could never resemble her friend in recklessness, yet she is attracted by this aspect of his character. The reckless one, while remaining quite reckless, regards with affection his friend’s caution. Far from being extrinsic to the friendship these dissimilar features are features in respect of which they are friends and which govern much of the interplay between them.⁷⁸

For Cocking and Kennett, what wears the trousers in companion friendship is not commonality of interests, but being “responsive to our interests being directed by each other.”⁷⁹ To illustrate what they mean by “responsiveness” and “direction”, consider another example:

my friend Iris asks me to the ballet and on account of this interest in the ballet being Iris’s interest I willingly accept this invitation. I may never have had any real interest in ballet yet I do not go begrudgingly or out of any sense of