

LOVE, PARTIALITY, AND MORALITY  
AN ANALYSIS OF THOMAS AQUINAS'S THEORY OF LOVE

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Philosophers convinced by Bernard Williams that there is a potential psychological conflict between the demands of love and the requirements of morality have approached the problem in various ways. The objective of this dissertation is to rehearse some of the ways in which contemporary philosophers have attempted to resolve the potential conflict with respect to love in some of its various forms and to show how each attempt to do so ultimately fails. Then I develop and defend an alternative theory of love and its motivations found in the work of Thomas Aquinas.

The dissertation is devoted to the examination of some of the most compelling contemporary approaches to addressing the potential conflict between the goals and special relationships which provide our lives with meaning, and the so-called moral point of view which is understood to be impersonal and impartial. I attempt to show what is compelling about each approach to the problem, but argue that each one ultimately fails to resolve the problem satisfactorily. I shall then show how Aquinas's more comprehensive theory of the relation between certain forms of love and morality addresses the potential worry by showing how, on his account, the love

characteristic of friendship is at once personal and partial and yet deeply moral. Hence, on his account there is no potential conflict between the special relationships which provide one's life with meaning and purpose and the requirements of morality. Love, according to Aquinas, in a certain sense grounds morality and provides us with normative reasons for promoting the good of certain other persons as part of promoting one's own good and the good in general. In the final chapter I show that although the love characteristic of friendship is personal and partial, the highest form of love—*caritas* or the love characteristic of friendship toward God—is at once partial insofar as it entails normative reasons for prioritizing certain relationships over others, and yet impartial insofar as it entails loving all persons as possessing intrinsic value as creatures made in God's image and loved by God.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Katharyn Waidler is currently an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill. where she has taught courses introductory courses in philosophy and ethics as well as upper division seminars in Ancient and Medieval philosophy for the past four years. Having grown up in Boulder, CO, she went to the University of Colorado where she majored in English Literature and after which taught four years of High School English courses. She became interested in philosophy under the tutelage of David A. Horner who was at the time completing his thesis for a D.Phil. at Oxford University. Her primary interests are in eudaemonist and virtue ethical theories, especially as developed by Thomas Aquinas. After receiving her Ph.D. at Cornell University, she is now interested in putting theory to practice, encouraging others (and herself!) to figure out precisely what it means for individual persons to live the best life for a human being.

For my parents:  
P. Lynne Murray Waidler  
and  
Rick Waidler

*“It is not unfitting if the obligation of gratitude has no limit.”*  
—Thomas Aquinas

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>In DDN</i>	<i>Expositio super Dionysium de divinis Nominibus</i>
<i>In EN</i>	<i>Sententia libri Ethicorum</i>
<i>In Mt.</i>	<i>Commentarium super Matthaeum</i>
<i>In Sent.</i>	<i>Scriptum super libros Sententiarum</i>
<i>SCG</i>	<i>Summa contra Gentiles</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Summa Theologiae</i>

## INTRODUCTION

### A POTENTIAL CONFLICT BETWEEN LOVE AND MORALITY

Bernard Williams has raised a substantive worry concerning potentially conflicting motivations of the moral agent between the impartial and impersonal character of the moral motivations provided by both Kantian and consequentialist moral theories, and the partial and particular concerns which provide structure and meaning to the agent's life. He characterizes the problem as follows:

The deeply disparate character of moral and non-moral motivation, together with the special dignity or supremacy attached to the moral, make it very difficult to assign to those other relations and motivations the significance or structural importance in life which some of them are capable of possessing.<sup>1</sup>

This worry is particularly problematic when it comes to determining what sort of priority the agent should assign to the significant love relationships in her life: "Once morality is there, and also personal relations to be taken seriously, so is the possibility of conflict."<sup>2</sup> Both Kantian and consequentialist moral theories face difficult if not insurmountable challenges in attempting to reconcile this potential conflict between morality, which is characterized as impartial and impersonal, and loving relationships between individuals, which provide the agent with personal motivations and entail partiality.

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1. "Persons, Character, and Morality." *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1981, 2.

2. *Ibid.*, 17.

One problem with attempts to reconcile the potential psychological conflict between love and morality is that both Kantian and consequentialist moral theories characterize love in different ways, focusing on particular forms of love, but failing to account for other forms of love widely acknowledged as genuine. To be sure, disagreement in the recent philosophical literature regarding the essence of love is not terribly surprising given its complex and multiform nature. In order to get a better handle on the nature of love and hence on its relation to practical rationality and to morality, it will prove useful to look back into the history of philosophy, specifically to the thirteenth century, in order to explore in some detail the different kinds of love presented in the works of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas, from his unique vantage point in the history of philosophy, was able to incorporate fundamental insights from both the western Christian and the classical Greek philosophical traditions into an inherently interesting and philosophically sophisticated account of love, an account which clearly appreciates not only love's complexity but also its fundamental role in practical rationality and human motivation.

One of the virtues of Aquinas's theory of love is his recognition of various kinds of love, the different sorts of motivations they provide us with, and a normative account of how our loves ought to be prioritized. In the dissertation, I distinguish between Aquinas's descriptive accounts of the different kinds of love and their role in his moral psychology, ranging from the mere passion or feeling of love to an



intentional relationship which is (at least partly) constitutive of the entire motivation structure of the rational agent.

With respect to the latter sort of love, which Aquinas identifies as the love characteristic of friendship (*amor amicitiae*), he provides normative reasons for prioritizing and acting on behalf of the good of particular persons to whom the agent is closest (under normal conditions). Nonetheless, he takes seriously the command to love our neighbor as ourselves, where the term neighbor is inclusive of all persons. Certainly, the kind of love with whom the agent is most closely connected provides us with motivations distinct from those by which we love *all* persons, an issue which I take up in the final chapter of the dissertation.

The primary aim of the dissertation is to show how Aquinas's account of a particular kind of love, *amor amicitiae*, and its connection with the moral virtues, promises to equip us with certain resources helpful for resolving the apparent conflict between the impersonal obligations of morality and the particular demands of love which contemporary defenders of modern ethical theories have had difficulty reconciling.

#### A. CONTEMPORARY ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT

In the dissertation I analyze and assess what I take to be the three most promising contemporary strategies for reconciling the potential conflict between love and morality. The first strategy is advocated by Peter Railton. Railton argues that the motivations of love and morality need not conflict insofar as the so-called moral point

of view, characterized by consequentialist and Kantian moral theories as impersonal and impartial, can accommodate the concerns of love and friendship, characterized as personal and partial. He adopts a “two-level strategy” according to which the moral agent aims to live her life in accordance with morality’s impartial or impersonal demands on the meta-level. But on the more immediate level, the agent is motivated by her cherished projects and relationships and accordingly prioritizes those projects and persons she cares about most. Nevertheless, on Railton’s theory, these more immediate motivations must ultimately be justified in terms of the impartial moral theory to which the moral agent subscribes. Accordingly, the motivations of love can be reconciled with those of morality only by subordinating the former to the latter, but in such a way that the two sources of motivation have no intrinsic connection with one another.

Harry Frankfurt employs another strategy in addressing potential conflict between the motivations of morality. On his view, all of the rational agent’s personal motivations are ultimately rooted in love. The impersonal demands of morality may indeed conflict with the motivations of love, but Frankfurt does not think the conflict is problematic since he denies that the demands of morality are overriding. Rather, when it comes to the foundations of practical reasoning, the motivations of love trump those of morality. Frankfurt offers a sort of Humean desire-based theory according to which the things one really cares about or loves provide the agent with her most basic motivations and reasons for action. But our most basic loves, on his

account, have no reasons, moral or otherwise—they are merely brute desires. Hence, for Frankfurt, worries about psychological or motivational conflict between the demands of love and the demands of morality simply don't arise.

According to the final strategy I consider, love indeed has reasons insofar as love is a response to the *generic* value of the one loved. Moreover, the reasons for love and the motivations it provides are *moral* reasons insofar as love is understood as a response to *impersonal* moral qualities of the one loved. According to Jennifer Whiting, the best kind of love is modeled on the Aristotelian virtue of friendship according to which the paradigmatic or ideal sort of love between friends is based on the friend's quality of character. Friendship, on her view, is impersonal in the sense that it is *initially justified* in terms of the virtuous character of the beloved friend, and *this* is what makes the relationship morally praiseworthy. David Velleman holds a similar account of what makes love moral insofar as, on his view, love is also a response to a generic quality of the other. Appealing to the Kantian notion of reverence or respect, he argues that love is impartial and hence moral insofar as it is a response to the *bare rational essence* of the one loved whom the rational agent is in a special position to appreciate and recognize as intrinsically valuable.

#### B. AQUINAS'S ACCOUNT OF LOVE AND MORALITY

In the dissertation I argue that each of these contemporary approaches fails to capture the true nature of the relation between love and morality. I argue rather that eudaimonistic moral theories in general, and Aquinas's theory of love in particular,

provide the rational agent with *moral reasons* for prioritizing or showing partiality to certain persons insofar as doing so is constitutive of attaining the agent's own complete fulfillment or perfection, i.e. one's final ultimate end, as an essentially rational and relational being. Aquinas's moral theory actually *entails* partiality insofar as it requires the agent to give special consideration to her own perfection, which entails prioritizing the love of self and those with whom the agent is specially related by virtue of natural bonds (as in the case of family members), or through a shared history and shared values or long term goals (as in the case of close friends).

In keeping with the Aristotelian virtue tradition, proper love of self entails developing virtuous character since such character is necessary for attaining of one's complete good or perfection as a rational being. Aquinas, in keeping with Aristotle, maintains that the rational agent naturally and necessarily seeks her ultimate good of happiness in the sense of the Greek term *eudaimonia*, that is a state of human flourishing in which all of the agent's rational desires are completely satisfied.<sup>3</sup> According to Aquinas, attaining such happiness, the final ultimate end of human beings, requires that the rational agent has a correct understanding of what is essential to human nature, since without such understanding she will fail to grasp what human fulfillment or perfection ultimately consists in.

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3. Aquinas renders the Greek notion of "*eudaimonia*" using the Latin term "*beatitudo*," which carries with it the notion of possessing certain virtues which are necessary for a rational agent to attain the human good.

The ancient eudaimonist tradition holds that human happiness entails possessing a virtuous character so that the rational agent cannot attain happiness without possessing the right kind of character. Nevertheless, she does not seek to acquire virtuous character merely as a means to happiness; rather she seeks to be virtuous as an end in itself, an end that is partly constitutive of her final ultimate end. On both Aristotle and Aquinas's view, friendship plays an important role in developing virtue, assuming the friendship is of the proper nature. Moreover, since human beings are essentially not only rational but also relational beings, the pursuit of one's perfection or the proper love of self entails developing one's friendships. Doing so entails giving special consideration to certain persons, and showing partiality toward one's friends. Hence for both Aquinas and Aristotle, the proper love of self entails both the pursuit of virtue and also certain forms of friendship, both of which are constitutive parts of the agent's happiness or completion *as a human being*.

As mentioned above, Aquinas's theory of love considers different kinds of love ranging from the passion based upon feelings or emotions (*amor* properly speaking), to love based not upon passion but upon choices of the will (*dilectio*), and finally, the sort of love characteristic of friendship (*amor amicitia*). This latter form of love is most relevant to my purposes in the dissertation insofar as it characterizes the best kind of love between persons. One of my primary aims is to show how this form of love is essentially moral not by virtue of being impersonal or impartial, but *by its very nature*

insofar as it is directed toward the good or perfection of both the agent herself and that of the persons loved. It is at once partial and particular but also deeply moral.

*Amor amicitiae* is essentially partial and particular insofar as it entails prioritizing the good for those persons for whom the agent has a special sort of care and concern, starting with one's own good. Aquinas shows how valuing particular persons more than others is required by *amor amicitiae* insofar as the sort of love is directed toward two distinct ends: 1) the objective good of the another person desired for the other's own sake, and 2) a certain kind of union the agent desires to have with the persons she loves. The first end, desiring the good of the other for the other's own sake, may be identified as a form of benevolence which one can have toward any number of persons, even those the agent does not know or is merely acquainted with. The second end, however, union with the one loved, seems to require partiality given that the agent is constitutionally limited to experiencing the sort of union toward which *amor amicitiae* is directed with a limited number of persons. Accordingly, the agent must prioritize certain relationships over others in order to achieve such union. Throughout the dissertation, I argue that this sort of prioritization characteristic of *amor amicitiae* is not only essential to the agent's own complete good or perfection, that is, her happiness, but also to the good of the agent's friends.

### C. THE PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

In the first chapter of the dissertation, I examine Peter Railton's two-level strategy to resolve the potential psychological conflict between love and morality.

Railton agrees with Williams that such a potential conflict exists, characterizing the problem as one of alienation—from oneself and one’s significant relationships. He attempts to resolve the problem by showing how the motivations of love and morality need not conflict by suggesting how the so-called moral point of view can accommodate the concerns of love and friendship. According to his two-level strategy, the moral agent aims to live her life in accordance with what she takes to be the impartial demands of morality, but in a way compatible with prioritizing her most cherished relationships. He argues that one need not adopt the so-called moral point of view except at the meta-level, and this need not be made explicit except upon reflection. Despite its apparent merits, I argue that the strategy is problematic insofar as it severs the motivations of love from those of morality in such a way that love seems to lack any sort of *intrinsic* connection to morality.

In the latter part of chapter one, I indicate that, according to the moral psychology of Aquinas, *amor amicitiae* and morality are intrinsically connected. On his view, the love characteristic of friendship is essentially partial insofar as it involves prioritizing relationships of those closest to us, but is at the same time moral insofar as it entails desiring the good of others for their own sake. Aquinas holds that at the most basic level of motivation, love and morality are inextricably connected. I appeal to his moral theory highlighting the teleological aspect of his account of motivation showing how *all* motivation is in a certain respect ultimately grounded in the love of self. Those who love themselves according to their true nature are motivated toward

their own fulfillment or perfection, that is, to live the best sort of life for a human being. Self-love properly understood provides the principle by which one is motivated to develop virtuous character *as well as* to pursue the particular interests and love relationships constitutive of the agent's final ultimate end. On Aquinas's moral theory, there is no deep disparity between the motivations of love and those of morality since all of the agent's rational motivations are directed toward the same final ultimate end: the happiness or perfection of the moral agent herself, and this essentially includes loving others as ends in themselves.

In the second chapter I examine Frankfurt's account of the reasons *of* love. While Frankfurt acknowledges that the concerns of love and morality do potentially conflict, he does not see this as a cause for concern. On his view, love is what provides the rational agent's life with meaning and determines the volitional structure ultimately grounding all of practical reason. Hence, Frankfurt holds that love and morality do in fact provide us with distinct sources of motivation which potentially conflict, but insists that this is not a problem since love trumps morality as that which grounds practical reason. According to Frankfurt what the agent loves, at the most basic level of motivation, is not subject to rational or moral evaluation. Love on his account is a form of caring—the things we love are those which we cannot help but care about. Accordingly, Frankfurt contends that love provides us with reasons for action, but at the end of the day, love has no reasons aside from the fact that love itself is what imbues our lives with meaning and purpose.



I intend to show that Frankfurt is wrong to think that the love has no reasons and to deny that it is subject to moral evaluation. While he is right to think rational agents aren't necessarily motivated to love particular persons solely on the basis of unique qualities, or on account of their virtuous character, there are nevertheless normative reasons for loving particular persons and prioritizing the wellbeing of those persons. Frankfurt's paradigmatic example of genuine love is that of a parent for his or her small child. Certainly, it seems right to say that parental love is in some sense "brute." Still, this is not to deny that parents have *reasons* for loving their children. Even when it comes to these most basic instinctual sorts of love, there are normative reasons for our caring. This is demonstrated in the fact that we would think it somehow inappropriate and even morally blameworthy for a parent to *fail* to love his own small child, or to prefer someone else's child to his own. Of course, Frankfurt's paradigmatic case of love as parental love for a small child is only one subset of the many kinds of authentic love, the kind in which it is most likely to think that brute instinct rather than reason provides the most fundamental motivations. Still, some of the most important love relationships are those between non-related adult persons. And certainly these sorts of relationships or friendships involve reasons both for choosing one's friends and for supporting and sustaining the friendships one has, even if such reasons serve only as a sort of background condition for supporting and sustaining such relationships. Frankfurt's "no reasons" account of love fails to take into account that we deem it morally blameworthy to fail to love certain persons, and

somehow morally blameworthy to love certain persons with vicious dispositions.

Hence, Frankfurt's denial that love and morality provide us with entirely distinct kinds of motivations is unconvincing.

In the second part of the chapter, I indicate how Aquinas, like Frankfurt, appreciates the fundamental role love plays in determining the motivational structure of rational agents, and even holds that love of self, or the desire for one's complete fulfillment, serves as the final ultimate end of all practical reasoning. He holds that love provides rational agents with reasons, acknowledging that without love, the lives of such agents would fail to have any meaning or purpose. However, Aquinas unlike Frankfurt holds that, aside from the love of self expressed in the desire for happiness toward which every human being is naturally and necessarily inclined, there are objective reasons for loving certain things as opposed to others. On Aquinas's account, love in all of its forms is an appetitive response to some object or end the intellect apprehends as good to be pursued. Accordingly, love has reasons insofar as its formal object is the good in general, while its particular object is some thing we apprehend *as* good. Nevertheless, Aquinas holds that the agent can be wrong about what is good to be pursued, given that not all objects or ends are *objectively* good for us to pursue insofar as we are essentially rational beings; only certain ends will actually promote our good given the kinds of beings we are. Hence Aquinas, unlike Frankfurt, holds that what we love is both rationally and morally evaluable in terms of whether it actually promotes the ultimate fulfillment or perfection of the rational agent. Only by

loving the right sorts of objects and ends can one attain genuine happiness, which Aquinas takes to be the ultimate end of all human beings.

In the third chapter, I address what I take to be the most compelling way in which contemporary philosophers have attempted to address the potential psychological conflict between love and morality. On this view, the motivations of love and morality need not conflict because love and friendship are best understood as responses to *impersonal* features of the person loved. Impersonal features are those qualities possessed by all persons, or at least a particular subset of persons. The reason that impersonal love is considered moral is that it is not based upon either particular qualities of the person, or upon mere brute characteristics which happen to make that person an object of desire for the one loving. Jennifer Whiting provides such an account of friendship, providing an Aristotelian based argument that friendship is a moral relation insofar as it is initially justified by the *moral virtue* of the one loved. David Velleman argues along similar lines that love is a moral emotion insofar as it is a response to an even more impersonal feature of the one loved—their *rational capacities* or capacities for valuation.

I argue that while each of these views is right in holding that the person loved has intrinsic value both as a moral being and as a rational being, they fail to take into account that we have particular reasons for loving particular persons, and the fact that a person possesses such impersonal qualities is not generally the primary reason why we love the persons we do. Moreover, the fact that we love certain persons more than

others is not merely a matter of accidental circumstances according to which we happen to be in the right position to recognize and appreciate the impersonal qualities of particular persons. Rather, we are drawn to particular persons more than others, not necessarily on the basis of their virtue or rationality, but on the basis of having certain natural affinities for particular persons, or on the basis of the shared histories and common purposes we share with certain persons. Hence I argue that love is an essentially *personal* relationship grounded in something more than the other's generic qualities. The natural affinities, shared histories, and common purposes we share with particular persons provide the grounds for the intentional commitments we make to those we love.

My view is that certain forms of love are morally praiseworthy quite apart from being ultimately justified in terms the sort of impartial aims of consequentialist and Kantian theories. What makes love of other persons morally praiseworthy is not that it can be justified in terms of a person's impersonal qualities, but the fact that it is directed toward the good of another person for that person's own sake and further that loving persons in this manner is partly constitutive of one's own completion or perfection as a rational and moral being. Some moral philosophers, however, have argued that in order for love to be morally praiseworthy it is not enough to love another person for her own sake. The moral value of love must consist in its being *entirely* altruistic such that one's love cannot ultimately be directed toward the perfection or completion of the one loving, i.e. the final ultimate end of happiness.

This objection, however, seems unwarranted. I argue that love can be at once other-directed and a constitutive part of the agent's own good or final ultimate end. Certain forms of love are morally praiseworthy simply by virtue of the fact that they are aimed toward ends which are in themselves objectively valuable, both the rational ends of other persons and one's own rational ends.

In the second part of chapter three I argue that Aquinas's moral theory entails both the proper love of oneself and the love of other persons, which entails desiring the good of the other for the other's own sake. According to Aquinas, loving other persons is an extension of self-love; the proper love of self provides both the *grounds* and the *exemplar* for loving other persons. It provides the *grounds* for love insofar as the proper love of self entails possessing certain virtues necessary for attaining one's objective good or perfection as a human being. The most significant of those virtues is love. Hence, proper love of self according to which one seeks to attain one's own objective good entails loving other persons as ends in themselves. The fact that the moral agent loves other persons as ends in themselves precludes loving them instrumentally, i.e., merely as a means to the agent's own happiness. Desiring and pursuing the good of another for the other's own sake entails seeking the other person's *objective good*. It is in the sense the proper love of self also provides the *exemplar* for the genuine love of other persons. According to Aquinas, loving another person with *amor amicitiae* entails desiring the complete or perfect end of the person.

Just as the agent who loves herself properly desires her own objective good, she desires the objective good of the ones she loves.

These three chapters are aimed toward solving the problem raised by Williams concerning the conflicting motivations of an agent's personal projects and in particular the love relationships which provide one's life with meaning, and the impersonal and impartial demands of morality on consequentialist and Kantian theories. I argue that that such theories are wrong to suppose that the demands of morality are in fact impersonal and impartial. Hence, Williams is right in rejecting such theories; nevertheless, he fails to indicate how certain relationships and forms of love are in themselves morally praiseworthy. I show that love, in its paradigmatic form not only provides one's life with meaning and purpose, but that it is also inherently moral.

In particular, I aim to show how Aquinas's *amor amicitiae* is a morally praiseworthy phenomenon insofar as such love is essentially directed toward the objective good of both the agent loving and the one loved. Williams correctly identifies the significance of our most cherished projects and loves in the structure of our motivations. But by characterizing the motivations associated with those ends and persons we care about most deeply as *non-moral*, he fails to see that the potential conflict between the best forms of love and morality is in fact illusory.

In the final chapter of the dissertation, after having argued that love can be at once essentially particular and partial and yet genuinely moral, I suggest how Aquinas's theory of the best kind of love for other persons also entails a sort of

*impartiality*. One of the most significant features of Aquinas's account of the love characteristic of friendship is that in its most perfect form it is grounded in *caritas*, which just is the love characteristic of friendship *for God* (*amor amicitiae ad Deum*). Aquinas characterizes *caritas* as an infused virtue which incorporates both impartial and partial demands upon our attention.

Aquinas's development of the traditional Christian account of the *ordo amoris* provides a detailed normative account of how one's loves are properly ordered based upon the proximity of the person loved to oneself and to God. Yet a striking and distinctive feature of *amor* as understood in the Christian tradition is that *all* persons, even one's enemies, are properly included within its scope. The greatest commandment of Christianity is twofold requiring that one love *God* with all her heart, soul and mind, and that she love her *neighbor* as herself, where the second commandment is viewed as an extension of the first.<sup>4</sup> According to the tradition, the term "neighbor" is inclusive, extending to all persons. According, on Aquinas's view, *caritas* requires not only desiring the good of *all* persons as ends in themselves, but also desiring a sort of union with them based upon the everlasting fellowship of happiness in which all persons will ultimately partake, either actually or potentially. Accordingly, in specifying the order of *caritas*, Aquinas provides a normative account of love ranging from the particular and the partial to the more general and impartial.

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4. Mt. 22:36-40, Cf. Lev. 19:18, Deut. 6:5.

Although the best kind of love ought to be ordered in such a way that prioritizes particular persons closest to the one who loves, it is not limited to such relations.

Love founded on *caritas* is inclusive of *all* persons.



## CHAPTER ONE

### TWO-LEVEL STRATEGIES FOR RESOLVING THE CONFLICT

On Aquinas's account the moral obligations of rational agents are not potentially in conflict with the demands of love because the agent's moral obligations are actually *rooted in love*—the love of other persons, and more basically, the proper love of oneself. Moral obligations, according to Aquinas, are grounded in a proper understanding of self-love; self-love, correctly understood, gives rise to moral virtue as well as the love of other persons *for the other's own sake*. The moral agent desires and promotes the good of other persons as ends in themselves, not merely as instrumental to achieving her own happiness or perfection. Nevertheless, loving other persons for their own sake is partly constitutive of and hence necessary for attaining happiness.

Contemporary moral theorists since the latter part of the twentieth century have had their hands full attempting to reconcile an apparent disparity between the impersonal and impartial requirements of morality, which we are obligated to fulfill in order to be good, and the particular requirements of our individual personal projects and commitments which provide our lives with meaning and purpose. Emphasis on the impartial and the universalizable are the respective hallmarks of the two most prominent modern moral theories, consequentialism and Kantianism. Rather than favoring our own interests and the interests of those most closely connected to us, say through family ties, group affinities or patriotic loyalties, the so-called moral point of view requires us to be unbiased, giving equal consideration to all persons and favoring

no one in particular.<sup>1</sup> Many contemporary philosophers identify the moral point of view with an impartial point of view from which, according to Bentham's famous dictum, "everybody [is] to count for one, nobody for more than one."<sup>2</sup> But taking an impartial perspective seems to run the risk of putting us at odds with those things we really care about—the projects and commitments around which we organize our lives and which make them meaningful. The danger is that when we take the moral point of view, our own particular interests and concerns must be considered as no more significant than the interests and concerns of anyone else; hence it appears that living up to the demands of morality does not allow room for special attention to our own cares or even to those of our closest friends and loved ones. For this reason, both consequentialist and Kantian theories give rise to a sort of psychological conflict or inner disharmony within the moral agent, potentially alienating her from herself and from the persons she cares about.

As indicated, Bernard Williams has been particularly influential in pressing this sort of criticism demonstrating how the problem cuts across some of the differences between consequentialist and Kantian moral theories.<sup>3</sup> Consequentialist moral

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1. To be sure, there is a wide range of opinions concerning the nature of the moral point of view and its relation to the "impartial" (or "impersonal") point of view. For the purposes of this introduction, I shall not get into the details of this debate, but rather assume that there is a deep connection between morality and impartiality while keeping in mind that part of my larger project will be to show how certain kinds of partiality are also fundamental to morality.

2. Quoted in John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ed. M. Warnock (London: Fontana, 1962): 319.

3. Williams initially introduced this sort of psychological or motivational conflict as a

theories evaluate actions in terms of outcomes; roughly, the consequentialist holds that the morally right action is the one which makes the greatest contribution to the overall good.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, consequentialism appears, at least *prima facie*, to require that the moral agent be rigorously impartial insofar as it obliges her to give equal consideration to the interests of each and every individual, evaluating all of her actions in terms of what, under the circumstances, will contribute the most to the overall good. Accordingly, applying the consequentialist standard to the moral agent's practical deliberations appears to preclude paying special attention to her own interests and ends as such and likewise the interests and ends of those closest to her. For this reason, consequentialist moral theories have been criticized for bringing with them a sort of alienation from oneself and from one's most cherished relationships.

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problem for utilitarian moral theories in particular. Cf. "A Critique of Utilitarianism," in J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism for and Against*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973). Later he went on to show how it presents a problem for modern moral theories in general. See, for example, "Morality and the Emotions." *Problems of the Self: Philosophical Papers 1956-1972* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973): 207-229, and "Persons, Character, and Morality." *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973-1980*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1-19. Other contemporary philosophers who have raised concerns along these lines include Michael Stocker "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," *Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1976): 453-466, and "Friendship and Duty: Some Difficult Relations." *Identity, Character, and Morality: Essays in Moral Psychology*, ed. Owen Flanagan and Amélie Oskenberg Rorty (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991): 219-233; Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints." *Journal of Philosophy* 79 (1982): 419-439, and "Morality and Partiality" *Philosophical Perspectives* 6 (1992): 243-259; and John Deigh, "Morality and Personal Relations," *The Sources of Moral Agency: Essays in Moral Psychology and Freudian Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 1-17.

4. I.e. the good of the whole or the impersonal good which is comprised of the interests and ends of individual persons and in which each person's interests and ends count just as much as and no more than those of every other person. For purposes of this project I shall limit my discussion of consequentialism to act-consequentialism, which is ostensibly the most defensible form of the theory.

Williams famously contends that consequentialism undermines the moral agent's personal integrity by alienating her from herself and her first-order or "ground projects," those long-term plans and commitments that provide her life with unity and purpose.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, consequentialism has been criticized for alienating the moral agent from those persons most closely connected to her insofar as it appears to discourage partiality, an essential feature of close friendships and other intimate relationships.<sup>6</sup>

The problem arises in a slightly different form in Kantian moral theories. Giving persons equal consideration in Kantian ethics does not necessarily require attributing equal weight to the *interests* of each and every individual, but rather attributing equal weight to the *rights* of each individual, and this is quite plausibly considered to be compatible with paying special attention to one's own interests as well as those of the persons most closely connected with us.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, Kantian moral theories have been understood as emphasizing the significance of impartiality by virtue of the central role attributed to the universalizability requirement. Roughly

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5. "A Critique of Utilitarianism," 110-112.. Cf. Neera Badhwar Kapur, "Why It Is Wrong to Be Always Guided by the Best: Consequentialism and Friendship." *Ethics* 101 (1991): 483-504, Samuel Scheffler, *The Rejection of Consequentialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), and Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories."

6. Cf. Lawrence Blum, *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), John Cottingham, "Ethics and Impartiality" *Philosophical Studies* 43 (1983): 83-99, John Kekes. "Morality and Impartiality," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 18 (1981): 295-303, Michael Slote, *Common Sense Morality and Consequentialism* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985).

7. J. David Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion." *Ethics* 109 (1999): 340. Cf. Marcia Baron, "Impartiality and Friendship." *Ethics* 101 (1991): 836-857.

stated, this is the requirement that the moral agent ought always to act only on principles which can be universalized or, in other words, principles which could be regarded as appropriate for any other moral agent under similar circumstances for deciding which course of action to pursue.<sup>8</sup> The requirement that the moral agent act only on universalizable principles entails a sort of impartiality by demanding that she take a distinct perspective on her reasons and motives for action. She must be consistent in the sense that she must evaluate her own reasons for action in accordance with the same standards by which she evaluates the reasons of any other moral agent. This seems to entail that all of the moral agent's motivations and practical deliberations must be characterized by a sort of "moral mindedness" which threatens to interfere with the sorts of reasons and motives by which persons are generally thought to be actually moved—specifically, those motives which arise from one's particular projects and life-defining commitments. Hence, Kantian moral theories, like consequentialist theories, appear to give rise to a psychological or motivational conflict between the agent's moral obligations and her personal cares and concerns.

#### A. RAILTON: SOPHISTICATED CONSEQUENTIALISM

Peter Railton attempts to answer this psychological conflict charge by demonstrating how a fully consequentialist moral theory can allow for prerogatives

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8. Here I am following Velleman's interpretation of the Categorical Imperative developed in "The Voice of Conscience," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 99 (1999): 57-76.

which do in fact permit, and indeed may even require, the moral agent to pay special attention to her ground projects and life-defining commitments, insofar as doing so promotes the most good overall.<sup>9</sup> While this debate is not strictly about love, a person's loves are certainly among the most important of her life-defining commitments; hence the significance of this debate to how we conceive of the relation between love and morality should be fairly clear. I shall examine Railton's argument for the compatibility of the impartial and impersonal standards of consequentialism with the special attention required to support and maintain one's ground-projects, focusing especially on the implications of his argument for the particular and partial demands of love. While Railton's account is directly concerned with a consequentialist moral theory, he maintains that his strategy can be utilized *mutatis mutandis* in order to defend a Kantian moral theory as well.<sup>10</sup>

Railton considers the sort of problem raised above as a form of alienation both from oneself and from those persons and commitments that provide one's life with meaning and value. He argues that, developed in the right way, consequentialism need not entail this sort of alienation, except to an appropriate degree necessary for

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9. Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 13 (1984): 134-172.

10. Railton, 148. For now I will take this point as a given, while acknowledging that precisely how Railton's argument applies to Kantian ethics requires the sort of attention which lies outside the scope of this chapter.

preserving individual autonomy.<sup>11</sup> His strategy is to distinguish between what he calls “subjective consequentialism” and “objective consequentialism.” He uses the term “subjective consequentialism” to describe the view according to which the moral agent, as a matter of course, ought consciously to make each and every decision based upon a deliberation determining which course of action she believes will in fact promote the most overall good. In other words, the rational agent behaves as a subjective consequentialist insofar as she appeals to a consequentialist decision-making process by which she attempts to determine in any given situation which course of action promotes the most good. She then acts in accordance with this determination. Objective consequentialism, on the other hand, does not specify any particular decision making process, but concerns rather the *criterion* by which a course of action is morally evaluable. Any given action or course of action is morally right just in case it *in fact* promotes the most good. The critical difference is that objective consequentialism, unlike subjective consequentialism, does not require adhering to any particular decision-making process or mode of deliberation, but concerns only the *outcome* of any particular course of action. Railton introduces the term “sophisticated consequentialist” to denote a moral agent committed to objective consequentialism, but not subjective consequentialism: the sophisticated consequentialist seeks to live a

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11. Railton maintains that some degree of alienation for our ground projects and commitments is crucial to autonomy given that many of them are formed pre-theoretically or unconsciously. Holding our basic cares and concerns up to rational scrutiny is required for them to be chosen autonomously, 147-8.

life that in fact promotes the most good, but is not committed to any particular process of deliberation.<sup>12</sup> He argues that the sophisticated consequentialist is able to avoid the problem of alienation since she is not committed to the decision making process to which the subjective consequentialist is committed, contending that it is the *process of deliberation* which gives rise to the problem.

To illustrate how the decision-making process of a subjective consequentialist alienates the rational agent from the persons he values the most, Railton considers the example of a man named John who attempts to justify the special attention he pays to his wife Linda from the so-called “moral point of view” of the subjective consequentialist. In order to justify this attention, John appeals not only to his genuine affection for his Linda, but to the fact that he is in a special position to know and to look out for her needs, and derives satisfaction from doing so. Moreover, he makes a global appeal to his belief that the world as a whole is better off if people take good care of the persons they love. Railton points out that John’s broadly consequentialist justification for his disposition toward Linda is not only likely to strike his Linda as cold and impersonal, thus alienating him from her, but also indicates a sort of alienation of John from his own affections and actions. The problem arises because his rational deliberative self is unnaturally divorced from his affective self insofar as he

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12. 152-3.



views such affections apart from their cognitive content. Indeed, John's alienation from his own affections is what *causes* his alienation from Linda.<sup>13</sup>

Railton contends that this is a problem for morality insofar as many ethicists contend that the moral agent is required to deliberate about which course of action should be taken from the impersonal moral point of view, or the "total assessment position."<sup>14</sup> If the moral point of view requires that the moral agent deliberate from this sort of global standpoint, then he must provide some sort of global justification regarding whether or not he is morally permitted to pay special attention to his own projects or the needs of a particular person rather than giving equal attention to the needs of all. Hence if being moral is a matter of taking this so-called moral point of view, then the moral agent is forced into the situation where he is alienated from his deep commitments, the persons he loves, and ultimately himself in a way that undermines his psychological well being and that of his loved ones.

Railton's aim is to show that consequentialism need not force the moral agent into this sort of alienation. He contends that the sophisticated consequentialist, by rejecting subjective consequentialism while maintaining objective consequentialism, is able to live his life in a way that in fact promotes the most overall good but, unlike the subjective consequentialist, is able to do so in a manner compatible with giving

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13. 135-136.

14. Williams, *Critique*, 130.

priority to his most valued personal commitments and affections thus avoiding the problem of alienation. Since the sophisticated consequentialist does not appeal to any sort of consequentialist calculation at the level of actual deliberation, he can make decisions based upon the projects and personal commitments he truly cares about—those things which give his life meaning and purpose. Yet since he is committed to living an objectively consequentialist life, the sophisticated consequentialist is willing, when pressed, to question his projects and commitments from the more global and impersonal moral point of view. So long as he is able to justify his life as one which *in fact* contributes to the most overall good, he is acting morally according to the criterion of rightness of objective consequentialism. Accordingly, the sophisticated consequentialist is able to live a genuinely moral life, but one which does not alienate him from the commitments and persons he really cares about.

In order to illustrate this, Railton appeals to a scenario parallel to the one sketched above. He imagines a new character, Juan, who unlike John is a sophisticated consequentialist. When asked about the special attention he pays to his wife, Juan would answer much differently than John, the subjective consequentialist of the previous example: Juan would say that it's because he *loves* Linda and, given their shared history, it's almost part of him to give her needs and interests special consideration. Juan does not need to deliberate about whether or not to prioritize Linda's well being in a given situation from some impersonal total assessment position. Nevertheless, *when pressed*, Juan could still give an answer justifying a course

of action which prioritizes Linda's well being by appealing to the criterion of objective consequentialism. Railton suggests that Juan might reason as follows: overall the world is a better place with the kinds of close relationships such as the one he has with Linda, and if every decision were based upon a deliberation about what would promote the most good, such relationships would hardly be possible since such deliberation would inevitably give rise to the sort of alienation from one's affections and one's loved ones described above.<sup>15</sup> So, it turns out somewhat paradoxically that actually promoting the most good overall, the goal of objective consequentialism, sometimes *requires* that the moral agent stop deliberating as a subjective consequentialist. If every moral agent were to deliberate about each and every course of action, consciously having to justify prioritizing certain persons or commitments in given situations, there would be more alienation among such agents from themselves, their commitments and their loved ones. Taken into the objective consequentialist calculation, the net result may actually be less good overall.

The upshot of Railton's argument, then, is that the sophisticated consequentialist rejects subjective consequentialism to the extent that it undermines the kinds of relationships and commitments that make life meaningful and contribute to human happiness. Nonetheless, he upholds the criterion of rightness held by objective consequentialism, even if his practical deliberations are not based on

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15. 150-151.

consequentialist considerations. What makes the sophisticated consequentialist a genuine *consequentialist* is that he abides by the following counterfactual condition: “while he ordinarily does not do what he does simply for the sake of doing what’s right, he would seek to lead a different sort of life if he did not think this were morally defensible.”<sup>16</sup> Railton, then, essentially advocates what I take to be a two-level strategy in defense of consequentialism. At the level of deliberation, the moral agent need not (and perhaps ought not) think as a consequentialist. But at the meta-level, the level at which one evaluates one’s life as a whole, the moral agent is a consequentialist in that he seeks to live a life that in fact promotes the most good overall.

#### B. PROBLEMS WITH THE TWO-LEVEL STRATEGY

One problem with Railton’s theory is that it may no longer be genuinely consequentialist. He himself acknowledges that it may strike us as counterintuitive that objective consequentialism actually entails the rejection of subjective consequentialism. Indeed, it appears to some philosophers that the rejection of subjective consequentialism undermines consequentialism altogether. For example, when considering this sort of two-level strategy as a defense of utilitarianism<sup>17</sup> Bernard Williams famously objects, “If utilitarianism...determines nothing of how thought in the world is conducted, demanding merely that the way in which it is

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16. Railton, 151.

17. According to Williams, utilitarianism is the view that the right thing to do is whatever will promote the most happiness, i.e. “eudaimonistic consequentialism” (*Critique*, 80).

conducted must be for the best, then I hold that utilitarianism had disappeared and that the residual position is not worth calling utilitarianism.”<sup>18</sup> It does appear that if consequentialism must “usher itself from the scene” at the level of deliberation about which course of action is the best in a particular situation this undermines at least part of what makes consequentialism an attractive moral theory—for instance, the practical guidance it provides when it comes to decision making, especially when there are conflicting interests at stake.

In reply to Williams, Railton appeals to his distinction between subjective consequentialism (a method of deliberation which reliably guides our decisions) and objective consequentialism (the criteria which must be met for a course of action to be morally right) arguing that only the latter is essential to consequentialism. He contends that objective consequentialism is a genuinely consequentialist theory in that it holds that the standard of rightness is that which in fact promotes the most good. While it is true that objective consequentialism may not play much of a role when it comes to deliberating about the courses of action with respect to the moral agent’s ground projects and personal commitments, the objective consequentialist would presumably give these up or change the role they play in his motivational structure if his way of life did not meet the counterfactual condition that, upon reflection, he can

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18. *Critique*, 135. Rawls holds a similar position: “What we want to know is which conception of justice characterizes our considered judgments in reflective equilibrium and best serves as the public moral basis of society. Unless one maintains that this conception is given by the principle of utility, one is not a utilitarian,” (*A Theory of Justice*, 182).

give an account of how his actions are compatible with living an objectively consequentialist life.<sup>19</sup>

Still, one might worry that Railton's strategy gives morality a primarily negative role—it merely provides a check on the life of the moral agent. Although the objective consequentialist does not consciously evaluate whether each and every one of her actions meets the criterion of objective consequentialism, she reflects upon particular actions or courses of action for various reasons. For instance, when she is pressed by someone to give an account of the moral defensibility of her actions, or because, in general, she thinks it worthwhile to occasionally reflect upon whether her actions actually meet the criterion of objective consequentialism, or because she is faced with some new moral problem which requires further consideration of the rightness of her actions.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, nothing about objective consequentialism actually *requires* that she always, or even often, reflect upon whether her actions contribute to her aim of living an objectively consequentialist life.<sup>21</sup>

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19. Railton makes this point with respect to his analogous account of objective hedonism: “The sophisticated hedonist's motivational structure should therefore meet a counterfactual condition: he need not always act for the sake of happiness, since he may do various things for their own sake or for the sake of others, but he would not act as he does if it were not compatible with his leading an objectively hedonistic life,” (Railton, 145, cf. note 29, p. 158).

20. Cf. Butler's account of reflecting upon our life “in a cool hour,” (Sermon 11, §21). I am grateful to Nick Sturgeon for challenging me to think further about this.

21. Of course, Railton might respond that it is part of living an objectively consequentialist account that the moral agent adopt a standing policy to occasionally take stock of whether or not, in general, her actions contribute to promoting the most good overall. However, I see nothing in his account that *requires* her to do so, or to do so often enough, that she meet this goal.

Moreover, without some sort of standing policy to take this sort or reflective attitude toward one's actions in general, objective consequentialism does not provide much practical guidance to the agent in determining which sorts of actions, projects, or relationships to prioritize in order to attain the goal of promoting the most good overall. According to sophisticated consequentialism, the test of morality lies merely in meeting the counterfactual condition that the moral agent *would* seek to live a different sort of life if she were to discover that hers was not morally defensible, because, in fact, it fails to promote the most good. But Railton does not indicate what role, if any, morality has to play in coming to have the sorts of projects, commitments and relationships the sophisticated consequentialist chooses in the first place. If, with respect to such fundamental matters, the agent does not bring consequentialist considerations into play except upon occasions where, for whatever reason, she considers whether or not particular actions contribute to the overall good, then it seems difficult to see how the moral agent will actually achieve her aim of living an objectively consequentialist life.

A deeper worry concerning the sort of two-level strategy Railton advocates is that it still leaves us with a self potentially divided between a personal and an impersonal point of view. According to objective consequentialism, the moral value of the agent's life is determined solely in terms of promoting the most overall good, but this does not necessarily account for the intrinsic *moral* value of the agent's particular project, commitments, and relationships. Although Railton's account of objective

consequentialism attempts to account for the intrinsic non-moral value of one's particular commitments or relationships, he does consider these as possessing *moral* value.

One of the primary advantages of Railton's version of consequentialism is that, unlike some of the more dominant forms of consequentialism according to which the only intrinsic good is a subjective state (e.g. happiness), Railton advocates a pluralist account of human value. He allows that the best overall good for a human being includes an aggregate of goods, which he takes to be intrinsically non-morally valuable. Among such goods he includes happiness, friendship, knowledge, purposeful activity, autonomy, solidarity, respect and beauty.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, Railton's account of objective consequentialism holds that the criterion for a course of action to be morally right is that it promotes the most intrinsic good where such good is inclusive of the aforementioned intrinsic non-moral values.<sup>23</sup>

While Railton maintain that one's projects, commitments, and special relationships have intrinsic value, he nevertheless considers their value to be *non-moral*. According to even sophisticated consequentialism, they are morally evaluable not in

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22. 148-150.

23. Railton claims that such non-moral goods need not be ranked lexically, but each is to be allotted a certain weight in the overall good thus making it possible to determine "trade-offs among values" (150). He does not however specify how such weights might be distributed. Such a lack of specification and clarity makes it difficult if not impossible to determine how any particular course of action contributes to the overall intrinsic good and thus difficult if not impossible to determine how the courses of action one chooses over a lifetime are in fact morally evaluable.



terms of their intrinsic moral worth but rather in terms of being part of a life which upholds the consequentialist standard of rightness, i.e. a life that promotes the most overall intrinsic, but non-moral, good. Nevertheless, it seems to me that in keeping with objective consequentialism, the life promoting the most overall good must be a life that prioritizes the projects, commitments etc., which maximize the non-moral goods of *all* persons. In order to achieve such a life, the agent, despite rejecting subjective consequentialism, must nevertheless determine at some level how she ought to prioritize certain projects and commitments over others in terms of how well her priorities promote objective consequentialism. This means that, upon reflection, she must also take into account the intrinsic value of *other persons'* projects, commitments and relationships as well as her own when determining the moral value of the courses of action she in fact pursues.

Hence it would appear that Railton's account of sophisticated consequentialism does not really solve the problem of alienation, since living an objectively consequentialist life still leaves the moral agent potentially divided between courses of action which prioritize the projects and commitments which give *her own* life meaning and purpose, and the impersonal standard by which she must evaluate such projects and commitments, if they are to be justified in terms of objective consequentialism, given that objective consequentialism entails promoting the most intrinsic good *overall*. The essential worry here is that, in keeping with the objective consequentialist criterion for the moral rightness of an act, the agent cannot merely be concerned

about her own intrinsic non-moral goods, but must also take into account those of all other people, since moral rightness includes valuing the intrinsic non-moral goods of *all* persons.

However, Railton's objective consequentialism has the resources to resolve this worry. He argues that promoting the most good overall, i.e. the best consequences for the most people, may entail the agent's being a certain *sort of person*, i.e. the sort of person who acts from a stable *disposition* or *character* according to which he prioritizes commitments to particular persons and acting in accordance with being this sort of person, all things considered, does in fact maximize the most intrinsic good overall even when a particular action performed by such a person does not. Railton strengthens this claim arguing that "the objective act-consequentialist can approve of dispositions, characters, or commitments to rules that are sturdy in the sense [that they] do not merely supplement a commitment to act for the best, but sometimes *override* it, so that one knowingly does what is contrary to maximizing the good," (159, emphasis mine).<sup>24</sup> That is, the best sort of person from the act-consequentialist point of view will sometimes perform the wrong action. In support of this claim, he considers again the case of Juan and Linda. In this scenario, the couple has a commuter marriage. Generally, one of the two travels to see the other every other

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24. According to Railton, his account of sophisticated consequentialism does not entail advocating an indirect sort of consequentialism such as trait consequentialism or rule consequentialism (both of which he rejects), but is still a genuine form of act consequentialism, albeit one that takes into account the character of the moral agent.

weekend. But on one of the off weeks, Juan notices that Linda is feeling particularly depressed. Juan must determine whether or not, under such circumstances, it would be better for him to spend money on a ticket to go see Linda, or whether the money would be better spent by writing a check to OXFAM, thus significantly contributing to the quality of life of an entire village. Clearly in this case, more *overall good* would result from Juan's writing the check to OXFAM. Nevertheless, Railton suggests that, although the best *action* from a consequentialist standpoint would be to write the check, *being the best sort of person* from a consequentialist standpoint overrides the agent's obligation to performing the right action. All things considered, being the sort of person who prioritizes the needs of his loved ones will, at the end of the day, promote the most overall good.

But Railton's suggestion does not necessarily provide much guidance as to whether or not and under what particular circumstance the agent should perform the best *action* from the consequentialist point of view, or instead act according to the sort of character attributed to *the best sort of person*, even when this would result in performing the wrong action. Railton acknowledges this tension in a footnote stating that "for an act-consequentialist to say that an action is not right is not to say that it is without merit, only that it is not the very best act available to the agent."<sup>25</sup> He contends that the act consequentialist may share the sort of character assessment

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25. 160, fn. 30.

according to which it would be *more valuable* for Juan visit Linda in her distressed state as opposed to writing the check to OXFAM. Railton suggests that the intuitive sense of *rightness* in doing so “may be due less to an evaluation of the act itself than to a reaction to the sort of character a person would have to have in order to stay home and write a check to OXFAM under the circumstances.”<sup>26</sup> In a later article, Railton argues, appealing to a similar case, that the act consequentialist must hold a normative view of the agent’s character, contending that “the best way to achieve good results almost always involves taking seriously the development of firm character, where ‘taking seriously’ includes embracing a character even though it will sometimes lead to wrong action.”<sup>27</sup> It certainly seems right that the act consequentialist can and should be able to evaluate sorts of persons as well as particular actions, and may conclude that under certain circumstances the right action is one that the best sort of person would perform, in this case, Juan, being the right sort of person, would never neglect the needs of Linda if he could help it.

But here it would seem that Railton is guilty of equivocating about the sense of “rightness” at issue. Railton himself admits that, on his account, the act consequentialist tends to treat moral “rightness” as a term of art insofar as he tends to “pull out one contributor to value and one component of moral evaluation linking

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26. Ibid.

27. “How Thinking About Character and Utilitarianism Might Lead to Rethinking the Character of Utilitarianism” in *Acts, Values and Norms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 233.

them in a fairly simple, direct or indirect, way.”<sup>28</sup> As Railton points out, this tendency leads to a dilemma. Either the act-consequentialist, by making “all-things-considered obligation” a term of art, removes obligation from reasonable expectation,<sup>29</sup> or if he retains the familiar sense of the role of the term “rightness,” the right action requires too much of the agent, both in terms of what is expected of him, and what he will be criticized for failing to do.<sup>30</sup> In the case of Juan deciding to buy the ticket to visit Linda, his action may be morally *right* in the sense that it is based upon possessing a certain sort of character, but morally *wrong*, insofar as his decision fails to promote the most overall intrinsic goodness. Railton admits as much, conceding that he was inclined here to “pick and choose among the connections the expression ‘right’—as used by an act utilitarian—would retain within existing usage.”<sup>31</sup> The problem, then, lies in determining which sense of “rightness” the act consequentialist should prioritize. Many (perhaps most) would agree that Juan is acting “rightly” by prioritizing the needs of his wife given that this is what the best sort of person would do given the circumstances. But in other sorts of situations, it may not be as clear when the act consequentialist ought to act in terms of the best sort of character, and

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28. Ibid. 238.

29. Railton has in view the connection between the sense of “rightness,” and one’s “all things considered moral obligations.” The latter concerns traditional notions of what may be reasonably expected of the moral agent, what is praiseworthy and blameworthy, etc., notions which the act consequentialist is inclined to connect with moral rightness.

30. Ibid. 238-9; Cf. Bernard Williams, *Critique*.

31. 248, fn. 19.

when he ought to act in terms of promoting the most overall intrinsic good. Thus, while Railton's account of sophisticated consequentialism may be able to take into account the character of the moral agent, there is a cost. That cost is the practical ambiguity involved in knowing when to act in accordance with having the best sort of character when doing so violates the norm set by objective consequentialism, the action which will promote the most overall intrinsic good.

In applying Railton's account of objective consequentialism to the special case of love, it would appear that an action which prioritizes persons the agent loves, and the role love plays in the agent's motivational structure is *morally* good only to the extent that such loves are part of a life that in fact promotes the most intrinsic good overall. The agent is entitled to pay special attention to particular persons so long as the counterfactual condition is met, i.e. the moral agent is willing to step back from her cherished relationships in order to consider whether prioritizing such relationships is in fact morally justifiable insofar as they are part of a life that promotes the most overall intrinsic good. The deep worry about this sort of view in relation to love is that despite the attempt to avoid appealing to consequentialist calculations at the level of particular deliberations and choices, the agent must appeal to the objective consequentialist standard of rightness at a more global level in order to justify actions stemming from being a certain sort of person who prioritizes those he loves, since such loves are not *morally* evaluable in their own right. Accordingly, the objective consequentialist must still ultimately determine the value of her love relationships in

terms of the consequences which ensue from being the sort of person who prioritizes them. He thus remains potentially divided between the so-called impersonal moral point of view from which he determines the intrinsic but *non-moral* value of his loves in terms of the overall consequences of being the sort of person who prioritizes his love relationships, and the personal point of view according to which he prioritizes such relationships simply because they are important to him in their own right without having to consider the overall good which results from doing so.

Ultimately, then, even though Railton attributes intrinsic value to love and to being the sort of person who prioritizes the persons he loves, love itself is not *morally* evaluable except in terms of its overall consequences. But if my arguments are correct, Railton does not, in the end, resolve the problem of potential conflict between acting from the impersonal point of view and the personal point of view. According to the former one's actions are *morally* right just in case they in fact promote the most intrinsic good overall, even when this takes into account being the best sort of person who may sometime fail to perform the morally right action so long as he doing so on the basis of having the right sort of character. On the other hand, one acting from the personal point of view prioritizes particular persons, commitments and relationships simply because they are important to him without any further justification. The problem this potential conflict highlights is that the objective consequentialist must still (even if he does so only on occasion) evaluate his actions from a global perspective in determining when he ought to act in accordance with being the best

sort of person who sometimes does what is morally *wrong* in prioritizing his loves and personal commitments, and when he ought to act in accordance with what is morally *right*, i.e. performing the action that will promote the most intrinsic good overall. The objective consequentialist is thus not immune to the problem of alienation insofar as he is required, from the impersonal point of view, to make such determinations.

What I take to be the primary problem with Railton's account of objective consequentialism with respect to love is that, although he takes the agent's loves and personal commitments to possess intrinsic value, he does not take them to possess *moral* value. This leads to the sort of potential conflict described above. But it seems reasonable to think that the agent's cherished relationships and commitments are not only intrinsically but also morally valuable. This is precisely the view that Aquinas holds. On his account of certain kinds of love, the moral agent is not required to meet some impersonal criterion of the rightness of moral action which can potentially conflict with being the best sort of person. This is because certain sorts of love provide the very basis of morality. Our standing dispositions and actions are morally praiseworthy or blameworthy to the extent that *grounded* in or motivated by the right sorts of loves. Hence, I turn now to consider Aquinas's views about the relation between love and morality.

### C. AQUINAS ON LOVE AND MORALITY

According to Aquinas's moral psychology, love between persons—in particular the love characteristic of friendship—plays a foundational role in his account of the moral



life. As a *eudaimonist*, Aquinas holds that morality consists in pursuing the ends constitutive of happiness or the best kind of life for a human being. All of the projects, commitments, and cherished relationships the fully rational agent pursues,<sup>32</sup> she pursues ultimately for the sake of achieving happiness, where happiness is an objective state which entails becoming fully actualized as a rational or intellectual being. Hence for Aquinas there is no artificial psychological divide between the supposedly impersonal and impartial demands of morality and those particular and partial projects or commitments the fully rational agent really cares about, given that the fully rational agent will care about those things which actually contribute to living the best sort of life for a human being. *All* such considerations play an important role in the motivational structure of the moral agent and *all* such considerations are ultimately evaluable in terms of how well they promote one's final ultimate end, the objective happiness or perfection of the moral agent. Accordingly, moral agency extends beyond the sorts of actions or courses of action generally thought of as comprising the moral life—those actions which have been described by the modern moral theories of consequentialism and Kantianism as requiring that moral agents adopt an impersonal and impartial point of view. On Aquinas's account, morality pertains to the entire motivational structure and character of the individual moral

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32. I specify that this is the case with the fully rational agent because although Aquinas holds that all rational agents naturally and necessarily pursue happiness as their final end, the agent can be wrong about what is constitutive of genuine human happiness and thus fail to live a fully rational life. Aquinas's provides a normative account of the ends a rational agent *ought* to pursue in order to attain that which will actually perfect or complete her in accordance with her essential nature.

agent. Accordingly, all of the agent's deliberations and choices are to some degree or another morally evaluable, especially those commitments and relationships which form the core of the agent's motivational structure and are potentially constitutive of the agent's happiness, depending upon their moral value. Hence, on Aquinas's view, there is no deep disparity between the fully rational agent's moral and non-moral motivations since morality pertains to her entire motivational structure.

With this account of Aquinas's moral psychology in the background we are now in a position to consider how particular love relationships, in particular the love characteristic of friendship (the paradigmatic form of love for another person), is deeply moral insofar as such relationships comprise the very core of the moral agent's motivational structure and are hence key to her perfection *qua* moral agent. That certain forms of self love and the love of particular persons play such a central role in his moral theory is key to understanding how Aquinas must not only allow for, but positively *require* that the moral agent pay special attention to the particular persons one is specially committed to, actively seeking their well being as an end in itself. Nevertheless, although Aquinas's moral theory does advocate showing partiality to certain persons to whom we have special commitments and to whom we are most closely connected, his theory importantly extends beyond those particular commitments to include *all* persons insofar as all persons are appropriately considered within the scope of love. I will come back to develop this aspect of Aquinas's moral theory in the final chapter of the dissertation, but for now it is worth noting that a

striking and distinctive feature of love as it is understood in the Christian tradition to which Aquinas belongs is that all persons are to be loved as actually or potentially sharing in the everlasting happiness found in a loving personal relationship with God. Aquinas's theory of love takes seriously the greatest commandment of Christianity—the twofold injunction requiring that one love God with all her heart, soul and mind, and that she love her neighbor as herself.<sup>33</sup> Since the term “neighbor” is inclusive, extending to all persons as actual or potential participants in everlasting happiness, Christian love requires that the moral agent desire the good of all persons. Aquinas upholds this impartial commandment of Christianity, but does so in a way that nevertheless requires paying special attention to those particular persons with whom a person is most closely connected, as he makes clear in his account specifying the order of *caritas* (*ST* II-II 26.6). Accordingly, the moral agent should prioritize those persons with whom she has a special relationship. But she must also intend the good of *all* other persons within her scope of influence; moreover, her obligation to do so extends not only to persons in special need, but in accordance with the Christian tradition, even to persons she considers to be her enemies.<sup>34</sup>

So Aquinas's moral theory does in one sense have an impartial element—the fully rational agent is required to include all persons within the scope of love and

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33. Mt. 22:36-40; Cf. Lev. 19:18, Deut. 6:5. For Aquinas's commentary on this passage see *In Mt.*, cap. 22 l. 4.

34. Cf. *Car.* VIII; *ST* II-II 23.1 ad 2, 25.8.

hence to promote the well being of all. Still, Aquinas allows and indeed requires that special attention be given to those particular commitments and persons most central in the life of an individual. My intention in what follows is to develop the particular and personal aspect of Aquinas's moral theory demonstrating how his theory, unlike consequentialist and Kantian moral theories, provides the moral agent with reasons to prioritize particular persons and commitments in their own right and that doing so is *morally* valuable.

It is worth pointing out from the beginning that Aquinas's theory of love is not a desire-based theory. As I will demonstrate in detail in chapter two, Aquinas provides a normative account of the appropriate objects of desire and how one's desires are to be properly ordered in the life of the rational agent who, by virtue of her rationality, naturally and necessarily seeks to attain her own genuine happiness or perfection.<sup>35</sup> As will become clear further on in the chapter where I exposit Aquinas's descriptive account of desire, which he identifies as the inclination of an individual toward a particular object or end *initiated* by love. But love itself is deemed morally praiseworthy or blameworthy according to the objective value of the beloved object or end. This requires that the rational agent apprehend the objective value of the object or end through the intellect. The apprehension of a particular object or end as something good to be pursued is what gives rise to desire and is itself rationally evaluable.

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35. I will argue for a rationalist as opposed to a desire based account of love in chapter two.

It is also important to note from the beginning that although Aquinas's moral theory obviates the problem of alienation endemic to consequentialism and Kantian moral theories, there is nevertheless a deep worry concerning whether the moral agent can genuinely seek to promote the good of another *for the other's own sake* if the well being of those she loves is ultimately sought for the sake of the agent's own happiness or perfection.<sup>36</sup> In response to this sort of worry, I shall argue that although Aquinas's account of happiness (*beatitudo*) does entail that the rational agent's love for other persons is partly constitutive of her own happiness or perfection, this does not require that she loves others merely for their instrumental value, since the *for the sake of* relation need not be viewed exclusively as the relation of a means to an end. Moreover, seeking to promote the good of the other *for the other's own sake*, i.e. as an end in itself, is a defining feature of the highest and best sort of love on Aquinas's account. And this sort of love for another person is precisely the sort that partly constitutes the agent's own happiness or perfection.

In what follows in the remainder of this chapter, I will develop and defend Aquinas's account of the inextricable connection between love, the desire for happiness, and morality. In section A, I will explore the relevant aspects of Aquinas's

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36. Jennifer Whiting worries that a view which gives primacy to the *agent's eudaimonia* is contrary to loving another for the other's own sake, since such love is essentially a matter of promoting one's own self-interest. As Whiting puts it, "loving and seeking to benefit one's friend for her own sake is acceptable *because*, and only insofar as, it is a way of seeking to benefit *oneself*;" "The Nicomachean Account of *Philia*," in "The Nicomachean Account of *Philia*," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Richard Kraut (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006) 277. I will consider Whiting's worry at length in chapter three.

account of happiness, in particular how he identifies the genuine happiness of a human being with the completion or perfection of her rational nature, i.e. the state in which all of the her rational desires are fulfilled such that there is nothing left for her to desire.<sup>37</sup> As will become clear, Aquinas identifies the desire for genuine happiness with the proper love of self. On Aquinas's view, the proper love of self is at the center of all the agent's desires and inclinations insofar as it provides the principles for both moral virtue and the other-directed relationships, i.e. friendship love. In section B, I will focus on developing Aquinas's view that self-love is the principle of moral virtue, the habits or settled dispositions of the appetitive power of the soul inclining the moral agent toward the good and to act for the sake of the good. In section C, I will consider Aquinas's related claims that 1) friendship is required for moral virtue, and thus for genuine happiness, and 2) self-love provides the principle, or the "form and root" of friendship, the sort of other-directed-relationship which entails desiring the good of another for the other's own sake. Finally, in section D, I will consider what I take to be the most worrisome objection to Aquinas's moral theory: that one cannot love another person purely for that person's own sake if the other person's good is ultimately sought for the sake of one's own happiness or perfection. I will respond to this objection, arguing that although on the eudaimonist account the rational agent's ultimate motivation is to achieve her own happiness or perfection, this does not rule

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37. Cf. *ST* I-II 5.1 quoted below.

out genuinely loving another person for that person's own sake. Indeed loving another person and seeking her good *as an end in itself* is partly perfective of the self and hence required for one to achieve genuine happiness.

#### 1. HAPPINESS AND SELF-LOVE

As a eudaimonist, Aquinas holds that the motivation of all human beings ultimately rooted in the natural desire for one's own happiness.<sup>38</sup> According to his moral psychology, this desire for happiness just is the natural and necessary inclination of all human beings *qua* rational or intellectual beings to seek the ends which perfect them as beings of that particular kind. Aquinas explains the nature of happiness as follows: "By the name 'happiness' (*beatitudo*) is understood the ultimate perfection of the rational or intellectual nature and accordingly what is naturally desired, since each thing naturally desires its own ultimate perfection" (*ST I* 62.1).<sup>39</sup> According to Aquinas, intellectual beings, like all other beings including those lacking cognition, in some sense naturally desire their own good, i.e. those ends which perfect

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38. Aquinas distinguishes between *natural love* which is the natural and necessary desire of all persons for happiness, and *love involving choice* which concerns those things a person desires for the sake of happiness and indicating that in rational beings (angels and human beings) the former gives rise to the latter: "natural love is the principle of love of choice." In the case of human beings, "the will tends naturally towards its final end—for every human being naturally wills happiness, and all other desires are caused by this natural desire, since whatever one wills, he wills on account of the end; therefore, the love of that good which one naturally wills as an end is his natural love. But the love which arises from this, which is of something loved for the sake of the end, is the love of choice" (*ST I* 60.2, Cf. 82.1; I-II 1.6-7).

39. Respondeo dicendum quod nomine beatitudinis intelligitur ultima perfectio rationalis seu intellectualis naturae, et inde est quod naturaliter desideratur, quia unumquodque naturaliter desiderat suam ultimam perfectionem.

or complete them as the kinds of beings that they are. Although it is clear that a non-cognitive being, e.g. fire, doesn't "desire," something in the sense that cognitive beings do, but Aquinas holds that each created entity is naturally inclined toward an end which is "perfective" of it, or completes it, as a thing of a particular kind with a particular nature. So just as fire is, at least according to Aquinas, naturally inclined to rise upward since it is its nature to do so and in the sense perfective of it, so the intellectual being is naturally inclined to seek the ends perfective of it, and these ends are determined by its nature *as* an intellectual being. According to Aquinas's natural teleology, intellectual beings are at the highest and most sophisticated end of the spectrum of created beings, but nonetheless share the same teleological ordering as the rest of created beings, even those lacking cognition. Self-love, then, is simply one way of describing the natural inclination of all created beings along the spectrum to seek those ends which perfect or complete them as things of a particular kind with a particular nature. Of course, his account becomes much more complex when applied to human beings which have not only cognitive capacities, which they share in common with non-human animals, but intellectual capacities.<sup>40</sup>

Generally speaking, then, in accordance with Aquinas's natural teleology, all created things are naturally inclined to pursue their own good; further, what their good consists in depends upon the nature of the thing itself—its completion or

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40. See, for example, *STI* 60.3.



perfection as a thing characterized by its specifying capacities or potentialities.

Accordingly, the good particular to human beings, creatures characterized by their rational or intellectual capacities, is happiness, which, formally conceived, consists in the perfection or completion of human nature *qua* rational or intellectual nature.

But what precisely does Aquinas mean by perfection and why does he identify happiness with the perfection of the agent's rational or intellectual nature? Although I cannot here provide a detailed answer to this question, it is important to emphasize that Aquinas holds an objectivist account of human happiness or the human good based upon what is perfective of human beings as such.<sup>41</sup> Only certain ends will truly satisfy the sorts of desires definitive of human nature inasmuch as it is essentially rational. Moreover, Aquinas argues that human beings can have only one *final* ultimate end as opposed to many because the final ultimate end is conceived of as that which completes or perfects the human being such that all of her rational desires are wholly fulfilled.

Since each thing desires its own perfection, it desires something as its ultimate end, which it desires as its own complete and perfect good ...Hence it is fitting that the final end so fulfill the entire appetite of a

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41. *ST I* 5.1 ad. 1: "Good, however, expresses the notion of what is perfected, which is desirable, and consequently expresses the notion of what is completed (*ultim*). Thus, what is completely perfected is called good without qualification. But what does not have the complete perfection it ought to have, although it has some perfection insofar as it is in actuality, is called neither perfected nor good without qualification but [only] in some respect" (tr. MacDonald). Cf. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Being and Goodness," *Being & Goodness*, ed. Scott MacDonald (Ithaca & London: Cornell, 1991), 99-101. Again, Aquinas's objectivist account of the human good will be addressed more fully in chapter 2.

human being that nothing else remains to be desired. This is not possible if something more is required for his perfection (*ST I-II 1.5*).<sup>42</sup>

Whatever a human being desires as her final ultimate end must complete or perfect her such that all of her rational desires are *completely* fulfilled and she desires nothing further. In order for the final ultimate end to perfect a human being *qua* essentially rational, it must consist in those goods which pertain to her rational nature, i.e. the goods of intellect and will.

Aquinas distinguishes between the *formal* conception of the final ultimate end of human beings or the human good, i.e. happiness, and the *particular* end in which the human good is realized or instantiated (*ST I-II 1.7*). He acknowledges that although each and every human being naturally and necessarily desires happiness generally speaking, i.e. her own complete and perfect good, not all agree about what the human good consists in. Nevertheless, this disagreement does not mean that there is not some one good, or aggregate of goods, which *in fact* constitutes human happiness.<sup>43</sup> And as indicated above, Aquinas holds an objectivist account of what the human good consists in, since perfect or complete happiness must fulfill human nature as a whole, and this depends upon certain objective features of human nature. Since

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42. Cum unumquodque appetat suam perfectionem, illud appetit aliquis ut ultimum finem, quod appetit, ut bonum perfectum et completivum sui ipsius...Oportet igitur quod ultimus finis ita impleat totum hominis appetitum, quod nihil extra ipsum appetendum relinquatur. Quod esse non potest, si aliquid extraneum ad ipsius perfectionem requiratur.

43. Cf. *ST I-II 4.7 ad 2*. And SCM, "UE in PR" for a defense of the aggregate view of the final ultimate end.

human beings are essentially rational or intellectual beings, their final good must consist in those goods that pertain to the intellect and will. Rational agents who do not have a correct conception of what is essential to human nature thereby lack understanding of what in fact constitutes the good life of a human being; nevertheless, such agents will seek happiness in apparent goods, i.e. goods they *think* will satisfy their desires. But since they fail to grasp what is essential to their nature *as human beings*, these agents will fail to attain the genuine human good or the happiness they seek.<sup>44</sup>

Aquinas identifies this desire for one's own happiness or perfect good with self-love. Accordingly, he holds that all rational agents naturally love themselves; yet, since some fail to love themselves in accordance with their rational or intellectual nature, they do not all love themselves properly.<sup>45</sup> In keeping with his objectivist account of the human good, Aquinas maintains that genuine self-love is essentially a form of *intellective* love. Rather than being based merely upon the agent's prior desires or sensory appetites, intellectual love is based upon her rational judgments about which objects or ends are good for her to pursue. And such judgments are based upon the features of the objects themselves, not merely upon the agent's other desires or inclinations. Unlike sensory love which is based purely upon the agent's desires and

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44. Aquinas of course distinguishes between the sort of happiness a human being can achieve by her own natural powers which Aquinas calls "imperfect happiness," (*beatitudo imperfecta*) and the vision of the divine essence or "perfect happiness," (*beatitudo perfecta*) which surpasses the natural capacities of a created being (*ST* I-II 5.5). Here, I am primarily concerned with the sort of imperfect happiness one can naturally without divine assistance.

45. Cf. *ST* II-II 24.5 ad 3, quoted below.

inclinations, intellectual love depends upon her prior apprehension of some good considered “under the common nature of good” (*ST I* 82.5).

Aquinas’s account of intellectual love is in keeping with his view that there are *external* or objective reasons for preferring certain objects and ends to others.<sup>46</sup>

Aquinas provides a descriptive account of the object of the will, and hence of intellectual love which belongs to the will, indicating that the will or rational appetite of every rational being is directed toward a good or apprehended good (*ST I-II* 8.1). Aquinas further indicates that the proper object of the will is the good in general, i.e. the good considered universally, or a particular good considered under the aspect of a universal good. (*ST I-II* 9.1; 9.1 ad 3).

But Aquinas further argues for a normative account of the will’s proper object; the proper object of the will is not merely an apparent good, but the actual good. Only when one apprehends and wills what is objectively good or perfective of the rational being as such, can she attain genuine happiness (cf., for instance, *ST I-II* 5.1 ad 1). The objective good, i.e. that which is good all- things-considered, is what truly satisfies all of the rational desires of the intellectual agent and is hence the end in which her genuine happiness or perfection may be attained. Accordingly, the intellectual agent genuinely loves herself to the extent that she apprehends and wills that which is objectively good, valuing such goods more than the merely apparent

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46. See Terence Irwin, “Aquinas: Action,” in *the Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study*, vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 473-4.

goods which ultimately fail to perfect or complete her as a rational or intellectual being.

The most significant feature of Aquinas's account of genuine human happiness and self-love for my purposes here is the way in which he conceives of these as inextricably tied up with his account of moral goodness. This connection between true happiness, genuine self-love and moral goodness is crucial to establishing my thesis that on Aquinas's moral psychology, there is no potential problem of alienation of the moral agent from the things she really cares about. This is because the fully rational agent is inclined to pursue those ends which are genuinely constitutive of her happiness, that which all rational beings desire naturally and necessarily. The agent who understands her true essence and pursues that which perfects or fulfills her rational or intellectual nature is in a position to attain *genuine* happiness. This not only requires attaining certain objects or ends the agent desires, but also *being a certain sort of person* and *acting for the sake of the good in general*. In the following two sections, I will develop Aquinas's account of genuine human happiness demonstrating the centrality of moral virtue to his account. As I shall argue, it turns out that moral goodness and rational self-love are two sides of the same coin comprising human happiness.

## 2. SELF-LOVE AND VIRTUE

As indicated above, insofar as moral virtue involves the perfection of human beings *qua* rational beings, it is also a constitutive feature of human happiness.<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, it is worth briefly sketching Aquinas's account of what virtue is and its relation to self-love. Generally speaking, Aquinas identifies virtue with the morally good agent's state of character: "the perfection of a capacity," i.e. a capacity of the soul, and also with "a good habit (*habitus*) ordered toward action," i.e. a good quality of the soul which disposes the moral agent to act for the sake of the good (*ST* I-II.55.1-3). Specifically, a moral virtue is a habit or disposition of the appetitive part of the soul<sup>48</sup> which inclines the rational agent to act in accordance with what is best: "and the best is the end, which is either the activity of a thing, or something attained by the activity proceeding from the capacity [of the soul]," (*ST* I-II 56.1).<sup>49</sup> Virtue, then, has the same ultimate end as genuine self-love—true happiness, the final ultimate end in which all of one's rational desires are completely fulfilled such that there is nothing

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47. My focus here is on moral virtue, i.e. that which perfects the rational appetite or will, as opposed to intellectual virtue which perfects either the speculative or practical intellect (Cf. *ST* I-II 58.3). Here I must leave aside theological virtues, but these will play a significant role when it comes to the discussion of *caritas*, the love characteristic of friendship *for God*, which Aquinas takes to be a divinely infused virtue.

48. Aquinas holds that the proper subject of virtue is the will or intellectual appetite: "The subject of a habit which is called a virtue *simpliciter* can only be the will or in some power insofar as it is moved by the will" (*ST* I-II 56.3). Accordingly, some virtues are in the sensory powers' appetite (powers of the sensory appetite) only insofar as such powers participate in reason, i.e. they have a natural inclination to obey reason (*ST* I-II 56.4).

49. [O]ptimum autem est finis, qui vel est operatio, vel aliquid consecutum per operationem a potentia egredientem.

left to desire. And as Aquinas's account of moral virtue makes clear, this end is partly constituted by the perfection of the will which inclines the rational agent to seek the best or final ultimate end, an activity or object in which her complete and perfect good consists.<sup>50</sup> On his view, then, virtue and love generally considered (*amor*) are connected in that virtue *derives from* the genuine love of self insofar as it is required to attain the happiness or perfection of the moral agent.

This is in keeping with the descriptive account of Aquinas's general moral psychology, according to which love (*amor*) is the principle of any appetite or desire: "Every motion toward something, or rest in something proceeds from some natural attraction or aptitude, which belongs to the nature (*ratio*) of love (*amor*)" (*ST I-II* 27.4).<sup>51</sup> Specifically, in the case of the rational appetite, love constitutes the origin of any particular act of willing and thus every human action:

Every agent acts for the sake of some end, as is said above (*ST I-II* 1.2). And the end is the good desired and loved by each one. From this it is clear that every action, whatever it might be, one does that action from some particular love (*ST I-II* 28.6).<sup>52</sup>

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50. Cf. *ST I-I* 4.4 where Aquinas argues that correctness of the will is necessary for attaining happiness.

51. *Omnis autem motus in aliquid, vel quies in aliquo, ex aliqua connaturalitate vel coaptatione procedit, quae pertinet ad rationem amoris.*

52. *Omne agens agit propter finem aliquem, ut supra dictum est. Finis autem est bonum desideratum et amatum unicuique. Unde manifestum est quod omne agens, quodcumque sit, agit quamcumque actionem ex aliquo amore.*

Given the significance Aquinas ascribes to love as the origin of desire and thus every human action, it is important to review precisely what he means by love considered generally before looking at his normative account of the particular kinds of love constitutive of genuine human happiness.

Aquinas holds that love generally speaking (*amor*) gives rise to a sort of circular motion of the appetite beginning with the apprehension of a desirable object and becoming fully actualized when the object is attained. Love (*amor*) is simply the state of apprehending some object or end as somehow suitable or fitting (*coaptatio*) to the one loving. This apprehension of the object as such is the principle of the actual motion of the appetite, i.e. the desire (*desiderium*) of the one loving for the apprehended object or end. Finally, the one loving finds rest (*quies*) once the object or end loved is attained (*ST* I-II 26.2). Accordingly, love in general is a state in which the subject apprehends an object or end as somehow suitable or pleasing to it. Love, then, provides the explanatory principle of the appetite or desire for some object or end apprehended as good to be pursued. Thus, love in general is the principle or origin of any appetitive motion. Intellectual love is unique insofar as it pertains to the will or intellectual appetite, and as indicated above, involves apprehending some object or end *as good* in a universal sense (*ST* I-II 26.1; *ST* I 20.1).



Intellective love and virtue are alike, then, in that they both have the will as their subject,<sup>53</sup> and both incline the rational agent toward some object or end considered *as good*. Aquinas specifies the relation a bit further when he claims that virtue is not love *simpliciter*, but that in some respect it derives from love “inasmuch as [virtue] derives from the will, the first affection of which is love (*amor*)” (*ST* I-II 56.3 ad 1).<sup>54</sup> From this it seems reasonable to suppose that on Aquinas’s view, the morally good agent is one who loves those objects or ends which she correctly apprehends as good all things considered, and that such love motivates certain actions which ultimately give rise to a virtuous disposition by which she is inclined to act for the sake of the good considered as such.

Moreover, we have seen that the morally good agent loves herself in the appropriate manner insofar as she desires those goods which fulfill or perfect her nature *qua rational or intellective being*. Aquinas holds that loving oneself entails desiring good for oneself (*ST* I 20.1 ad 3). This is simply part of his eudaimonist understanding of human motivation. But as we have seen, in keeping with his objectivist account of human happiness or perfection, he distinguishes genuine self-love from the sort that is blameworthy insofar the latter is directed toward the sorts of

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53. Aquinas defends the view that the will is subject of virtue *simpliciter* (as opposed to relatively speaking) at *ST* I-II 56.3.

54. Verbum Augustini intelligendum est de virtute simpliciter dicta non quod omnis talis virtus sit simpliciter amor; sed quia dependet aliquo modo ab amore, in quantum dependet a voluntate, cuius prima affectio est amor, ut supra dictum est.

goods pertaining to the rational agent's sensory nature as opposed to those pertaining to reason:

Those who love themselves are blamed inasmuch as they love themselves according to their sensory nature, to which they submit. That is not to love oneself truly according to one's rational nature, as one wishes to oneself those goods which pertain to the perfection of reason (*ST* II-II 24.5 ad 3).<sup>55</sup>

One who loves herself according to her sensory nature is ruled by her passions in such a way that can hinder reason and cloud her judgment about what is genuinely good to be pursued. Moral virtues such as temperance and courage incline the moral agent to submit her passions to reason providing her with the resolve to pursue the goods pertaining to her rational or intellectual powers, those powers of the soul comprising her very essence as an intellectual being. Of course, one can also be mistaken about what goods pertain to the perfection of reason. Hence, the intellectual virtue of prudence is also necessary in order for the fully rational agent to correctly identify which ends are actually perfective of her nature and hence good to be pursued.

Accordingly, genuine self-love characterizes the morally good agent in that she desires for herself the external or objective goods that will perfect her in accordance with her intellectual nature. Hence, according to Aquinas, rational self-love is the

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55. Ad tertium dicendum quod amantes seipsos vituperantur in quantum amant se secundum naturam sensibilem, cui obtemperant. Quod non est vere amare seipsum secundum naturam rationalem, ut sibi velit ea bona quae pertinent ad perfectionem rationis.

principle of a virtuous disposition to act for the sake of the good and conversely, virtue is required for human beings to attain genuine happiness or perfection.

### 3. SELF LOVE AND LOVE FOR OTHER PERSONS

#### a. FRIENDSHIP IS REQUIRED FOR HAPPINESS

We have just seen how according to Aquinas, virtue is a constitutive feature of happiness and of self-love properly construed. One might worry, however, whether or not Aquinas's theory, as I developed it so far, is genuinely *moral* given that his moral psychology seems concerned primarily with the rational agent's conception of what her own good consists in and with developing the sorts of virtues or dispositions which help enable her to attain the end of happiness. Many would contend that a moral theory involving little concern for the good or wellbeing of other persons is hardly worth calling a moral theory.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, there is a general assumption that in order to be moral, the agent's attitude toward another must be entirely *altruistic* or other-directed such that *any* self-interested motivation undermines the moral quality of the relation. I will deal with the former worry first, before considering whether or not this assumption is warranted.

How exactly does the love of other persons fit in to Aquinas's account of happiness and self-love? In what follows I will provide a brief sketch of Aquinas's

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56. Bernard Williams contends that altruism is a necessary feature of morality, where altruism is defined as the "general disposition to regard the interests of others, merely as such, as making some claim on one, and, in particular, as implying the possibility of limiting one's own projects," ("Egoism and Altruism," 250). I will be addressing this issue in detail in chapter 3.

notion of the love characteristic of friendship (*amor amicitiae*), and show how such love, which entails desiring and acting for the good of another person *for that person's own sake*, is a requisite feature of Aquinas's account of the genuine happiness of the moral agent. Then I will look at his account of friendship from the other direction—how self-love provides the principle or, in Aquinas's own words, the “form and root” of friendship. I shall argue that although Aquinas views friendship as requisite for happiness and as grounded in the proper love of self, this does not entail that friendship is to be sought for its instrumental value, as merely a means to attaining the end of one's own happiness. The love characteristic of friendship, rather, entails loving other persons in such a way that the moral agent desires and acts for the good of the other *for the other's own sake*. Friendship sought merely as a means to attaining one's own happiness does not constitute genuine friendship on Aquinas's account.

Aquinas holds that the love characteristic of friendship constitutes the most perfect or the paradigmatic form of love between persons. In order to see why, it is important to sketch his descriptive account of what friendship is and its defining features. Aquinas provides his most comprehensive account of friendship early in his career in his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (*In III Sent.* d. 27, q.2, a.1). Here Aquinas identifies four requisite characteristics of *love for another person*, and then specifies beyond these two further requisite characteristics of *friendship*.<sup>57</sup> He begins by

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57. Aquinas's account of the requirements of love and friendship are deeply influenced by Aristotle. Cf. *EN VIII & IX* and Aquinas's gloss on these passages in *In decem libros Ethicorum*

describing love for another person (*amor*) as a relation aimed toward being *united* in a certain sense with the one loved, such that the one who loves regards the one loved in a manner similar to the way he regards himself insofar as he desires the good of the other.<sup>58</sup> The defining characteristics of love for other persons are 1) *concupiscentia* or desire for the one loved, i.e. the desire for her actual presence,<sup>59</sup> 2) benevolence (*benevolentia*) according to which the one who loves desires the good of the other, for the other's own sake,<sup>60</sup> 3) beneficence (*beneficentia*) according to which the one who loves acts to attain good things for the one loved; and finally, 4) concord or harmony (*concordia*) according to which the one who loves and the one loved desire the same things.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to these defining features of love, friendship requires two further features. The first is that friends share in a *mutual love* such that each one loves the

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*Aristotelis ad Nicomachum exposition.*

58 Cf. Aquinas's later distinction between the kinds of union associated with love (ST I-II 28.1). I will consider this passage in some detail in chapter 3.

59. Here Aquinas uses the term "*concupiscentia*" to denote the natural inclination to attain some perceived good pertaining to one's sensory nature, which he refers to as the passions (*passions*). Apprehending a particular object as pleasing to oneself constitutes the passion *amor*; when the object of *amor* is present, one has the passion of pleasure, and when absent, he has the passion of concupiscentia or desire (cf. ST I-II 25.2).

60. Later, in the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas distinguishes between the love characteristic of concupiscentia (*amor concupiscentiae*) and the love characteristic of friendship (*amor amicitiae*). *Amor concupiscentiae* is directed toward some good desired for the sake of someone else—either for oneself or for another to whom one wishes good, whereas *amor amicitiae* is directed to the other person to whom one wishes the good (Cf. ST I-II 26.4). Accordingly, benevolence, i.e. wishing good to another for the other's own sake, is a constitutive feature of *amor amicitiae*.

61. The requisite sort of harmony concerns practical rather than speculative matters.

other and further, each one *knows* that they love one another.<sup>62</sup> The second is that they act out of *free choice*, and hence friendship love pertains to the will, as opposed to a passion, which pertains to the sensory appetite. Aquinas distinguishes friendship (*amicitia*) from other kinds of love (*amor*) in that it is similar to a habit.<sup>63</sup> As Aquinas defines it, a habit is a quality of the soul disposing one toward acting either well or badly.<sup>64</sup> Habits provide one of the internal principles of human actions, i.e. those actions which by definition proceed from reason and the will.<sup>65</sup> Accordingly, friendship is a kind of mutual love between two rational agents,<sup>66</sup> which follows from the free choice of each agent to actively pursue the well being of the other and to be united with the other in the sense of spending time together talking and engaging in similar activities. Because friendship entails all of these features, Aquinas calls it the “most perfect among those things pertaining to love.”<sup>67</sup>

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62. Cf. Aristotle *EN* VIII.2. Aquinas reiterates these criteria towards the end of his career. Cf. *ST* II-II 23.1 where Aquinas describes the nature of friendship as follows: “Not every love has the character of friendship, but that love which is together with benevolence, when we love someone so as to wish good to him.” Moreover, in the case of friendship, the love must be mutual: “Yet neither does benevolence suffice for friendship, for a certain mutual love is required, since friendship is between friend and friend (*ST* II-II 23.1).

63. “Friendship, according to the Philosopher (*EN* viii.5) is like a habit” (*ST* I-II 26.3).

64. *ST* I-II 49.1, 3.

65. *ST* I-II 1.1.

66. For Aquinas’s view that friendship can occur only between rational agents see *ST* I 20.2 ad 3.

67. Sic ergo patet quod amicitia est perfectissimum inter ea quae ad amorem pertinent (*In III Sent.* d. 27, q.2, a.1).

Having provided a rough sketch of Aquinas's account of friendship, I turn now to consider in what respect(s) he considers friendship to be partly constitutive of human happiness. Aquinas specifies the requirements for happiness in the first part of the second part of the *Summa*. Here Aquinas maintains that a properly ordered will is a concomitant of happiness—the happy person loves whatever he loves under the common notion of good (*ST I-II 4.4: Cf. ST I 20.2*). And it is precisely this context in which we must understand Aquinas's view that friendship is required for happiness.<sup>68</sup> Aquinas follows Aristotle in maintaining that friendship is required for happiness not merely because friends can be useful or can bring one pleasure, but rather because friends are necessary for acting well; hence friendship between virtuous persons is the ideal sort insofar as it helps each friend to act in accordance with the good.

If we are speaking about happiness (*felicitas*) in the present life... the happy person needs friends, not on account of their utility, since the happy person suffices for himself, nor on account of delight because he has perfect delight in himself through the activity of virtue, but on account of good action—that is to say (1) that he might do good to them, or (2) he might be delighted by seeing them do good, or even (3) that he might be helped by them to do good. For in the works of the contemplative life and in works of the active life, a human being needs the help of friends to act well (*ST I-II 4.8; Cf. In Ethic ix 1894-9*).<sup>69</sup>

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68. Qualification: friends are required for the imperfect happiness attainable in this life. However when it comes to perfect happiness consisting in friendship with God, friendship with other persons is a concomitant of perfect happiness insofar as it follows from the love of God (*ST I-II 4.8 ad 3*).

69. Si loquamur de felicitate praesentis vitae, sicut philosophus dicit in IX *Ethic*, felix indiget amicis, non quidem propter utilitatem, cum sit sibi sufficiens; nec propter delectationem, quia habet in seipso delectationem perfectam in operatione virtutis; sed propter bonam operationem, ut scilicet eis beneficiat, et ut eos inspiciens benefacere delectetur, et ut etiam ab eis in benefaciendo adiuvetur.

According to this passage, the reason friendship is *required* for happiness concerns the ways in which it provides opportunities for the moral agent to desire and to promote the good. As we have seen, happiness requires both correctness of will and virtuous activity, i.e. living well and doing good things. Aquinas here specifies three ways in which friendship is required for acting well, and hence for human happiness. First, the moral agent's friends are those he might benefit by seeking to promote their good. Since one lives his life in the companionship of his friends, he is in a special position not only to know what will in fact benefit his friend, but also has more opportunity to do so. One of the effects of love on Aquinas's account is a real union between friends: "to live together, speak together, and to be united together in like things" (*ST* I-II 28.1 ad 2). Persons living in such proximity are generally in the best position to know and to act for the sake of the good of one another.

Second, friendship provides the moral agent with the opportunity to delight in seeing his friend act virtuously. Aquinas elaborates on this in his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* where he claims that since human beings are not very good judges of their own actions, the happy person can find pleasure in seeing his friend do good: "inasmuch as he seeks to study the virtuous actions of the good man who is his friend" (*In Ethic.*, 1896).<sup>70</sup> Moreover, Aquinas claims that the virtuous person delights in the

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Indiget enim homo ad bene operandum auxilio amicorum, tam in operibus vitae activae, quam in operibus vitae contemplativae.

70. Sic igitur beatus indigebit talibus amicis, scilicet virtuosis, in quantum quaerit considerare



fact that his friend performs a good action, rather than someone with whom he is merely acquainted, because he considers his friend as “another oneself;” so in some sense, Aquinas claims, the friend views the other’s actions as if they were his own (ibid.).<sup>71</sup> In addition to Aquinas’s explicit claims here, it is in keeping with Aquinas’s general account of the love characteristic of friendship (*amor amicitiae*) that the one who loves delights in seeing the other do good, since willing and doing good is partly constitutive of the other’s own happiness and good. This is because the love characteristic of friendship is the sort of love which promotes the good of the other for the other’s own sake.

Finally, when Aquinas claims that human beings need the help of friends to act well, he elaborates in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Ethics* that it is difficult for one to do good continuously if he lives alone without the sort of interchange that takes place between friends (*In Ethic.*, 1897-8). Certainly, it seems reasonable to think one is helped by the support and encouragement of friends to continue to act well over a sustained period. Additionally, we might suppose that certain good ends cannot be achieved by a person acting alone, but that such goods require friends working together in order to achieve them.<sup>72</sup> Whatever the reasons, it is clear that Aquinas’s

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bonas actiones et sibi appropriatas, quales quidem sunt actiones viri boni, qui est amicus.

71. I elaborate on the “other oneself” relation in chapter 3.

72. John Cooper provides an extended and plausible analysis of how shared activities are “central to a person’s life and contribute most decisively to his flourishing.” Cf. “Aristotle on Friendship,” in &&&, 324-330.

reasons for holding that friendship is necessary for happiness in this life derives from his understanding that genuine happiness entails acting for the sake of the good and friendship provides one with optimum opportunity to do so.

#### b. SELF-LOVE: THE FORM AND ROOT OF FRIENDSHIP

Having considered why Aquinas maintains that friendship is required for genuine happiness and is hence a constitutive feature of self-love, I turn now to consider the flip side of the coin: how genuine love of self is required for friendship. In keeping with his general view that all human actions are done ultimately for the sake of one's own happiness, i.e. her perfection and completion as a rational being, Aquinas claims that self-love is the "form and root" of friendship.

Just as oneness is the principle of union, so the love (*amor*) by which one loves (*diligit*) one's own self, is the form and the root of friendship, for in this way we have friendship for another—we cherish our friends just as we cherish ourselves; hence it is said in *Ethic.* ix, "the features belonging to friendship directed toward another are derived from those which are directed toward oneself" (*ST* II-II 25.4; Cf. *In Ethic.* ix, 1858-9).<sup>73</sup>

With respect to the *form* of friendship, we have seen that genuine self-love entails loving oneself in accordance with her rational or intellective nature. In other words, it amounts to willing and seeking the good perfective of oneself as a rational or intellective being. According to Aquinas, then, self-love provides the form of friendship insofar as by loving another with *amor amicitiae*, i.e. the love characteristic of

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73. Unde sicut unitas est principium unionis, ita amor quo quis diligit seipsum, est forma et radix amicitiae, in hoc enim amicitiam habemus ad alios, quod ad eos nos habemus sicut ad nosipsos; dicitur enim in IX Ethic. quod amabilia quae sunt ad alterum veniunt ex his quae sunt ad seipsum.

friendship, she seeks the good of the other in the same way that she seeks her own good. Hence, in the paradigmatic case of love for another person, the rational agent loves her friend in a manner similar to the way in which she loves herself.<sup>74</sup> This entails seeking the good of one's friend as an end in itself, such that the one loving desires and actively promotes the ends which contribute to the genuine happiness of her friend, i.e. those ends in which are perfective of his intellectual nature such that his rational desires are completely fulfilled. This is what Aquinas means by cherishing one's friend *as one cherishes herself*.

Moreover, self-love provides the *root* of friendship insofar as it provides the principle for friendship. The desire for one's own happiness or perfection provides the foundation for all of a person's rational desires including the desire for friendship. As we saw in the passage quoted above (*ST* I-II 4.8), friendship is an essential part of a rational being's happiness insofar as it provides the agent with the best opportunity to perform good actions, and performing good actions is essential to being virtuous, which is requisite of the perfection of the rational agent. Elsewhere, in his account of the theological virtue of *caritas* (the highest and best form of *amor amicitiae*), Aquinas indicates that the principle act of *caritas* is to love (*ST* II-II 27).<sup>75</sup> He appeals to

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74. Cf. Aristotle, "One person is a friend to another most of all if he wishes goods to the other for the other's sake...But these are features most of all of one's relation to oneself; and so too are all the other defining features of a friend, since we have said that all the features of friendship extend from oneself to others," (*EN* 1168b, tr. Irwin).

75. I will address the theological virtue of *caritas* in chapter four of the dissertation.

Aristotle saying, “friendship consists in loving rather than being loved,” (*ST II-II* 27.1sc). The love characteristic of friendship entails acting for the good of one’s friends. Insofar as genuine self-love or the desire for happiness requires virtue, and friendship is a virtue which entails acting for the good of another, the happiness of the rational being must include loving others, and in particular with *amor amicitiae*. Hence we can see how love of self is the root or principle from which the rational agent loves, and thereby actively seeks to promote the good of the one loved.

In sum, self-love just is the desire for one’s final ultimate end: one’s own happiness or perfection as an intellectual being, and friendship is partly constitutive of this end. Nevertheless, the fully rational agent does not love her friends merely *as a means to* her own happiness, due to the very character of friendship itself. One loves one’s friend with *amor amicitiae*, and an essential feature of *amor amicitiae* is the love of another person as an end in himself. Such love is characterized by benevolence and beneficence, both of which are other-directed qualities according to which, respectively, one *wishes* and *actively promotes* the good of the other. Hence, self-love is the principle of friendship, but friendship itself requires loving and acting for the sake of another *for the other’s own sake*. A seemingly paradoxical yet necessary feature of genuine self-love, then is that it is at once both directed toward the ultimate end of one’s own happiness and directed toward the good of another which is desired as an end in itself and never as merely a means.

#### D. OBJECTION: A TWO-LEVEL STRATEGY?

On Aquinas's view, rational agents do, as a matter of fact, seek to live in such a way that they believe will allow them to attain happiness, the best life for a human being. This is the natural inclination of all rational creatures. The fully rational agent seeks to order her commitments and priorities in such a way that will help her attain the most happiness or the best kind of life for a human being.<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, virtue and *amor amicitiae* along with all other objects and ends of the rational agent are sought ultimately for the sake of the agent's own happiness. As we have seen, love, and in particular the love characteristic of friendship, is an essential component of happiness, or the best life for a human being. But the love characteristic of friendship entails loving another person *for that person's own sake*. Is there something incongruent about loving another person for her own sake if ultimately that love is sought for the sake of the happiness of the one loving? Can we seek the good of the other as an end in itself if one's doing so is ultimately directed toward achieving one's own happiness?

One might think that in order to avoid this apparent conflict, one must employ a two-level strategy along the lines of the one Railton proposes with respect to consequentialism. Recall that according to objective consequentialism, one need not deliberate about whether or each of her actions is morally justified by meeting the

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76. Once again, I am speaking of the sort of imperfect happiness available to the agent in this life. I do not address here the important questions concerning perfect happiness which depends upon the infused virtue of *caritas* and pertains to everlasting life.

consequentialist standard of moral goodness, i.e. that each action in fact promotes the most overall good, so long as one is acting in accordance with being the best sort of person—one whose life as a whole contributes to the most overall good, even if this means sometimes performing the wrong action. If my arguments against this sort of strategy succeed, then it would be problematic if it were to turn out that Aquinas's account of the love characteristic of friendship employed a two-level strategy according to which the love itself has intrinsic but *non-moral* value where the attainment of one's own happiness or perfection as an intellectual being is the only end with true *moral* value.

It is worth noting that Aquinas does not think it necessary to reflect upon how every human action, in particular every act of loving, contributes to her own happiness or perfection (Cf. *STI-II* 1.6 ad 3).<sup>77</sup> Accordingly, the rational agent can love another for the other's own sake without attending to the fact that doing so is ultimately part of attaining one's own happiness. But even if one is not *consciously* thinking about one's own good when desiring the good of another person, doesn't Aquinas's theory entail that, at the end of the day, the real reason one cares about the good of another is because doing so, ultimately, will promote one's own good? This is to say that if one were to discover that promoting the good of the other for the

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77. Likewise, as indicated above, neither does Railton think that the objective consequentialist is required to consider the moral value of each of her actions, so long as upon reflection, she is able to show how they contribute to promoting the most overall good, or at least stem from being the sort of person who promotes the most overall good, even if this sometimes means performing the wrong action.

other's own sake did *not* contribute to one's own happiness, it would be not be morally required, and perhaps not even rational, for one to do so.<sup>78</sup>

#### E. REPLY TO THE OBJECTION

There is sense in which Aquinas's theory does involve two levels. According to Aquinas's moral psychology all of the fully rational person's actions are ultimately directed toward attaining happiness, that which perfects and completes her as an intellectual and relational being. The best sorts of friendship will enable her to become the best sort of person and hence strive toward the best life for a human being. Whatever does not actually contribute to her perfection as such is not rational insofar as it undermines her ultimate goal of attaining genuine happiness over the course of her life. Hence, certain kinds of love, in particular those rooted in the wrong sort of self-love eventually undermine the agent's ultimate end. So if she were to consciously

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78. This is essentially a formulation of what has been referred to in the literature on Aquinas's moral theory as "the problem of love." As David M. Gallagher describes it, the problem involves an apparent conflict within Aquinas's theory of love. Since loving is an act of willing and since every act of willing is ultimately directed toward one's own good, then it follows that the object of love is always one's own good (*suum bonum*). However, Aquinas also holds that the highest and best sort of love is the love for another person which involves desiring the good of the other *for the other's own sake*. This kind of love, as we have seen, is what Aquinas refers to as *amor amicitiae*, or the love characteristic of friendship. Considered in light of Aquinas's general theory of the will, according to which every act of willing and hence loving is ultimately directed toward one's own good, it would appear that loving another for the other's own sake is always ultimately directed toward one's own good. But if this is the case, it would appear that Aquinas is being inconsistent—one's love for another can never really be motivated by the desire for the good of the other *for the other's own sake*, at least not ultimately, since such love is always ultimately motivated by the desire for one's own good. Gallagher addresses the problem arguing for the thesis that the rational agent's desire for his own good, or happiness, is not incongruent with loving another for the other's own sake; in fact, he argues, one's desire for happiness, a form of self-love, is what gives rise to the love of another for the other's own sake. David M. Gallagher, "Desire for Beatitude and Love of Friendship in Thomas Aquinas." *Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996): 1-47.

reflect upon those loves, and to apprehend that such loves do not in fact contribute to her overall good, she would have good reason to give them up.

There is another sense, however, in which Aquinas's theory does not rely upon any sort of two-level strategy. This is because there is a clear-eyed sense in which one may ultimately aim at her own perfection, and yet recognize that this *entails* loving another *for the other's own sake*. The difference between the two-level strategy deployed by Railton and Aquinas's account of *amor amicitiae*, is that Railton considers one's loves and friendships to possess *intrinsic* yet *non-moral* value. But for Aquinas *amor amicitiae* possesses both kinds of value—it is a moral relation in that it is directed toward two ends: 1) a sort of union with the beloved, and 2) the good of the other which is desired for the sake of the other. This other-directed component is an essential feature of *amor amicitiae* and is what makes the love relation *morally valuable* in its own right. So, although love of self provides the ultimate motivation for all of the rational agent's commitments and actions, the love characteristic of friendship entails loving the other for the other's own sake where the good of the other is an end in itself. Aquinas can consistently hold that loving another for the other's own sake is an end in itself and also that self-love is the ultimate motivation for all that an agent does. There is a priority involved insofar as all actions of the fully rational agent are ultimately directed toward attaining happiness, but not conflict insofar as *amor amicitiae* involves acting for the good of the other *for the other's own sake* and doing so is partly constitutive of the agent's own happiness. Thus, Aquinas's account, unlike Railton's,



does not ultimately require the employment of a two-level strategy. Aquinas doesn't try to take the subjective part out of love by requiring that it ultimately meet some impartial or universal standard. *Amor amicitiae* is morally valuable in its own right without being ultimately evaluated from some impersonal impartial standard of morality according to which the agent's actions are ultimately evaluated in terms of promoting the most overall good.

To see how this is so, we might reconsider the case of Juan and Linda. On Railton's account, spending the money on a ticket to see Linda instead of writing the check to OXFAM is a morally wrong act, even if it may be justified by virtue of Juan's being the sort of person who prioritizes the needs of his wife even when doing so fails to meet the universal criterion of promoting the most overall good. But on Aquinas's account of *amor amicitiae*, there is no such conflict. Juan's decision to prioritize the needs of his wife is *morally* good insofar as it entails acting for Linda's good for Linda's own sake. Juan is right to prioritize Linda's needs since he has a special commitment to her as his wife. As we shall see in chapters three and four, there is moral value in prioritizing the needs of those to whom we have a special commitment. Hence, on Aquinas's theory, there need not be any sort of potential conflict between promoting the good of the persons one loves and acting in accordance with what is morally right.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE FRANKFURTIAN APPROACH: LOVE IS NOT SUBJECT TO MORAL EVALUATION

Aquinas holds that love is rational in the sense that it is responsive to the individual's apprehension of what is the good to be pursued.<sup>1</sup> He holds that there are normative reasons for love based upon the value of the one loved and according to which love is rationally and morally evaluable as appropriate or inappropriate with regard to what one loves. I shall argue that Aquinas's account of the relation between love and rationality is more compelling than that of Harry Frankfurt who denies that love is a response to the perceived value of the one loved and that our loves are normatively evaluable. On Frankfurt's view, love is a higher order desire to support and sustain a first order desire, which is evaluable only in terms of one's more basic desires and, as such, is not subject to rational or moral evaluation. Aquinas, on the other hand, holds that in beings capable of cognition, love (*amor*) generally speaking entails the apprehension of some object or end as somehow suitable or fitting to the one who loves. Moreover, in rational or intellectual beings, love pertaining to the will (*dilectio*) has as its formal object the good universally considered or some particular

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1. I am primarily concerned with Aquinas's account of love as it pertains to the will (*dilectio*) since this is the kind of love of which friendship (*amicitia*) is comprised. As the previous chapter demonstrates, friendship constitutes the paradigmatic form of love between persons, and is hence the most interesting form pertaining to Aquinas's moral psychology. Nevertheless, in order to elucidate love as it pertains to the will, it will prove useful to see how this informs his account of love in general (*amor* in the wider extension of the term) as well as his account of sensory love (*amor* in more narrow technical sense of the term), which pertains to the sensory appetite.

individual considered under the aspect of the good. According to Aquinas, the one who loves apprehends what is loved as good to be pursued, and love is deemed appropriate or not according to whether or not the object or end actually is good to be pursued and whether or not this love should occupy the place in the agent's motivational structure that it does.

In this chapter I will explain Frankfurt's account of love as a sort of desire which at the most basic level has no reasons other than the fact that loving itself is important to us as human beings insofar as it gives our lives meaning and purpose. After suggesting what I take to be some of the most compelling features of his account of love, I will argue that his account of love is ultimately unsatisfactory—love is responsive to reasons, and is hence rationally and morally evaluable, even at its most basic level. Then I will explicate Aquinas's descriptive account of love between persons (i.e. rational or intellectual beings), focusing in particular on the love characteristic of friendship (*amor amicitiae*), which constitutes the paradigmatic case of love for another person indicating how, contra Frankfurt, such love is not ultimately rooted in desire, but is an appetitive response to what the agent's intellect presents as good to be pursued. Finally, I will argue that Aquinas provides a more satisfactory account of love as something which is rationally and morally evaluable in terms of the value of the one loved and the place that love occupies in the moral agent's

motivational structure.<sup>2</sup> Unlike Frankfurt, Aquinas holds that there are normative reasons for loving persons, and for ordering our loves in a particular way. Two of the central questions I intend to address are 1) what makes love normatively appropriate? And 2) what sorts of love relationships are to be prioritized in one's motivational structure and why?

#### A. FRANKFURT ON LOVE AND REASON<sup>3</sup>

Frankfurt's descriptive account of love is rooted in a Humean understanding of the will according to which human motivation is ultimately to be explained in terms of an agent's beliefs and desires. Frankfurt, of course, is well known for his analysis of the self in terms of hierarchically ordered desires; his work on love is an extension of this understanding of the nature of our wills and our motivational essences. Love, he suggests, plays an essential role in the lives of human beings as that which sets our final ends, defines our volitional boundaries and hence constitutes our very identities as individuals. Frankfurt argues for a desire-based account of love according to which it plays a foundational role in the motivational structure of human beings. On his

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2. Aquinas's view that love has normative value is in keeping with the view that love "has traditionally been regarded as being rational and as admitting of degrees of moral excellence," Gabrielle Taylor, "Love" (*Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 76, 1976): 154.

3. *Reasons of Love* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). This book is based upon the Romanell-Phi Beta Kappa Lectures which Frankfurt delivered at Princeton in 2000 under the title "Some Thoughts about Norms, Love, and the Goals of Life" and again as the Sherman Lectures at University College London in 2001. My exposition of Frankfurt's account of love is also drawn from his articles "Autonomy, Necessity, and Love" and "On Caring," in *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 129-141, 155-180; and "Some Mysteries of Love," *Lindley Lecture* (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2001). The page numbers in the parenthetical references will refer to *Reasons of Love* unless otherwise indicated.

account, love is a configuration of the will constituted by various relatively stable volitional dispositions and constraints which govern a person's attitudes and conduct in accordance with what he loves. Frankfurt identifies love as a particular mode of *caring*: "Among the things that we care about there are some that we cannot help caring about; and among the things we cannot help caring about are those that we love" ("On Caring," 165). Caring about a particular object or state of affairs, as Frankfurt describes it, consists in having and identifying with a higher-order desire to support and sustain a first-order desire for it. It is not merely a matter of wanting it, or even wanting it more than other things; it requires further a willing *commitment* by which a person sees to it that a particular desire continues to play a significant role in the order of his preferences. This commitment entails a disposition to actively support and sustain the desire as part of one's motivational structure. Moreover, this higher-order desire for the first-order desire to be sustained is not some external force by which a person happens to be moved at some time or another such as an addiction or a passion; rather, it is a desire with which a person *identifies* insofar as he considers it to express what he truly wants.<sup>4</sup>

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4. Frankfurt maintains that it is through caring that a person gives himself volitional continuity, a stable disposition to be motivated in particular ways, and thereby takes an active role in the constitution of his own agency. Love, on his account, is like other modes of caring insofar as it is essentially volitional as opposed to being affective or cognitive. Frankfurt describes it as "essentially a somewhat non-voluntary and complex *volitional* structure that bears both upon how a person is disposed to act and upon how he is disposed to manage the motivations and interests by which he is moved" ("On Caring," 165). The will of one who loves is ordered such that the good of some beloved ideal or object plays a foundational role in ordering his priorities and in guiding his behavior. Frankfurt conceives of love, moreover, as a sort of concern for the good of the beloved which he

Frankfurt rejects rationalist accounts of love according to which love is a response to some perceived value. He maintains that love itself provides the foundation of one's motivational structure and provides human beings with a source of reasons; nevertheless when it comes love, in particular our most basic loves, love itself has no reasons. A particularly striking aspect of Frankfurt's account of love is his rejection of the rationalist view that love essentially consists in the recognition and appreciation of the inherent value of one's beloved. On his view, love is not most basically a response of the lover to the perceived value of the beloved.<sup>5</sup> This is not to deny that the beloved *is* valuable to the lover, but to deny that the perception of value is a necessary condition for the formation and grounding of love. According to Frankfurt, the essential relation between love and value is that our loving is what *makes* something to be of particular value to us: "It is not necessarily as a *result* of recognizing their value and of being captivated by it that we love things. Rather, what we love necessarily *acquires* value for us *because* we love it" (*Reasons of Love*, 39). Hence, the value a lover identifies in his beloved *derives from* and *depends upon* the love itself.

Among human relationships, Frankfurt considers the paradigmatic instance of love to

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characterizes as both essentially *disinterested* in that it involves caring about the beloved object for its own sake rather than for the sake of some other good, and volitionally *constrained* in that it is not a concern over which a person has direct and immediate voluntary control.

5. Frankfurt's view that love is not based upon a response to value stands directly opposed to David Velleman's account of love (based upon the notion of Kantian respect) as most centrally an "arresting awareness" of the inherent value of the beloved which the lover is in the special position of "really seeing." See J. David Velleman. "Love as a Moral Emotion." *Ethics* 109 (1999): 338-374. I will examine Velleman's account of love more closely in the next chapter.

be the kind of selfless devotion a parent has toward her infant or small child. He suggests that this sort of love is not based on the evaluation of the child's inherent value, but that parent's love is what causes the parent to attribute the value to the child that she does. He observes "[t]he particular value I attribute to my children is not inherent in them but depends upon my love for them. The reason they are so precious to me is simply that I love them so much" (40). Frankfurt contends, moreover, that this relation between love and the value of the beloved holds generally, even accounting for the value to us of our own lives. We do not value living as a result of recognizing and appreciating the intrinsic value of our lives; rather it is due to the very fact that we love living that our lives possess such great value for us. Love then, as construed by Frankfurt, is not derived from value; it is, rather, the source or *creator* of value.

The claim that the particular value to us of what we love is the result of our loving somewhat plausible with respect to certain sorts of cases. One of Frankfurt's primary arguments concerns the importance to us *that* we care about, or even love, some thing or another. What grounds our care isn't the value of the object one cares about, but the importance of caring in general. That we care about something is what provides our lives with meaning or purpose, and causes us to flourish as the kinds of beings who, by nature, need to have a sense of purpose. For instance, my Dad loves to play golf. Accordingly, golf is something that is important to him. His love for golf, however, is not based upon the intrinsic value of the game itself (although the game

may have a certain kind of intrinsic value), but rather in the fact that golf is something that he *cares* about. But the value of golf is not based upon its importance in general, but rather in the importance of caring about *something* whether it is golf or some other thing. Frankfurt's claim that caring, or loving, is itself what is important seems right when it comes to this sort of case.

However, there are other sorts of cases in which it is not ultimately the importance to us of caring about *something* that accounts for the value of love, but the intrinsic value of the object of our caring or love. This is particularly true in cases concerning the love for other persons. Certainly it is true that it is important to us as human beings that we care about certain other persons. But there is a deeper sense of importance attached to cases of loving other persons, insofar as such persons are *intrinsically* valuable apart from whether we love them or not. The intrinsic value of persons is not ultimately rooted in our most basic desires, but in the fact that each person is valuable in their own right, and hence we have reasons to love them. Even in Frankfurt's paradigmatic case of the love of a parent for a small child or infant, the value of our caring is not merely based upon their value to us, but in the fact that the child is valuable full stop, regardless of our caring. Granted the parent may not come to love the child on the basis of recognizing her intrinsic value, but should recognize that she *has* intrinsic value, and would have such value even if, for some reason or another, the parent failed to recognize it. The value of the child is not ultimately based upon her value *to the parent* or to anyone else for that matter. Accordingly, contra



Frankfurt, we have normative reasons for loving our children, and indeed other persons we love, based ultimately in their intrinsic value, not merely the value we attribute to them rooted, which is rooted in our most fundamental desires.

In opposition this sort of claim about the normativity of love based upon the inherent value of the one loved, Frankfurt goes on to make a much stronger and more surprising claim about the relation between love and value. *Love itself*, he claims, is the ultimate source of what he refers to as “terminal” or “inherent” value.<sup>6</sup> This is because, on his view, love is what provides us with final ends: ends we seek not merely for their instrumental value, but for their own sake. And final ends are important to us insofar as they are necessary for us to engage in purposeful activity diachronically over the course of our lives and thereby make our lives meaningful (51-5). In the following passage, Frankfurt describes how love meets the human need for final ends by virtue of *generating* terminal or inherent value:

Love is the originating source of terminal value. If we loved nothing, then nothing would possess for us any definitive and inherent worth. There would be nothing that we found ourselves in any way constrained to accept as a final end. By its very nature, loving entails both that we

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6. Frankfurt does not explain here precisely what he means by these terms and so it is difficult to determine whether he is justified in conflating them. Presumably by “terminal value,” he means final value since he holds that it is by loving something that we make it a final end, i.e. a terminus. However, this seems to me quite distinct from having *inherent* value, which may be taken to mean something like *intrinsic* value, i.e. the value of something in itself apart from the subjective attitudes of another. Frankfurt’s view is that the intrinsic value of something, which has to do with the *type* rather than the *amount* of value it possesses, is quite irrelevant to our caring: there are many intrinsically valuable objects and ends which we are under no obligation to care about (12-13). His point is that *by caring*, we make certain objects and ends important to us so that they come to acquire inherent value for us irrespective of whether or not or how much intrinsic value they have.

regard its objects as valuable in themselves and that we have no choice but to adopt those objects as our final ends. Insofar as love is the creator both of inherent or terminal value and of importance, then, it is the ultimate ground of practical rationality (55-56).

Frankfurt thus comes to a significant yet contentious conclusion about the foundations of practical rationality. In setting our final ends, love is not only the source of inherent value; it is also the source of the standards of practical reason. Even more provocative is Frankfurt's suggestion that love is what provides the ultimate source of reasons justifying our moral principles.<sup>7</sup>

He is fully aware that his position is contrary to the views of philosophers who claim that certain objects and states of affairs have inherent value entirely independent of anyone's subjective attitudes or volitional dispositions. However, he denies that this claim has any relevance to matters which pertain to the grounding of practical reason. Even if some object or state of affairs has intrinsic value and so is *worthy* of pursuing as a final end, this would not entail that anyone has an *obligation* to pursue it as such, regardless of how great its inherent worth. Frankfurt contends that the claim that things have inherent value independent of any subjective considerations, if true, "would still provide *no account at all* of how people are to select the ends that they will pursue" (57). On his view, the question of how a person's ends are appropriately

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7. Frankfurt denies not only that there are certain final ends which reason requires us to adopt, but also that reason provides the ultimate justification of our moral principles. He suggests instead that the ultimate ground is determined by what we love: "In the end...the most fundamental source of moral normativity is not in our rationality but in our love for the condition and style of life that moral principles envisage," "Rationalism in Ethics," in *Autonomes Handeln: Beiträge zur Philosophie von Harry G. Frankfurt*. Ed. Monika Betzler (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2000): 272.

established is not primarily a question concerning value, but rather is a question concerning that which a person considers to be of *importance*. Frankfurt considers it a “serious mistake” to think that the importance of some object or end is authentic just in case that object or end has value apart from one’s caring about it (“Importance,” 93). It is not the independent value of something which makes it important to us; the direction of fit, he thinks, is quite the opposite: it is our valuing something that makes it important. On Frankfurt’s view, then, an adequate response to the question of how our ends are appropriately established must take into account what that person cannot help but to consider important to himself, that is, it must take into account what a person loves; but the inherent value of the object of love is not what determines its importance.

The notion of importance plays a significant role in Frankfurt’s account of caring (and love); hence, we should be clear about the distinct (although compatible) notions that he distinguishes between (“Importance,” 92). One way something can be important to us is independent altogether of whether or not we care about it. For instance, I may not care about the fact that I am working in an asbestos infested library. This may simply be because I am unaware that the library contains asbestos, or because I am unaware of the possible negative effects the asbestos will have upon my health. I fail to recognize its importance to me and so do not care about it. Frankfurt’s primary interest, however, is with a different notion of importance. Something may be important to us by virtue of the very fact that we care about it. For instance, my sister

is important to me by virtue of my caring about her. If I did not care about her, she would not have the place of importance in my life that she does.

Accordingly, Frankfurt points out two distinct sorts of justification to which one may appeal as grounds for thinking that something she cares about is *worthy of* her caring. The first sort would involve appealing to the independent importance of some object or end and, on the basis of this, deciding that it is worth caring about. But the second sort would not require her to suppose the object or end is independently important to her at all. She may be justified in caring about something simply by virtue of the fact that caring about it is itself something that is important to her.<sup>8</sup> In cases where the importance to us of something is due to our caring, the critical question to ask is not whether the object is independently important to us such that it warrants our caring, but whether we are warranted in *making* the object important to us by caring about it. This, Frankfurt contends, can only be justified “in terms of the importance of the activity of caring as such” (“Importance,” 93). We might then ask here what grounds the importance of the activity of caring. Is it simply that we care about caring? If is something more, i.e. that we care about certain things in their own right, then it would appear that our justification for caring about those things might depend upon something other than our most fundamental desires. In this case it would appear that we care about the things we do for because apprehend them as

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8. Cf. the above example of the importance of golf to my Dad.

having some sort of value apart from our caring, not merely because caring about some thing or another is important to us. But this seems to imply that we have reasons for caring about certain things, quite independent of the fundamental desire for meaning or purpose in our lives.

This is contrary to Frankfurt's claim that our caring is important to us is in itself apart from the independent importance of the object "primarily because [it is our caring about something which] serves to connect us actively to our lives in ways which are creative of ourselves and which expose us to distinctive possibilities for necessity and for freedom," ("Importance," 93). Our caring about something or another regardless of what it is meets our basic desire for meaning and is hence what constitutes our volitional identities. And this, according to Frankfurt, is what defines the very essence of our identities as persons.<sup>9</sup>

In *The Reasons of Love* Frankfurt makes an even stronger claim about the relation between caring and importance: "It is by caring" he says, "that we infuse the world with importance" (23). If we cared about nothing, nothing would have any importance to us. Frankfurt further claims that loving, as the mode of caring which essentially involves caring about something as an *end in itself* (but not as something

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9. Frankfurt has an interesting and complex account of how our caring, and more basically our loving, is constitutive of our personal identities. Although I won't be able to pursue these issues here, David Velleman provides an intriguing critique of Frankfurt's account of identity in which he denies that we have "motivational essences" of the sort which define our individual essences as persons. See his "Identification and Identity," in *Contours of Agency*, Ed. Sarah Buss and Lee Overton. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002. 104-123. See also Frankfurt's reply in the same volume.

with intrinsic value independent of our loving it), is of fundamental importance to us insofar as it sets our final ends, thus making it possible for us to have sustained commitments and pursuits. In providing our volitional lives with continuity, final ends are essential for us to have the sorts of goals which make our lives meaningful and purposeful. Furthermore, our loving, insofar as it sets our final ends, is the very *source* of reasons by which our volitional and practical lives are directed.

On the flip side of this coin, Frankfurt insists that our loving, at least when it comes to our most basic loves, is not itself subject to rational evaluation. Practical reasoning is involved in setting our final ends only insofar as it can help us to *identify* what it is that we love (55, fn. 9). But with respect to what we love, where we are satisfied or *wholehearted* in our love, Frankfurt insists that questions concerning whether our loving is warranted or whether it might be better for us to love something else instead are not questions we can (practically speaking) take seriously (49). Our disposition to be wholeheartedly satisfied in what we love, Frankfurt contends, does not depend upon any rational assessment of our love; rather, it depends upon a sort of *confidence* we have in our own volitional character (50).

This notion of *confidence* plays a fundamental role in Frankfurt's conception of practical reasoning. As he sees it, the final end or terminus of our practical reasoning is not truth about the value of what we love; the final end, rather, is confidence in our own volitional characters, characters constituted by love itself. Barbara Herman succinctly and precisely summarizes Frankfurt's position as follows: "the norms of

practical reflection are a guide to confidence, not truth—that is, to confidence in ourselves as valuers, not to any truth about value.”<sup>10</sup> It is at this point of confidence in ourselves and in our loving that we reach the substratum of practical reasoning.

Hence when we are wholeheartedly satisfied with our loving, that is, when our wills are undivided with respect to what we love, there is nothing in us to oppose our love with the result that we would seriously attempt to alter our wills by trying to stop loving what we do or to love differently. What we love at the most fundamental level provides the final end, the terminus, of practical reasoning, but love itself—at the end of the day—has no reasons.

But is this really the end of the story? I intend to show that it is not. Although the sorts of desires associated with love are not usually the result of some process of rational deliberation, either conscious or unconscious, they are nonetheless desires which are responsive to reasons. And reasons, it seems plausible to think, are grounded in truth about value.<sup>11</sup> I shall begin by addressing the first part of this claim: that love consists in the sorts of higher-order desires which are themselves responsive to reasons.

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10. Barbara Herman, “Bootstrapping,” in *Contours of Agency*, ed. Sarah Buss and Lee Overton (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002), 261. Frankfurt himself praises Herman’s account of his position as “not only extraordinarily comprehensive and accurate,” but also as “sensitive and insightful, presenting [his] views in ways that bring out quite vividly just what they amount to and what they count for.” See his “Reply to Barbara Herman” *op. cit.* 277.

11. Here I am in agreement with Herman although I do not follow her in holding that the connection between reasons and values is best explained by Kant’s “more metaphysically contentful notion of the will.”

Frankfurt's claim that love has no reasons cuts to the core of rationalist accounts of human motivation insofar as he takes the objects of a person's non-voluntary pre-rational desires, objects of desire which are effectively immune to rational evaluation, to be the objects and ends in which all of the other objects of desire are ultimately desired. But for Frankfurt it is not the objects of our basic desires, but the desires themselves which constitute our final ends. Contrary to Frankfurt, I contend that although it is certainly true that most basic desires or loving constitutes a source of reasons it is a mistake to deny that love itself, which he identifies with volitional desire, is a response to the perceived value of the object love and as such rationally (and morally) evaluable. Hence, I intend to argue against Frankfurt and show why it is more plausible to think that we have normative reasons for loving what we do such that we can be wrong in loving certain objects or ends, or giving them the place in our motivational structure that they occupy. Accordingly, in this section, I will explore why I find it compelling to think that the higher-order desires Frankfurt associates with love are the sorts of desires which themselves are responsive to reasons concerning the value of the object and ends loved, and which are evaluable with respect to whether or not such objects or ends possess genuine intrinsic value, rather than merely with respect to our more basic desires.<sup>12</sup> I will consider why it

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12. In his discussion about Frankfurt's account of identification, Richard Moran appeals to the distinction between brute desires and the more complex and sophisticated sorts of desires which depend upon our evaluative judgments. He suggests that it is by virtue of their being responsive to reasons that we are active with respect to some of our desires in such a way that they can be said to



seems plausible to think that love involves the sorts of desires which arise from our rational judgments about what is worthwhile or good to be pursued. The first reason is that it makes sense that when there is a lapse of reasons for loving, the loving itself may no longer be considered normatively appropriate.<sup>13</sup>

To see how this is so, it will prove useful to consider a hypothetical example involving someone who is wholeheartedly satisfied in her loving, but comes to discover some terrible truth about the character of the person she loves, a discovery which gives her reason to oppose her love and to alter the priority the love occupies in the structuring of her motivations and preferences. Consider a case in which a grown woman with a close and loving relationship with her father comes to discover that all of her life she had been mistaken about the sort of person her father really is. Not only does she love her father, but also her young son, whom she also loves, has a deep and abiding mutual bond with him as his grandson. The loving commitments between these family members could be accurately described as wholehearted—there is no uncertainty or ambivalence which would cause them to seriously question

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really belong to us. See his article “Frankfurt on Identification: Ambiguities of Activity in Mental Life” in *Contours of Agency*. Ed. Sarah Buss and Lee Overton (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002) 189-217. This sort of distinction between desires is now well established in the literature. Cf. Thomas Nagel’s distinction between “motivated” and “unmotivated” desires in *the Possibility of Altruism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), Stuart Hampshire’s distinction between “thought-dependent” and “thought-independent” desires in *Freedom of the Individual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), T.M. Scanlon’s “judgment-sensitive” attitudes, with specific reference to desire in *What We Owe Each Other* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

13. Cf. Niko Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship,” 168.

whether they should love differently than they do. That is until the woman makes the shocking and dreadful discovery that long ago her father had committed unthinkable war crimes, crimes which included the cold-blooded murder of innocent children (approximately the age of her son) with respect to which he is unrepentant.<sup>14</sup> No doubt such a discovery would lead to deep conflict within her. It is likely that she may come to doubt her filial commitment to her father and perhaps come to oppose her love for him. Upon realizing the truth about her father's character, the woman finds that a reason for her love, namely, that she knows her father's character and knows him to be a good man, is not based in the truth. Thus an important reason for her love is undermined and she comes to question whether her love is normatively appropriate. She may find that she can no longer support or sustain her desire to be in a close relationship with him and decide it best that she and her son cease any interaction with him. After all, he is not the man she has always believed him to be.

Of course this situation is extreme, as it would no doubt have to be in a case describing someone who comes to oppose a love with respect to which she has previously been wholeheartedly satisfied. My primary interest in this example

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14. This example is inspired by Costa Gravas's 1989 film *Music Box* about a Hungarian immigrant accused of heinous war crimes committed nearly fifty years prior to his indictment. His daughter, a lawyer, agrees to defend him hoping to prove his innocence, but ends up discovering that the allegations against her father are true when she finds a picture of him executing a young boy, the age of her son (his grandson). The screenwriter, Joe Eszterhas, a native Hungarian who immigrated to the US when he was six, bases the story on his memories of growing up in the post-Holocaust years. He recalls, "You have no idea how terrible it is to discover that your own people did these horrendous things...For my generation of Hungarian kids, the question 'What did you do in the war, daddy?' had potentially nightmarish implications."

concerns how such opposition is best explained. Frankfurt would presumably attribute the opposition to an inner conflict among a person's most basic desires. Upon discovering her father's true character, the woman's love for her father comes into conflict with another of her loves, a more basic love such as her love for her son, self-love, or even her love for an abstract ideal such as justice. Whatever the real conflict may be, Frankfurt's account of it is unsatisfactory. We have seen that he describes the sort of internal conflict which may afflict a person with respect to her most basic desires and commitments as symptomatic of a lack of confidence. But here we run into an apparent circularity at the center of his account. Frankfurt describes the internal conflict which may occur between a person's basic desires in terms of a crisis of confidence. But this crisis of confidence he explains as an internal conflict between a person's basic desires. So it appears that, in effect, wholeheartedness and confidence amount to very nearly the same thing. If this is right, then it would seem that the notion of confidence is not really playing any sort of explanatory role at all. But perhaps Frankfurt does not intend for it to do so. This may be because, on his considered view, no explanation is necessary or even possible. Our most basic loves do not admit of explanation, except perhaps in terms of biology or natural selection.

But it is more plausible that the inner conflict the woman experiences is better understood as a response to the lapse of reasons for her love. By allowing that the higher-order desires comprising love are the sorts of desires responsive to our evaluative judgments, we can arrive at a more satisfactory explanation of how it is that

someone could come to oppose a love with respect to which she has antecedently been wholeheartedly satisfied. I submit that this opposition is best explained as the result of the agent's having formed an evaluative judgment that her love was ill founded, based upon a falsehood. And this judgment has given her reason to oppose her love and the motivations associated with it inasmuch as she deems the love no longer normatively appropriate.<sup>15</sup>

Vis-à-vis Frankfurt, it is plausible to think that questions concerning whether or not something we love is itself independently valuable are not only legitimate, but also indicate something significant about our individual characters. A notable problem which Frankfurt's account of value and importance cannot resolve is the possibility that we could be objectively mistaken in making something valuable to us which does not have independent or objective value, or in making something more valuable to us than is warranted. To see why this is a problem, we might consider Charles Dickens's well-known character Pip Pirrip. Recall that Pip grew up in lowly circumstances prior to receiving a substantial income from an unknown benefactor under the expressed terms that he become a gentleman, "in a word a young fellow of great expectations."<sup>16</sup>

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15. Frankfurt would not deny that evaluative judgment is involved in some respect. He may say that the woman's love for her father is judged inappropriate in virtue of conflicting with her other more basic loves. It isn't evaluation *per se* that Frankfurt wishes to avoid; rather he wishes to avoid evaluation which is not grounded in what we love. Contrary to this, I am suggesting that our love is subject to standards of evaluation which are *independent* from our loves, i.e. standards related to the worth or value of the object loved as good to be pursued.

16. *Great Expectations; Oxford World Classics*, ed. Margaret Cardwell, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 135.

Pip, partially as the result of his fixation on Estella, the cold-hearted prodigy of the eccentric Miss Havisham, comes to despise any of his prior associations with anything she (Estella) might consider “common,” including his dear friend Joe whom he describes retrospectively as always steady, always faithful, “amiable, honest-hearted, duty-doing.”

It is worth noticing that the story is told from the perspective of an older more mature Pip who, with the benefit of hindsight, has come to realize that his deepest commitments and loves were misplaced. In the pursuit of social status, he valued the esteem of a person who did not value him and which turned out not to be genuinely valuable, or at least not more valuable than the person he forsook in order to pursue that esteem. It is with deep regret that the mature Pip recalls how he rejected his most faithful friend for the sake of his infatuation and ambition. This regret, of which we can certainly find plenty of real life examples, is one reason why it is plausible to think that there is an objective sense of value which does not derive from our caring, and that this sense of value is essential to what makes certain objects and ends genuinely worthy of our care or of our love. Of course, Frankfurt may give a different analysis of Pip’s regret. He may say, for instance, that because our loves are subject to change one may come to negatively assess what he previously took to be of value. In this way, Frankfurt could explain the case without relying on the idea that the younger Pip was

objectively mistaken.<sup>17</sup> But this sort of explanation is unsatisfactory. Why would Pip *regret* what he did if at the time that he did it, he was acting in accordance with the reasons his love provided him? It is not simply in virtue of loving differently that the mature Pip considers his past actions regrettable, but his awareness that even at the time of these actions, he was *mistaken* in valuing what he did to the exclusion of what was of genuine intrinsic value.

In light of this regret, it seems right to think that our loving itself is something which can be correctly described as subject to our rational evaluation of what is normatively appropriate or inappropriate. We can think reflexively about our loves, and assess whether or not we are warranted in making particular objects or ends valuable to us by loving them. As I have suggested above, it is in virtue of the rational capacity to reflect upon our desires and to assess their appropriateness that human beings have a certain kind of control over what it is that we make valuable to ourselves by our loving. If we come to recognize that our loves conflict with our considered judgments about what is good to be pursued, we have reason to oppose our loves and to love differently. This is in light of the fact that our love and the position it occupies in our motivational structure is subject to rational evaluation; if we come to see that our reasons for loving are unfounded such that the love is deemed normatively inappropriate, we should be moved to alter that love.

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17. I am grateful to E.S. Elizondo for compelling me to consider this possible reply to my example.

In response to the claim that reasons are a response to perceived value, Frankfurt reiterates his own view that “values track love and that love—if we look to the end of the story—has no reasons.”<sup>18</sup> Another reason to think this view is mistaken is to consider it from the perspective of the one loved. Here we will consider another literary example, in this case, Jane Austen’s remarkable heroine Elizabeth Bennett. Recall the first time Elizabeth is proposed to by Mr. Darcy.<sup>19</sup> Darcy proclaims his love for her after having struggled in vain against his better judgment. He rehearses all of the reasons why he should not love her—“his sense of her inferiority--of its being a degradation—of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination.” Elizabeth responds with justified indignation to his declaration of love, “I might as well enquire why with so evident design of offending and insulting me, you chose to tell me that you liked me against your will, against your reason, and even against your character.”<sup>20</sup> What is striking about this interaction is just how unsatisfying it would be, from the perspective of the one loved, to believe that someone loved you *despite* his rational assessment of your value.<sup>21</sup> This I submit is

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18. See his “Reply to Barbara Herman,” in *Contours of Agency*, ed. Sarah Buss and Lee Overton (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002) 276.

19. Of course Frankfurt may object to this example since it involves romantic love which he thinks cannot provide a very illuminating example of love insofar as it is complicated by passions and other self-interested desires with respect to the beloved object. However, those issues are not of any real relevance to the features of the example which I am primarily interested in here.

20. *Pride and Prejudice* (New York: Knopf, 1991) 175-176.

21. It might be objected that loving someone despite one’s assessment of the independent value of the beloved is the very ideal of unconditional love. This I think is wrong. Unconditional

because it is partly constitutive of genuine love that involves the recognition and appreciation of the independent and inherent value of the beloved—a value that does not depend merely upon the subjective attitudes of the lover.<sup>22</sup> Although Frankfurt may be right that love does not generally originate from a positive assessment of the value of the beloved, it is a mistake to think that our love is not in some way grounded in our perceptions of the independent value of what we love. In cases where a person's love does not reflect his considered judgments about the independent value of the beloved, something strikes us as inappropriate about it. All this is not to say that love *consists in* the response to the perceived value of the beloved, at least not entirely. Rather, it is to say that, normatively speaking, recognition of the independent value of the beloved is a *minimum condition* of love.

Frankfurt's primary insight is that love itself is of central importance to us and to the ordering of our motivations insofar as it specifies what we pursue as final ends; but for this very reason, it seems to me that our loving must be subject to normative standards beyond those set for us by other things we love. Because of the importance

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love does not involve making an otherwise worthless object into something valuable to us. Rather, it involves being committed to someone, recognizing and appreciating their intrinsic value, in spite of the things they may do which incline us to give up on them. I shall consider this in the final chapter on Aquinas's conception of charity (*caritas*).

22. What Darcy feels for Elizabeth at this point does not appear to be love, but rather some sort of blind passion, the kind Gabrielle Taylor identifies with infatuation: “[Infatuation] is the very suitably linked with the type of desire which may lead a man to act against his better judgment, while the type of want ascribed to love accounts for the view that the lover tends to value what he loves,” (“Love,” 156).



to us of loving, it strikes us as morally inappropriate to love something we cannot reasonably consider to be valuable in its own right, that is, something we do not consider to be intrinsically worth pursuing. There are rational constraints upon the sorts of objects we can appropriately consider to be final ends if we are to live genuinely happy and morally praiseworthy lives.<sup>23</sup> Although it is no doubt true that we make things important to us by loving them, and hence make valuable to us the things we love, it must also be true that to be fully rational, a person must love things that are themselves independently worth valuing and thus the kinds of things that can we rationally assess as good to be pursued. Thus while Frankfurt is certainly right in what he affirms—our loves do create value and in doing so provide a source *of* reasons, he is wrong in what he denies—that there are reasons *for* love such that our loves are rationally and even morally evaluable not merely in terms of other more basic loves, but in terms of the intrinsic value of their object. Love is normatively appropriate or inappropriate depending upon the genuine value of its object. This is precisely what Aquinas affirms in his account of love and its role in human motivation to which I now turn.

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23. Frankfurt takes this into account when he considers an example in which what a person cares about is avoiding stepping on cracks in the sidewalk. The error this person makes, he explains, is “not that he cares about something which is not really important to him. Rather, his error consists in caring about, and thereby imbuing with genuine importance, something which is not worth caring about.” And the reason it is not worth caring about, he maintains, is that “it is not important to the person to make avoiding the cracks in the sidewalk important to himself,” (“Importance,” 93). But here he is trading on an ambiguity between the objective and subjective senses of importance. It seems much more plausible to think that the error consists in making something *subjectively* important to oneself which has no *objective* importance or value.

## B. AQUINAS ON LOVE AND REASON

I have suggested that one of Frankfurt's central insights is his identification of love both with the final ends of human beings and with the starting point of practical reason—a move that strikes some contemporary moral philosophers as quite distinct and innovative. However, it is interesting that, centuries earlier in the history of philosophy, love played much the same dual role as the originating principle of practical reason and as that which provides us with our final ends. The primacy of love to practical rationality is a hallmark of much medieval ethical thought, although with this crucial difference: insofar as practical rationality is understood as being closely tied with morality, love and moral virtue are inextricably connected; indeed, love constitutes the very centerpiece of Aquinas's moral psychology. In the latter half of this chapter, I shall argue that Aquinas offers a more compelling theory of love according to which our loves are subject to objective rational constraints, but which preserves Frankfurt's central insight that love is a primary source of reasons in the lives of human beings and, as such, is a creator of value.

On Aquinas's account, love is responsive to reasons and is rationally and morally evaluable in terms of this relation. This is true both with respect to the kinds of love which belong to the rational appetite or will which follow directly upon the judgment of reason, but even with respect to the passion, *amor*, which belongs to the sensory appetite and is causally explained in terms of one's sensory apprehension of

what is suitable or fitting to the one loving.<sup>24</sup> In the next section I shall consider Aquinas's descriptive account of love in general in order to make clear its general structure. Then I shall consider *amor* in the stricter sense of the term as that which belongs to the sensory appetite. On Aquinas's view, even the passion *amor* is responsive to reason and morally evaluable to the extent that it is subject to one's rational judgments about the good to be pursued. As the principle of the other passions, *amor* plays a crucial role in the emotional life of the individual. Finally, I shall consider love as it pertains to the rational appetite or will. Aquinas calls this intellectual love (*dilectio*) because it involves choice about what the intellect apprehends as the good to be pursued. Intellectual love is most important as it provides the centerpiece of Aquinas's moral psychology and is the primary sort of love between persons.

#### 1. AQUINAS ON LOVE IN GENERAL

I begin with a descriptive account of the various kinds of love Aquinas distinguishes between before moving on to consider the normative features of love

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24. Aquinas's most comprehensive treatment of *amor* comes in the *Treatise on the Passions* (*ST* I-II 22-48) where he begins by identifying it as something belonging to the appetite (*ST* I-II 23.1). Appetite (*appetitus*) in its most general sense simply denotes the inclination or a natural tendency of any given thing (living or non-living) toward some end: "An appetite is nothing other than a certain inclination toward something on the part of what has the appetite." (*ST* I-II 8.1). As I explain below, the metaphysical picture underlying Aquinas's account of appetite is rooted in his natural teleology: everything that has a substantial form, by virtue of that form, has a natural inclination toward some end to which it is particularly well-suited; this basic inclination is a thing's natural appetite (*appetitus naturalis*). The natural appetite thus serves as an internal principle of motion by which an object is inclined toward some end suitable to its nature.

and its relation to rationality. According to Aquinas, *amor* in general and *dilectio* or intellectual love in particular are appetitive responses to the cognitive apprehension of some object or end *as good* and something to be pursued. His theory does allow for a certain sort of subjectivity—we may love what we apprehend *as valuable* and in doing so make it valuable *to us*. Still, there is an objective constraint upon what counts as a proper object of *amor*: the cognitive valuation of the object must be rationally *justified* if the appetitive response is to be considered appropriate. On Aquinas's view, *amor* is rationally and morally evaluable not only in terms of the actual value of the object to which it is directed, but also in terms of the relation of its relation to reason. Aquinas holds that *amor*, generally speaking, is morally good when it follows from a true judgment of reason.

The term *amor* as employed by Aquinas has both a broad and a narrow extension. While the narrow extension is limited to the passion belonging to the sensory appetite, the broad extension includes intellectual love or *dilectio* which belongs to the rational appetite or will.<sup>25</sup> For purposes of elucidation I begin by sketching relevant features of his more general account. According to Aquinas's psychology, the souls of human beings and non-human animals have both cognitive powers by which they apprehend information about the world, and appetitive powers

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25. Aquinas distinguishes between four terms, each of which pertains in some sense to the notion of love: *amor*, *dilectio*, *caritas*, and *amicitia*. He uses the term *amor* in a general sense which includes *dilectio* and *caritas*: *dilectio* involves choice and so pertains to the will; *caritas* denotes a certain perfection of love inasmuch as it is directed toward the highest good, i.e. God. In its most proper sense *amor* is a passion which belongs only to the sensory appetite of cognitive beings (*ST* I-II 26.3).

by which they are inclined towards a particular object or end apprehended as good to be pursued or away from an object or end apprehended as bad. Generally speaking, *amor* just is the internal source or principle of any appetitive motion toward an object or end apprehended as good to be pursued.<sup>26</sup> Aquinas ascribes a unique principle of motion, i.e. a unique kind of love, to each kind of appetite: natural appetite which is shared in common by all things by virtue of their substantial forms, sensory appetite which is shared in common by all cognitive creatures (i.e. non-rational animals and human beings) by virtue of cognition, and intellectual appetite which is proper to human beings insofar as it follows upon the judgment of reason.

In each one of these appetites, the thing which is called love (*amor*) is the principle of motion tending toward the end loved. But in the natural appetite, this sort of principle of motion is the natural suitedness (*connaturalitas*) of the appetite toward the end to which it tends, which can be called natural love (*amor naturalis*), just as the natural tendency of a heavy body downward towards the center place [of the earth] (*ad locum medium*) by virtue of its weight (*gravitatem*) can be called natural love. And similarly, the apprehension of some good as suitable (*coaptatio*) to the sensory appetite or to the will, that is, the approval (*complacentia*) of the good so apprehended, is called either sensory love (*amor sensitivus*), or intellectual or rational love. Therefore, sensory love is in the sensory

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26. Aquinas's most comprehensive treatment of *amor* comes in the *Treatise on the Passions* (*ST* I-II 22-48) where he begins by identifying it as something belonging to the appetite (*ST* I-II 23.1). Appetite (*appetitus*) in its most general sense simply denotes the inclination or a natural tendency of any given thing (living or non-living) toward some end: "An appetite is nothing other than a certain inclination toward something on the part of what has the appetite." (*ST* I-II 8.1). The metaphysical picture underlying Aquinas's account of appetite is rooted in his natural teleology: everything that has a substantial form, by virtue of that form, has a natural inclination toward some end to which it is particularly well-suited; this basic inclination is a thing's natural appetite (*appetitus naturalis*). The natural appetite thus serves as an internal principle of motion by which an object is inclined toward some end suitable to its nature.

appetite, just as intellectual love (*amor intellectivus*) is in the intellectual appetite (*ST* I-II.26.1).<sup>27</sup>

So natural love, the internal source or principle of the subject's natural inclination towards a particular end, just is the subject's natural suitedness (*connaturalitas*) for the end to which it is inclined by its very form or nature. Hence the weight (*gravitas*) of a boulder, the internal principle by which it is naturally inclined downward, may be conceived of as the boulder's "natural love." All things, according to Aquinas have natural love for some object or end to which it is naturally suited by virtue of its substantial form, i.e. that by virtue of which each thing is what it is, and which causes the existence of each thing *simpliciter* (as opposed to the accidental form which causes the thing to exist *as such*, e.g. qualities such as white or hot).<sup>28</sup>

The substantial form of a human being is the rational soul since the rational soul is what causes the human being to be a human being and without which the human being would not exist as a thing of its kind. Human beings are thus inclined toward happiness, the end for which they are naturally suited in accordance with their essentially rational natures. While it seems odd to apply the term *amor* to the *gravitas* of a boulder, it is important to keep in mind the direction in which Aquinas tends to

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27. In appetitu autem naturali, principium huiusmodi motus est connaturalitas appetentis ad id in quod tendit, quae dici potest amor naturalis, sicut ipsa connaturalitas corporis gravis ad locum medium est per gravitatem, et potest dici amor naturalis. Et similiter coaptatio appetitus sensitivi, vel voluntatis, ad aliquod bonum, idest ipsa complacentia boni, dicitur amor sensitivus, vel intellectivus seu rationalis. Amor igitur sensitivus est in appetitu sensitivi, sicut amor intellectivus in appetitu intellectivo.

28. *ST* I 76.4

build his account of the more obscure aspects of human psychology by beginning with the more general theory about the natural order of things and showing how this general theory applies in the more complex case of human beings.<sup>29</sup>

Accordingly, his metaphysical teleology provides the basis upon which Aquinas goes on to provide an account of *amor* in the proper sense of the term, i.e. as a passion of the sensory part of the soul. As we have seen, Aquinas holds that the natural inclination of any given thing is grounded in its substantial form, and this internal inclination is what moves a thing toward an end suitable or fitting to it as a thing of its kind.

Much behavior of human beings and non-human animals, however, cannot be explained simply in terms of natural inclinations, but must take into account other factors by which they are moved to act in particular ways, such as the manner in which they respond to features of the environment taken in via the senses. Due to their perceptual capacities, cognitive beings are capable of engaging the world in more complex ways and this requires a richer set of explanatory principles. Hence, Aquinas claims, “forms are found in a more elevated way than in those things which lack

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29. Robert Pasnau provides the following explanation of Aquinas’s methods: “One might suppose that this ascription of appetite [and by extension *amor*] to all of nature is some kind crude anthropomorphism, the dead-end project of explaining nature in terms of concepts that have a place only human psychology. In fact, Aquinas’s project is precisely the opposite. He is not trying to bring psychology to bear on the rest of nature, but rather to use his general theory of the natural order to understand human beings...Human beings are a part of the natural order, and work much like other members of that order,” *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 201.

cognition,” (*ST* I 80.1). The forms of sensory particulars apprehended either through the senses or through the imagination (and hence called apprehended forms), provide a further source of motivation in cognitive beings. This apprehension of sensory particulars as goods to be pursued or evils to be avoided can, under the right conditions, influence the sensory appetite thus giving rise to an inclination toward or away from the apprehended object. In nonrational animals, certain appetitive responses are hard-wired, so to speak. The appetitive inclination follows immediately upon the apprehension of the appetitive object and (barring certain perceived obstacles) the animal acts accordingly. For instance, the dog perceiving the bone as desirable is automatically inclined to pursue it, or the sheep perceiving the wolf as inimical is automatically inclined to flee.<sup>30</sup> In the case of human beings, however, we shall see that the intellect plays a fundamental role not only in how we apprehend particular sensory objects, but also in the ways we respond to the inclinations to which they may give rise. Aquinas refers to such inclinations of the sensory appetite as the passions (*passiones*) (*ST* I-II 22.2). In the case of human beings even the passions can be evaluated as normatively appropriate or inappropriate based upon whether or not they are in accordance with right reason.

Among the passions, Aquinas maintains that *amor* is first in the order of execution (as opposed to the order of intention) insofar as it plays the initiating role in

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30. Of course the account is much more rudimentary than this explanation suggests. The dog sees the bone and simply goes for it without any universal concept such as “desirable.”



the appetitive motion toward an object or end apprehended as good to be pursued. The stages of the appetitive motion toward an apprehended good are as follows: 1) *amor* is the appetite's natural affinity (*aptitudo* or *proportio*) for the object apprehended as good to be pursued. Hence it is the principle of motion which gives rise to 2) desire or concupiscentia (*concupiscentia*), the actual motion of the appetite toward the object or end. Upon attaining the beloved object or end, the appetite is brought to its ultimate resting point, 3) joy or delight in the beloved object (*ST* I-II 25.2; Cf. 23.4, 26.2).<sup>31</sup> Hence, in the order of execution, the actual motion of the appetite, *amor* is first, although the converse is true with respect to the order of intention, since "good has the nature of an end, which is prior in the intention, but posterior in execution" (*ST* I-II. 25.2).<sup>32</sup>

Aquinas considers *amor* to be the principle of motion in the sensory appetite and hence as primary among the passions.<sup>33</sup> Although it is in his treatments of the passions where he describes the appetitive motion which *amor* sets in motion, the

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31. Manifestum est autem quod omne quod tendit ad finem aliquem, primo quidem habet aptitudinem seu proportionem ad finem, nihil enim tendit in finem non proportionatum; secundo, movetur ad finem; tertio, quiescit in fine post eius consecutionem. Ipsa autem aptitudo sive proportio appetitus ad bonum est amor, qui nihil aliud est quam complacentia boni; motus autem ad bonum est desiderium vel concupiscentia; quies autem in bono est gaudium vel delectatio.

32. Bonum autem habet rationem finis, qui quidem est prior in intentione, sed est posterior in consecutione.

33. The analogy with motion, however, is limited in its ability to accurately describe the nature of love. The analogy appears to suggest that love ceases once the beloved object is attained and the appetitive motion comes to rest in delight or joy. However, this appearance is misleading. On Aquinas's view, love and desire remain even when the lover has attained the beloved object.

same appetitive motion is attributed *mutatis mutandis* to the intellectual appetite and hence to intellectual love or *dilectio* to which I will return in section C. First, however, given that the passions, and in particular the passion *amor* play a significant motivational role in Aquinas's moral psychology, it will prove useful to look briefly at Aquinas's account of the passions, and how, even at the sensory level, *amor* is normatively appropriate or inappropriate in terms of the suitability of its object and its relation to right reason.

## 2. AMOR THE PASSION

Passions, according to Aquinas, are occurrent affective mental states of the sensory part of the soul.<sup>34</sup> A passion is an occurrent state insofar as it involves the apprehension of an external principle which causes a sort of change within the subject and which endures only so long as the external principle continues to influence her. More specifically, a passion is an *intentional* state of the sensory appetite: it is directed toward a formal object in terms of which the passion is specified. For instance, the formal object of fear is a future evil (or what is apprehended as a future evil).<sup>35</sup> Moreover, passions involve a *target*, that is, a particular object (either physically present

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34. I am here indebted to Peter King's elucidation of Aquinas's account of the passions. King explains the account by way of analogy with perception highlighting the parallel structure between the cognitive and appetitive capacities of the sensory part of the soul. See his "Aquinas on the Passions," in *Aquinas's Moral Theory* ed. MacDonald & Stump (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999): 102-110.

35. Anthony Kenny has influenced contemporary work on the emotions by highlighting the role of intentionality of the passions in medieval thought. *Action, Emotion, and Will* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), 191ff.

or present to the imagination) toward which the passion is directed.<sup>36</sup> This is what separates a passion from more general feelings or sensations such as dread or anxiety; whereas these general feelings are not directed towards anything particular, the passion fear is directed to a particular, for instance, my apprehension of the wolf growling from ten feet away and preparing to attack.

Further, Aquinas maintains that some sort of transformation always accompanies the passions, qua motions of the sensory soul, to the body (*ST* I-II 22.1, 3; Cf. *ST* I 75.3). Corporeal creatures, both human beings and non-human animals, are subject to physical changes, and such changes are partly constitutive of a passion. Just as the sheep has a physical impulse to flee upon the sight of the wolf, so the human being may experience a rush of adrenaline, or an increased heart rate or some other bodily change which gives rise to the feelings characteristic of fear. According to the preceding conditions, then, we might generally characterize Aquinas's account of a passion as a complex psychophysiological motion involving three essential components: (1) the *apprehension* of an intentional object (i.e. a particular object apprehended either by the senses or the imagination as something to be pursued or avoided), (2) the *inclination* of the sensory appetite toward or away from the object

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36. The term "target" is used here as a technical term designating the actual object toward which the passion is directed. Cf. de Sousa, 115-116. The term, as used in this context, originates in Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1951).

apprehended, and (3) a *physiological change* in the subject resulting in the characteristic feeling of the passion.

I have indicated that as *cognitive* beings both non-human animals and human beings are subject to passions. I should however stress that the passions of human beings as essentially *rational* creatures have a degree of complexity not found in their non-rational counterparts. According to Aquinas's Aristotelian psychology, human beings are unique insofar as they have *rational* souls comprised of increasingly complex hierarchically structured powers or potentialities specified in terms of their functions. The most basic of the powers, possessed by all living things, is the nutritive power by virtue of which humans grow and reproduce. The sensory power, possessed by all animals capable of cognition, is that by virtue of which they perceive and are moved. The most complex and sophisticated power, possessed uniquely by human beings and specifying what is essential to them, is the intellective power by virtue of which they engage in higher-level cognitive and affective activities. These traditional distinctions play an important explanatory role in Aquinas's psychology, but may at times obscure the fact that Aquinas views the soul as a *unity*—it is the whole animal which apprehends, is moved, acts and, in the case of human beings, also thinks and understands. Aquinas holds that these distinct powers or capacities influence one another in various manners because they are all parts of the *same* soul.

A human being possessed of a rational soul has two distinct sources of motivation: one sensory and the other intellectual. Yet even the *sensory* appetites of

adult human beings are more sophisticated than those of small children and non-human animals insofar as they are inclinations or appetites of a *rational* soul and, as such, are rationally permeated and permeable. Consequently, Aquinas's theory allows that animals and small children have passions; nevertheless, the passions of fully rational adult human beings may be marked by a level of sophistication not possible in the case of non-rational beings. For purposes of this paper, I restrict discussion to the passion *amor* as it occurs in adult human beings, since their passions are most of all subject to rational evaluation.

We have seen that the passions in general are characterized by at least three conditions: the *apprehension* of a particular intentional object, an *inclination* toward (or away from) the object, and some sort of *bodily change*. In the case of *amor*, the formal object of love is a sensory good apprehended through either the senses or the imagination. Its target is a particular: the individual object loved. Aquinas further specifies sensory *amor* as the aptitude (*coaptatio*) or affinity (*complacentia*) of the sensory appetite for a particular good apprehended *as good* and to be pursued (*ST* I-II 23.1). This apprehension or cognition of a sensory good, then, constitutes a necessary condition of *amor*. Citing Augustine's claim that "no one is able to love something unknown,"<sup>37</sup> Aquinas argues that cognition (*cognitio*) of a sensory object *as pleasurable or good* is what gives rise to *amor*.

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37. Nullus potest amare aliquid incognitum (*de Trin* X 1).

Good is a cause of *amor* in that it is its object. But good is not an object of appetite unless it is apprehended. And so love requires some apprehension of the good which is loved. On account of this, Aristotle says that the bodily vision is a principle of sensory *amor*...Hence cognition is a cause of *amor* for the same reason as the good, which cannot be loved unless it is cognized (*ST I-II 27.2*).<sup>38</sup>

Aquinas identifies the cause of *amor* with its proper object which, as we have seen, is a sensory good (*ST I-II 27.1*), but a sensory good cannot be loved unless it is cognized; hence, cognition of a sensory object apprehended either through the senses or the imagination is a precondition of *amor*.

But mere cognition is not sufficient to give rise to the passion; the object loved must be cognized *in a particular light*: as good, not in the universal or all-things-considered sense or good, but in the particular sense of being pleasurable or enjoyable and to be pursued as such. This apprehension of the sensory object *as good*, however, need not involve a full-blown judgment of reason. The passions in general are appetites or inclinations which arise from *sensory* cognition and require a sort of perceptual evaluation of a sensory object, rather than a universal or all-thing-considered judgment. Hence, passions are

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38. Bonum est causa amoris per modum obiecti. Bonum autem non est obiectum appetitus, nisi prout est apprehensum. Et ideo amor requirit aliquam apprehensionem boni quod amatur. Et propter hoc philosophus dicit, IX *Ethic.*, quod visio corporalis est principium amoris sensitivi...Sic igitur cognitio est causa amoris, ea ratione qua et bonum, quod non potest amari nisi cognitum. Aquinas elucidates this passage from Aristotle in his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Pleasure at the sight of a woman is the beginning of love for her; for no one begins to love a woman unless he has been first delighted by her beauty," (*In Ethic.*, 1824).

more analogous to forms of perception than to forms of judgment insofar as they belong to the *sensory* power of the soul.

Aquinas's general theory of the passions holds in common certain features of what many contemporary philosophers classify as cognitivist theories of the emotions.<sup>39</sup> These theorists maintain that emotions require an attitude directed at a *proposition* and identify emotions as judgments of value.<sup>40</sup> As we have seen, Aquinas's theory of the passions does not fall under a description of this sort, since propositional attitudes are functions of the intellective rather than the cognitive power of the soul. But as Ronald de Sousa suggests, propositional attitudes are not the only cognitive states. De Sousa proposes a cognitive account inspired by a model of perception rather than judgment according to which: "emotions are genuine representations not just of the inside world of the body but also, through that, of the external world of value. As representations, they have a mind-to-world direction of

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39. In trying to locate where Aquinas's theory belongs in contemporary taxonomy, it is important to stress that the sense of the term "passion" as employed by Aquinas is not identical to the contemporary sense of the term "emotion;" many phenomena which we now refer to as emotions fail to meet Aquinas's criteria for what constitutes a passion. Nevertheless, it seems right to think that Aquinas's passions constitute at least a significant subset of the emotions. So, roughly speaking, it seems plausible to classify Aquinas's theory of the passions as a "cognitivist theory," insofar as it involves regarding some object or end *as good* or *as bad*.

40. Theories of this sort are championed by Robert Solomon, "Emotions & Choice," in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980): 251-281 (although more recently he has expressed that he finds the term "cognitivist" to be infelicitous, "Emotions, Thoughts, and Feelings," 2004); see also Martha Nussbaum, "Emotions as Judgments of Value and Importance," *Thinking about Feeling*, ed. Robert Solomon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 183-199.

fit.”<sup>41</sup> In other words, the emotion analogous to a representation of some object which an agent desires something which she does not possess, and thus seeks to bring the world in line with her desire. Attributing a true “mind-to-world fit” to emotions involves a sort of “rightness” or “criterion of success” in terms of the formal object of the emotion and is thus a normative account of the emotions. On this picture, an emotion can be evaluated as appropriate or inappropriate with respect to some objective property of its target in a manner akin to how we evaluate perceptions as correct or incorrect according to their “fit” with the external objects cognized. Hence, emotions are objective in the sense that, like sense perception, they are not merely projections of our desires but rather can be determined as “correct” or “incorrect” depending upon whether or not they correspond to features of the actual world.

Aquinas’s view of the passions resembles that of de Sousa inasmuch as it is a normative account according to which the passions involve a sort of “evaluative perception,”<sup>42</sup> of their targets, and are objective insofar as, like perceptions, they are intended to correspond to the actual world. The appropriateness or inappropriateness of a passion in general, and *amor* in particular, depends upon the objective value of the sensory object toward which it is directed. Moreover, on Aquinas’s account, although

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41. Ronald de Sousa, “Emotions: What I Know, What I’d Like to Think I Know, and What I’d Like to Think,” *Thinking about Feeling*, ed. Robert Solomon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 61.

42. I borrow this term from Peter King, “Late Scholastic Theories of the Passions,” *Emotions and Choice from Boethius to Descartes*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund and Mikko Yrönsuuri (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2002): 230.



the passions are inclinations of the sensory appetite and depend upon sensory cognition, they are nevertheless rationally and morally evaluable in terms of more universal rational judgments about the good. According to Aquinas's moral psychology, the passions of the sensory appetite are connected to the intellect in such a way that a person's universal rational concepts and her beliefs about value should influence how she conceives of and responds to particular objects apprehended through sensory cognition. Hence, while the passions, including *amor*, are not themselves propositional attitudes, they are nevertheless subject to the more universal or all-things-considered judgments of the intellect. *Amor*, then, is rationally and morally evaluable in terms of 1) whether or not the evaluative perception of the beloved object accords with the agent's universal judgments about what is good and to be pursued, and 2) the veridicality of the evaluative perception.

### 3. INTELLECTIVE LOVE

Aquinas distinguishes between *amor* strictly so-called, a passion of the sensory soul which is aimed at a particular sensory good the agent apprehends as desirable, and *dilectio* or intellectual love, which belongs to the will and includes a prior choice (*ST* I-II.26.3; cf. *ST* I-II.26.1, quoted above). Intellectual love is a response to the intellectual judgment of some object or end believed to be good in a universal or all-things-considered sense.<sup>43</sup> Terry Irwin has recently called attention to Aquinas's

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43. *Dilectio* designates a simple act of the will, or intellectual appetite, and hence is the sort of love which pertains not only to human beings as rational creatures, but also to God and to the

understanding of intellectual love as based upon external (as opposed to internal) reasons: “reasons whose goodness does not consist simply in their relation to other desires of the agent.”<sup>44</sup> Rather than being based merely upon the agent’s prior desires, intellectual love is based upon her rational judgments about which objects or ends are good for her to pursue. And such judgments are based upon the features of the objects themselves, not merely upon the other desires or inclinations of the agent.

Unlike sensory love which is based purely on one’s desires and inclinations, intellectual love depends upon the rational agent’s prior cognition of an object or end “under the common notion of good,” (*ST I* 82.5). His account of intellectual love indicates that Aquinas recognizes that there are external or normative reasons for preferring certain objects and ends over and above others; and moreover, that this is the case with regard to the best or complete good of human beings. Accordingly, as a form of intellectual love, *caritas*, the love of a person for God, is based upon the agent’s external reasons for desiring God. Aquinas identifies *caritas* as the very perfection of love since it is directed toward the highest good (*ST I-II* 26.3). As form

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angels, beings which are not subject to passions (*ST I* 20, 60; *ST I-II* 22.3 ad3, 59.5).

44. See Terry Irwin, “Aquinas: The Ultimate End,” in *the Development of Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

2007): 473.

of intellectual love, *caritas* is based upon the agent's external reasons for desiring God.<sup>45</sup>

The appetitive motion initiated by intellectual love or *dilectio* shares the same basic structure as *amor* considered generally, but its specifying features increase the complexity of the account. We have seen that as the form of love belonging to the will, Aquinas identifies the object of *dilectio* not as a particular sensory object apprehended as good to be pursued, but rather as an object or end apprehended as good in a universal or all-things-considered sense. The fact that it is directed toward the good considered universally may seem to suggest that Aquinas views the object of *dilectio* as impersonal—an object or end of a certain sort, rather than *this particular* object or end of the relevant sort.<sup>46</sup> However, although Aquinas understands the formal object of *dilectio* to be the good considered universally, this does not necessarily exclude loving an individual for his or her unique qualities or attributes, or on the basis of some sort of relationship. While the formal object of *dilectio* may in fact be some impersonal universal good, e.g. justice or mercy, it may just as well be some *particular* object or end recognized *as good* in a universal or all-things-considered sense. This latter possibility has important implications for Aquinas's account of the love characteristic of friendship (*amor amicitiae*), the paradigmatic sort of love one has for

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45. I will provide a more detailed account of *caritas* and the normative role it plays in the motivational structure of the fully rational agent in the following two chapters.

46. I will expand upon the particularity of love's objects in chapter three.

other persons, in that the love of another person *for her own sake* requires the object of *dilectio* to be a *particular individual* not merely an abstract or universal concept.

We have seen how, in the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas distinguishes between *amor* strictly so-called, a passion of the sensory soul aimed at a particular sensory good which the agent apprehends as good to be pursued, and *dilectio* or intellectual love, which belongs to the will and includes a prior choice (*ST I-II.26.3*). Elsewhere, Aquinas identifies *dilectio* as the most perfect or complete form of *amor* insofar as it belongs to the intellectual appetite and involves free choice about the object to be loved:

Since *amor* pertains to the appetite, it follows that the order of the appetite is the order of *amor*. However, the most imperfect appetite, the natural appetite which lacks cognition, brings about nothing other than a natural inclination. Above this is the sensory appetite, which follows cognition, but does not include free choice. But the highest appetite is that which includes both cognition and free choice: for this appetite moves itself in a certain respect, and hence the love which pertains to this appetite is the most perfect and is called *dilectio*, inasmuch as by free choice it discerns what is to be loved (*DDN 4.9*).<sup>47</sup>

As an act of the will, *dilectio* is based upon a prior intellectual judgment that the beloved object or end is good to be pursued.<sup>48</sup> It is distinct from sensory *amor* by

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47. Cum enim amor ad appetitum pertineat, secundum ordinem appetituum est ordo amorum. Est autem imperfectissimus appetituum, naturalis appetitus absque cognitione, quod nihil aliud importat quam inclinationem naturalem. Supra hunc autem est appetitus sensibilis, qui sequitur cognitionem, sed est absque libera electione. Supremus autem appetitus est qui est cum cognitione et libera electione: hic enim appetitus quodammodo movet seipsum, unde et amor ad hunc pertinens est perfectissimus et vocatur dilectio, in quantum libera electione discernitur quid sit amandum.

48. *Dilectio* designates a simple act of the will, or intellectual appetite, and hence is the sort of love which pertains not only to human beings as rational creatures, but also to God and to the

virtue of its object. Whereas the object of the sensory appetite is a particular sensory object apprehended as good to be pursued, “the will concerns the good under the general notion of the good (*sub communi ratione boni*),” (*ST I* 82.5). The passage suggests that the object of the will need not be a universal, i.e. the good *in general*, although the good in general is the *formal* object of the will. What is required is that when the will aims toward some individual object or end, it does so by considering the individual *under the general notion of the good*, i.e. the universal good. So in order to will any object or end, the agent must apprehend it *as good*, i.e. as sharing in the good in general or the universal good. This capacity is unique to intellectual beings insofar as it requires one to apprehend the universal good and of particular goods *as* instances of the universal good.

A further feature of *dilectio* is that it is an act of the will involving *choice* (*electio*) about particular objects or ends the agent pursues as directed toward her final good, i.e. happiness. On Aquinas’s account of human action, choice just is the act of willing something the rational agent takes to be ultimately ordered toward the final or complete end of happiness. Choice is substantially an act of the will or rational appetite, but it follows necessarily upon the judgment of the intellect arrived at through the process of deliberation about particular objects and ends to be pursued as

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angels, incorporeal beings which are not subject to *passions*, but nonetheless are motivated by certain *affections* (*ST I* 20.1 ad 1, 60.1-2, 82.5 ad 1; *ST I-II* 22.3 ad 3, 59.4 ad 2-3, 59.5 ad 3).

directed toward the final ultimate end.<sup>49</sup> Aquinas holds that human choice is free since its immediate object is not the most perfect good, i.e. happiness, which all human beings are naturally and necessarily inclined to pursue. Rather, the objects of choice are particular objects or ends judged by the intellect to as good to be pursued insofar as they are ordered toward the perfect and complete good:

Choice, however, since it is not about the end, but about those things which are for the end...does not concern the perfect good, which is happiness, but other particular goods. And so a human being chooses not from necessity, but freely (ST I-II 13.6).<sup>50</sup>

Since there are various ways one might choose to pursue the perfect and complete good, human beings are free to choose among various courses of action and competing goods in order to achieve the ultimate goal of happiness. Accordingly, *dilectio* inasmuch as it involves choice, concerns particular objects freely chosen and apprehended as goods ordered toward one's complete and perfect good or happiness.

On Aquinas's view, then, intellectual love is based upon her rational judgments about which objects or ends are good for her to pursue, i.e. those which are pursued as part of one's final ultimate end or completion, rather than being based merely upon the agent's prior desires. Such intellectual judgments are based upon the features of the objects themselves, not merely upon the other desires or inclinations of the agent.

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49. ST I-II 13.1.

50. Electio autem, cum non sit de fine, sed de his quae sunt ad finem, ut iam dictum est; non est perfecti boni, quod est beatitudo, sed aliorum particularium bonorum. Et ideo homo non ex necessitate, sed libere eligit.

Aquinas's account of *dilectio* indicates his recognition that there are normative reasons for preferring certain objects and ends over other objects and ends; and moreover, that this is the case insofar as the particular objects and ends are pursued as those which are constitutive of the formal notion of the best or complete good of human beings.<sup>51</sup> Such love is normatively appropriate to the extent that the agent's apprehension of particular goods and the good in general correspond to the actual value of such goods and whether or not such goods actually contribute to the final or ultimate end for human beings.

Aquinas thus provides a normative account of the proper objects of love according to which our loves are rationally and morally evaluable in terms of whether or not they actually do promote the final ultimate ends of human beings. His theory of love, like that of Frankfurt, takes into account the significance of love in determining our ultimate ends and thus determining the volitional or motivational structure of rational agents. However, Aquinas's account is more plausible than Frankfurt's desire based account of love. This is because he takes our loves to be normatively evaluable in terms of whether or not they actually correspond to an objective account of what human happiness ultimately consists in. On Frankfurt's desire based account of love, our loves are evaluable only in terms of whether or not they cohere with our most basic desires, but as we have seen, such desires are not

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51. See Irwin, 498-501.

themselves rationally or morally evaluable. This leaves his view open to the objection that our most basic desires may not actually correspond to what ultimately completes or perfects us as beings of a certain sort. A person whose desires fail to correspond to what genuinely satisfies the person as an essentially rational being will set for herself the wrong sorts of ultimate ends. Although such ends may imbue her life with meaning and purpose, as Frankfurt suggests, they will fail with respect to perfecting and completing her as a being whose nature is essentially rational and whose genuine good consists in attaining that which will actually satisfy her desires as such.



## CHAPTER THREE

### GENERIC STRATEGIES FOR RECONCILING THE CONFLICT

In order to view friendship and love as genuinely moral, some contemporary philosophers have found it necessary to downplay its interested, personal and partial aspects and to reconceive true friendship and even love as grounded in or justified by certain impersonal and impartial qualities of the one loved, such as the content of her character or even something so generic as her essentially rational nature. In order to avoid a potential psychological conflict between love and morality, such philosophers have attempted to rethink love and friendship as impersonal or impartial insofar as they take the paradigmatic cases of love to be based upon and justified by the recognition of some general rather than particular good of the one loved.

Jennifer Whiting employs such a strategy in developing her account of Aristotelian virtue friendship in terms of “impersonal friendship.”<sup>1</sup> She characterizes her account as impersonal in the sense that the content of the friend’s character is what *initially justifies* the agent’s concern for her; that is, the friend’s character is what makes her worthy of one’s concern. In a similar vein, David Velleman appeals to the Kantian notion of respect, arguing that what we respond to in loving a person is simply her bare rational essence, where this is identified with her capacity for valuation.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Whiting, “Impersonal Friends,” *Monist* 74 (1991): 3-29. “The Nicomachean Account of *Philia*” in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Richard Kraut (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 276-304.

2. Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion,” *Ethics* 109 (January 1999): 338-374.

According to Velleman, love is impartial, and hence moral, in the sense that it is a response to the value shared by all persons *qua* rational beings. Both Whiting and Velleman agree that certain contingent circumstances or particular qualities play an *explanatory* role in determining whether one chooses *this* as opposed to *that* particular person as the object of concern. Nevertheless, both philosophers hold that it is the appreciation of the *generic* features of the other that provide *normative* or *justificatory* reasons which ground one's concern.

In the first part of this chapter, I rehearse the most significant features of Whiting's and Velleman's generic accounts of love and morality arguing that such views are mistaken in the general assumption that love and friendship must be grounded in or a response to some impersonal feature in order to be justified. This is not to deny that there is an important connection between impersonal features of the one loved and the best forms of friendship. No doubt certain generic features provide the background conditions for the sort of love or concern constitutive of friendship. Still, it is not the case that one's concern for another *qua* virtuous or *qua* rational being is what makes the kind of love characteristic of friendship morally praiseworthy.<sup>3</sup> After considering Whiting and Velleman's generic accounts of what justifies or grounds love, I argue that Aquinas, in keeping with the Aristotelian tradition, presents

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3. The love characteristic of friendship is a particular kind of love which entails not only a sort of union with the other, but also the desire for the good of another for the other's own sake. It is this kind of love with which I am here concerned and which I refer to even when I simply use the term "love."

us with a more psychologically compelling and morally desirable account of love, its desires, and its motivations. According to Aquinas, the love characteristic of friendship certainly entails the apprehension of the value of the one loved both as a rational being and also as one who possesses (at the very least) the *capacity* for virtuous character. Nevertheless, although the apprehension of the value of the other provides an important background condition for this sort of love, such apprehension does not play a *central* role in what makes the love characteristic of friendship an essentially moral phenomenon. Aquinas's account of such love does not take certain generic features of the other to be what justifies or grounds one's love. Rather, what makes loves morally praiseworthy is not primarily the valuing of generic features of the other, but the desires and subsequent actions which support and sustain the love characteristic of friendship—the desire to promote the *objective* good of another for the other's own sake, where the objective good consists in the perfection or completion of the other as a rational and relational being. I argue that the good of the other can be valued *independently* even if desiring her good is partly constitutive of one's own good.<sup>4</sup>

In this chapter, I appeal to Aquinas's moral psychology in making the argument that the love characteristic friendship is morally praiseworthy not primarily due to the

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4. Cf. Lawrence Blum's account of what makes a friendship morally praiseworthy in *Friendship, Altruism & Morality*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980). He contends that “the moral excellence of friendship involves a high level of development of the altruistic emotions of sympathy, concern, and care—a deep caring for and identification with the good of another from whom one knows oneself to be clearly other,” (70).

impersonal features of its object, but due to the *very nature* of such love itself. I argue that the love characteristic of friendship is inherently *personal* insofar as it is directed toward a particular person with whom the agent has a special relationship *regardless* of certain generic features of the other which may or may not have played an initial role in motivating the agent to choose that person as an object of concern. Moreover, it is essentially *partial* inasmuch as, *paribus ceteris*, it involves prioritizing the good of those persons with whom we have a close personal relationship over those whom we do not.

Although it is generally uncontested that an essential feature of the love characteristic of friendship is concern for the good of the other as an end in itself, one of the primary assumptions motivating Whiting's generic account of friendship in particular is that the agent's concern for the good of the other must be *altogether* disinterested or altruistic in order to be morally praiseworthy.<sup>5</sup> I argue that this assumption is unfounded. Although the love characteristic of friendship necessarily entails loving the other for the other's own sake, it also entails loving *oneself* appropriately where doing so is partly constituted by possessing certain virtues necessary to attain happiness or fulfillment as a human being. One of these virtues is

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5. Whiting acknowledges her debt to Thomas Nagel's *Possibility of Altruism* in developing her generic strategy of understanding the relation between the one loving and the one loved as impersonal in the paradigmatic sort of friendship. Cf. "Impersonal Friends," 21.

the sort of disinterested concern for the good of another entailed by the love characteristic of friendship.

In the best kinds of love, the moral agent seeks her own good or perfection as her final ultimate end, where this is *partly constituted* by desiring the good or perfection of the persons she loves *as an end in itself*. The primary aim of this chapter is to show how Aquinas develops the Aristotelian account of friendship into a compelling account of love according to which one's concern for another is genuine and morally praiseworthy while at once constituting part of one's own good. Hence, in the latter half of the chapter, I highlight relevant features of Aquinas's account of the love characteristic of friendship arguing that it is plausible to think the best kind of love for another person is at once disinterested insofar as it entails desiring the good of another as an end in itself and interested in the sense that doing so is partly constitutive of one's own good or perfection as a human being. Loving other persons as ends in themselves is entailed by the virtue of *caritas*, the most important of the virtues in that it is what enables human beings to attain their final ultimate end.

#### A. GENERIC ACCOUNTS OF THE RELATION BETWEEN LOVE AND MORALITY

##### 1. WHITING ON "IMPERSONAL FRIENDSHIP"

Whiting advocates a particular interpretation of an Aristotelian model of friendship according to which the agent's concern for her friend is *initially justified* by

certain features of that person.<sup>6</sup> She opposes the Aristotelian model generally speaking to what she calls a “brute” model of friendship, according to which such concern is ultimately groundless insofar as it depends entirely upon whether the agent happens to have such concern in the first place.<sup>7</sup> The advantage of the Aristotelian model, Whiting contends, is that the agent’s concern is initially justified by certain features of the other person: “We may approve of someone’s character, projects and commitments and so come to think her worthy of our concern,” (“Impersonal Friends,” 7). Thus far, Whiting’s view seems right. As opposed to the brute model according to which the agent has *no* reasons justifying her concern, on the Aristotelian model the agent *does* have reasons for concern based upon certain characteristics of the other. Accordingly, the agent’s concern is grounded in characteristics of the other which are *relatively independent* of the agent herself, that is characteristics the other person would have regardless of her relation to the agent (8).

Whiting points out that an essential feature of the Aristotelian model of friendship is the conception of one’s friend as “another self,” in accordance with which one’s concern for another is the *same in kind* as concern for oneself. She

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6. With respect to Whiting’s account, it is worth emphasizing that the sort of friendship she has in view is that between non-related adult persons. As is explained below she contends that such friendships, unlike familial or civic relations, are paradigmatically justified by appeal to the character of the other person, and it is in this sense that she considers friendship to be impersonal. I am grateful to Charles Britain for helping me to clarify this.

7. According to the model of “brute friendship,” one’s initial concern for her friends neither admits of nor demands justification. Such concern is simply something we come to have (Note that this is precisely the position endorsed by Harry Frankfurt discussed in the previous chapter).

distinguishes between what she calls *generic* and the *egocentric* strategies for interpreting the Aristotelian account of sameness in kind of concern for oneself and others. Whiting opposes the egocentric strategy according to which the nature of one's concern for another essentially depends on having the right sort relationship between oneself and the other in the sense that the good of the other is considered to be a *part of or an extension of* one's own good (IF, 9).<sup>8</sup> Whiting contends that the problem with understanding the good of another as literally part one's own is that it entails valuing the other's good *as one's own* (IF, 10). She finds this objectionable because it appears to undermine the Aristotelian notion of valuing the good of one's friend *for the friend's own sake* since one's concern for her friend is ultimately justified in reference to one's own good.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the so-called egoistic reading of understanding of the sameness in kind of concern for oneself and others is problematic insofar as it precludes having the sort of concern for the other which is *altogether* disinterested.<sup>10</sup>

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8. Here her primary target is Terry Irwin's account of Aristotle's conception of the character friend in EN 1170b14-19 as "another self." Cf. *Aristotle's First Principles*, 389-399.

9. She further explicates this worry in her more recent account of Aristotelian *philia* where, for instance, she claims *pace* Cooper, that Aristotle's account of the reasons one has for friendship cannot be one's own perfection or self-realization: "If [Aristotle] allows this to serve as the reason for the agent's having friends in the first place, he threatens to undermine the primacy of wishing and doing well to another for the other's sake. For even if having friends involves some sort of wishing them well for *their* sakes, it is problematic for the agent to take as her reason for having friends the fact that doing so is the only (or the best) way to achieve the sort of self-knowledge or self-awareness in which *her eudaimonia* consists," ("*Philia*," 296). For Cooper's account of the Aristotelian claim that friendship is required for human happiness insofar as it provides the conditions for self-awareness or self-realization, see "Aristotle on Friendship," 317-324.

10. Although there may be parallels with the contemporary notion of egoism, I think it is somewhat anachronistic to apply the term to Aristotle's teleological conception of happiness, given

Having rejected egocentric accounts of the sameness in kind account of oneself and others, Whiting defends what she calls a *generic* strategy which involves viewing certain features the agent shares in common with another as the ground for her concern. Justification for the agent's concern for the other is the same in kind as concern for herself insofar as the ground for concern is based in such common features. Whiting explains that the account is generic in that it is based upon *common features or characteristics* as opposed to the *uniqueness or particularity* of the other.<sup>11</sup> She acknowledges that there is a certain range of specificity when it comes to the characteristics the agent shares in common with the other person: the agent's concern may be based upon something so generic as shared humanity, or something more particular such as certain life projects or goals. The crux of the view, however, is that the agent's ground for concern for another person is like the ground for concern for oneself *not* due to the relation of the other to oneself, but rather some common generic feature.

Moreover, Whiting's particular version of the generic strategy is *character-based*.

She takes the relevant common characteristic justifying both concern for oneself and

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the disparity between contemporary notions of happiness and the Greek conception of *eudaimonia* which entails possessing certain qualities of character which are essentially other-directed. Cf. Annas on the inappropriateness of accusing ancient eudaimonist theories as being egoistic. *The Morality of Happiness* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993): 322-323.

11. Whiting calls attention to a virtue of her account vis-à-vis qualitative theories of love: "The 'generic' label calls attention to this strategy's tendency away from the characteristics which distinguish us from one another and so away from the fetish concern with uniqueness characteristic of modern discussions of friendship," (8).



concern for the other to be the content of one's character. Appealing to Aristotle's paradigmatic form of friendship, i.e. friendship based upon virtue, she contends that concern for another is the same in kind as self-concern insofar as it is based upon *the appeal to character*. Accordingly, Whiting labels her view as *ethocentric* as opposed to *egocentric* since the normative paradigm for concern for another is the sort of self-concern the *virtuous person* has for himself. Whiting interprets Aristotle's claim that the virtuous person loves his friend as "another self" to mean that he loves her not simply as an extension of himself, but as a person who is like him in the relevant respect, namely, as one who possesses virtuous character. Accordingly, she takes Aristotle to be claiming that self-love and hence love of another is *impartial* in the following sense: "insofar as self-love properly construed involves the virtuous person's love for herself *qua virtuous*, and insofar as a genuinely virtuous agent will value virtue as such, the virtuous agent should love other virtuous agents in much the same way that she loves herself (i.e. *qua virtuous*)."<sup>12</sup> By construing Aristotle's view in this way, Whiting claims to surmount problems raised by egoist readings where concern for another is ultimately grounded in self-concern. This, she insists, undermines a key criterion of Aristotelian friendship, i.e. the desire for the good of another for the other's own sake.

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12. "Philia," 293.

In sum, Whiting's view is that "the *substance* or *content* of another's character (as distinct from its *relationship* to one's own) is the ground for concern," (11). She contends that the advantage of her generic character-based strategy of understanding the sameness in kind one's concern for oneself and another is that it allow us appreciate her understanding of the Aristotelian criterion of friendship:

If I value my own good and the activities in which it consists *not* as *mine* but rather that of *a* person of a certain *sort*, then I can value my friend's good and the activities in which *it* consists in the same way I value my own without having to value them *as mine*, (10).

Whiting takes it that her interpretation of Aristotle's view allows that the agent's concern for the good of the other is *disinterested* in a way that she considers morally desirable. The agent values the good of her friend *in the same way as* she values her own good without valuing the good of the other *as part of her own*.

## 2. PROBLEMATIC FEATURES OF WHITING'S ACCOUNT

As a preliminary note, my project differs from Whiting's in that I am not primarily concerned with the *initial justification* of friendship, but with what the love characteristic of friendship *consists in* on the part of the one loving and what it required to support and sustain one's ongoing concern for the good of the other.<sup>13</sup> Further, where Whiting speaks of "friendship," a *relation* between two persons, my focus is on "the love characteristic of friendship," which pertains not to the relation but to the *act*

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13. See Whiting's preliminary note concerning the difficulty of translating the abstract Greek noun "*philia*" most often translated by the English term "friendship," and the verb from which it is derived, "*to philein*," which she contends is best rendered by the term "to love," Cf. "The Nicomachean Account of *Philia*," 276-77.

of love itself. Nevertheless, despite this apparent difference the subject matter with which we are both concerned is alike in the relevant respect since is also concerned with *act* characteristic of friendship, i.e. the act of loving on the part of the friend.<sup>14</sup>

Contrary to Whiting, I contend that the most important feature concerning the moral evaluation of the love characteristic of friendship is not how it is initially justified, but what such love *entails*—that is, supporting and sustaining concern for the good of one’s friend for her own sake, regardless of how such concern is initiated.<sup>15</sup>

I find it more psychologically plausible to think we choose our friends not on the basis of something so impersonal as the friend’s virtuous character, but rather upon certain likenesses they have to us (similar interests, projects, etc.), likenesses that may, but need not be, primarily character-based. This is not to deny that if we were to find the other person boorish or utterly reprehensible, we would have reason to oppose becoming friends with her regardless of common interests we might share. I

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15. As I shall argue below it seems equally if not more important to the normative evaluation of self-love and friendship to consider how one is justified in *continuing* to love oneself and hence others with whom one already has an established friendship. Whiting herself claims only that once a friendship is established “the friendship relation itself... is taken to provide reasons for concern additional to those (if any) existing prior to its establishment” (“IF” 7). It is my contention that the ongoing concern for the good of the other for the other’s own sake is not primarily justified by the virtuous character of the other, but has more to do with the established *relationship* between the agent and her friend. Cf. Diane Jeske: “I am justified in caring about my friend because she stands in the friendship relation to me, because I happened, perhaps for no clearly defined reason, to start caring in the first place,” “Virtue, Friendship and Impartiality,” (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol. LVII, no. 1, March 1997): 64. According to Jeske, one’s initial concern for another is more brute than Whiting would allow, but the justification of friendship is not based upon how it initially comes about; rather, it has more to do with the *sort of relationship* the agent has with her friend.

agree with Whiting that character is a relevant factor in how we choose, and how we *should* choose our friends, but I don't agree that it is the primary factor. The other person must meet certain standards of character in order for the agent to rationally consider her as a potential friend, but I do not find it plausible to think that the character of the other person is primarily what makes the love characteristic of friendship morally praiseworthy. Rather, the character of the other is merely a background condition for the justification of friendship.

The question I find most significant when it comes to the moral evaluation of the love characteristic of friendship is not how friendship is initially justified, but rather, what it means to value the good of another *for the other's own sake*. This is clearly an essential condition for genuine friendship on Aristotle's account.<sup>16</sup> Whiting contends, however, that one does not legitimately meet this condition if ultimately the friend's good is considered in some respect as *part of* one's own good: "I can aim at my friends' ends in the same way I aim at my own only if I aim at them as independent goods and not as parts of my own," (10). On her view, then, in order to truly value the good of the other it must be pursued *entirely independently* of its relation to the agent's good.

Of course, on a eudaimonist account, valuing the good of one's friend as part of one's own need not entail valuing it instrumentally as a *means* to one's own good.

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16. *EN* 1155b30.

Whiting points out that one way theorists have attempted to reconcile the requirement of valuing the good of another as part of one's own good with valuing it for its own sake is to maintain that valuing the good of another for the other's own sake is what *makes* it part of one's own good (IF, 9). She contends, however, that this strategy fails since it doesn't provide an account of what *explains* or *justifies* my caring about the other for the other's own sake and it is this, *not* its being part of one's own good, that does the argumentative work:

So if—as the avoidance of brute concern seems to require—there is something in the object that *justifies* my concern, then insisting on the importance of the object's being *part* of *my* good involves *misrepresentation*: it yields only the appearance and not the substance of egocentricity (10).

Whiting's complaint is that despite *appearing* to justify concern for another for the other's own sake in terms of its being part of one's own good, the real justificatory work nevertheless must lie in valuing impersonal or generic features of the other. In essence, Whiting is claiming that either one's concern for the other is a brute fact and hence does not admit of justification, or it is justified in terms of certain generic or impersonal features of the other.

It is true that valuing the good of another for its own sake must be *explained* by the apprehension of the other as good in some respect, otherwise we would have no reason for valuing her good as an end in itself. But I question the extent to which apprehension of the other as good is what *justifies* concern for her good. Again, the apprehension of another *as good* in some respect and hence worthy of concern

provides an important background condition for valuing the good of the other, but is not the primary factor in what makes our valuing morally praiseworthy. Moreover, it seems plausible that the reasons for one's concern are often grounded in more brute characteristics than Whiting would admit.

Although there must be *reasons* explaining one's concern for her friend,<sup>17</sup> such reasons need not be as impersonal or generic as Whiting insists in order to be justified or even explained. We will see that on Aquinas's account of love generally speaking, and *a fortiori*, of the love characteristic of friendship, love just is the apprehension of the other as *suitable* or *pleasing* to the agent and this is what gives rise to desire to be united to the other. Such apprehension may be based upon more generic character-based features, but it may also be based upon more particular and personal features of the other which the agent approves of, for instance, her sense of adventure, her love of film or something more personal or particular such as a quirky sense of humor. Whether the features of another which initially explain the agent's concern are more impersonal and generic or whether they are more personal and particular, the salient feature in the moral evaluation of the love characteristic of friendship is that the agent loves another and values the good of the other *for her own sake*.

Whiting sees that according to most accounts of Aristotle's eudaimonist theory of human motivation, all of the agent's concerns and actions are ultimately rooted in

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17. Cf. Chapter three of this dissertation.

the desire for *one's own* happiness or perfection as a rational agent insofar as all human beings ultimately aim toward aim for this.<sup>18</sup> But Whiting is wrong to think that Aristotle's account of eudaimonia must be interpreted otherwise in order to be a genuinely moral theory. Eudaimonism is a normative theory according to which the rational agent aims at what is best or what is fine (*kalon*) in an objective or external sense, and this essentially entails other-directed desires for the objective good of one's friends.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, although the agent's actions and aims are *ultimately* directed toward *her own* happiness or objective good, this is perfectly consistent with and in fact *entails* desiring the objective good for the other *independently* of one's own good. Hence, Whiting's contention that the so-called egoist strategy of understanding sameness in kind between concern for self and concern for the another undermines the condition of valuing the good of the other *for the other's own sake* is unfounded.

Further, there is a problem with Whiting's generic character-based strategy for understanding the sameness in kind between self-concern and concern for another.

Whiting acknowledges that her account of character-relative reasons justifying

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18. Whiting actually denies that eudaimonism entails acting ultimately for the sake of *one's own* final good or ultimate end. She suggests, "it is compatible with what Aristotle says that an agent at least sometimes, perhaps often, takes the *eudaimonia* of others as the ultimate end for the sake of which she acts in the sense that she aims at their *eudaimonia simply as such* (and *not* as parts of her own)," "*Philia*," 277. Although I cannot address this interpretation of eudaimonism here, this seems highly implausible as a reading of Aristotle's teleology and as an interpretation of the eudaimonism in general.

19. Cf. Annas: "The agent acts out of self-concern, but where this is concern for oneself as a rational agent aiming at the fine, this will take the form of other-directed and moral action," 260.

friendship is open to the criticism that the agent is required to value the good of her friend as well as her own good as “a particular person of a certain *sort* and *not* as the good of *this* particular person of the relevant sort,” (11). On Whiting’s ethocentric account, the relevant feature justifying one’s concern is the *sort* of person the other is—specifically the agent’s concern is justified when it is directed toward a person with virtuous character. There is no *justificatory* reason for developing concern for one virtuous person rather than another; the fact that we choose one person rather than another is simply a matter of epistemic and circumstantial contingencies.

But Whiting’s ethocentric account seems psychologically implausible insofar as it seems contrary to our actual reasons for developing and maintaining an ongoing concern for particular people: we love particular people not because they are persons of a certain *sort*, i.e. virtuous, but because they are the individuals that they are and with whom we stand in a particular relationship—we value the good of *this* particular person because her relationship to us plays the primary role in explaining and justifying our ongoing concern for her good.

Of course, when it comes to non-related adults persons, one’s relationship with another cannot be what *initially* justifies (or explains) concern for her. But as I have indicated, the *initial* justification of concern for my friend is *not* what I take to be the salient feature with respect to what makes such concern morally praiseworthy. Rather, the morally salient feature is my *ongoing* concern for her good and *this* is justified in



terms of my being in the right sort of relationship with her.<sup>20</sup> I am justified in loving *Lizzie* because of my shared history with her as someone with whom I have spent a good deal of time, shared common interests, and engaged together in particular life projects. It is much more plausible to think I am justified in my concern for her as *this* particular person, as opposed to being *a* particular person of a certain sort. Although the friendship was not initially based primarily upon my apprehension of her as someone with virtuous character, my concern for her is justified because she is now my friend, someone with whom I have an established relationship which justifies my ongoing concern for her well being.

In defense of her generic character-based strategy of understanding the sameness in kind between concern for oneself and that of one's friends, Whiting appeals to Aristotle's account of the virtuous person's attitude toward *herself* as providing the normative paradigm for her attitude toward her friends (IF, 14-15). The virtuous person's self-concern is unlike the self-concern of just anyone, since the virtuous person correctly understands who she is, and hence treats herself correctly.<sup>21</sup>

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20. Part of the problem of Whiting's account is that she fails to consistently distinguish between different kinds of reasons for friendship: justificatory reasons and explanatory reasons. As Jeske puts it, "The justification of my concern for my friend...depends upon his standing in a certain relationship to me, so my relationship to [my friend] provides justificatory reasons for my continuing to care about him," (65). Also see Niko Kolodny for the justificatory role of relationships in "Love as Valuing a Relationship," (*the Philosophical Review* 112.2, 2003): 135-189.

21. Of course Whiting would agree that there is a sense in which self-love is what Annas describes as "psychologically primary," (254-255), appealing to Aristotle's claim that "Each person wishes good to himself most of all," (1159a11-12). But Whiting's point is that one's initial concern for self isn't *justified* simply by virtue of being psychologically primary; rather it is justified rather

Whiting takes Aristotle's account of the virtuous person's attitude toward herself as the normative paradigm for her attitude toward her friends to provide a promising strategy for responding to the objection to her account of impersonal friendship according to which one values the good of her friends because of their virtue rather than because they are the particular individuals they are.

Taking into account the agent's concern for herself from the subject's point of view, Whiting points out how important it is for a person to think well of herself and to think that her activity is not only valuable but also morally acceptable. She appeals to examples from psychological literature of the sort of cognitive dissonance experienced by those who doubt the value or moral acceptability of their actions, and hence tend to blame their bad behavior or vices on circumstances beyond their control as a psychological mechanism used to maintain a positive view of themselves (IF, 16-17). Whiting appeals to such a mechanism and the fact that when they fail people suffer from guilt, depression and even engage in self-destructive behavior as providing evidence *against* the view that people care about themselves no matter what kind of character they might have.

Certainly, Whiting is correct that persons with bad character do in fact experience cognitive dissonance and do in fact despise themselves insofar as their base character and bad behavior are morally blameworthy. But it is most plausible to

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when one comes to apprehend the value of her own virtuous character. So self-love can be at once psychologically primary, and initially justified by the recognition of one's virtuous character.

think that such cognitive dissonance and self-loathing is the *result* of the rational agent's concern for self. One who antecedently failed to be concerned about *herself* simply wouldn't care about whether her character or behavior is valuable or morally acceptable. Contra Whiting, it is more likely that the agent's self-concern is justified by virtue of the fact that, insofar as she is a rational being, she *does* care about herself because she *already* stands in a particular relationship with herself. For *this* reason, she despises in herself the negative character qualities and bad behavior, and *this* is what leads to cognitive dissonance. No doubt the fully rational or virtuous agent loves herself *properly* to the extent that she takes herself to possess genuine value in accordance with her true nature *qua* rational and moral being, and to the extent that she engages in activity she conceives of as objectively valuable in promoting that which is fine or praiseworthy.

Still, the agent's concern for herself may be ill conceived insofar as she fails to grasp her true nature as a rational and moral being. Such a person will fail to recognize what her good actually consists in, and thus will fail to demonstrate the right kind of concern for her character and fail to love herself in accordance with her true good. Nevertheless, the agent has a special reason to care about herself and her behavior because she is *herself*, i.e. *this* particular person. The heavy drinker for example may continue to make excuses and when the excuses fail, he may in fact fall into despair, depression, and further self-destructive behavior. But it is out of concern for himself that he may also (as many alcoholics do) come to the decision not to engage in such

morally problematic and destructive behavior. Such persons after hitting “rock bottom,” may decide that they want to become better people and overcome their self-destructive tendencies out of concern for their own good for *himself* as well as the good of those he cares about insofar as they stand in a particular relationship to him.

By appealing to the subject’s point of view, Whiting highlights an important feature of the moral psychology definitive of eudaimonism, namely that each person desires his own *objective* good as his final ultimate end, and each person’s objective good consists in part in possessing virtuous character. But the fact that people who have less than virtuous character and engage in bad behavior attempt to justify themselves or fall into depression and become self-destructive doesn’t do the argumentative work Whiting suggests, i.e. showing that only virtuous persons demonstrate genuine self-concern. Rather, it seems more plausible to think that all persons provided they come to see what their objective good consists in, desire to become virtuous, because as a matter of psychological fact each person is concerned for herself and her wellbeing. As is evident in the case of the heavy drinker, one’s self-concern is not due to his being antecedently virtuous, but because he stands in a particular relationship to *himself*. Accordingly, although Whiting is correct to identify a significant connection between virtuous character and genuine self-love, it seems more plausible to think the rational agent desires her own good insofar as she is *this* particular person, i.e. *himself*, rather than on the basis of being a person of a certain *sort*, i.e. one who (*already*) possesses virtuous character.

Finally, it seems that Whiting's account of character-based friendship sets the bar too high in that it describes an ideal which very few person's actually attain, especially given Aristotle's account of virtue as something quite rare and acquired over time through the repetition of morally praiseworthy actions. Granted, Whiting admits as much: "character-friendship is an *ideal* which even the best of our ordinary everyday friendships may only approximate," (IF, 15). But providing an account of the justification of friendship in terms of an ideal seems much too high-minded.<sup>22</sup> On Whiting's account, it would appear that the majority of human beings fail to meet the criterion according to which concern for themselves and their friends is morally praiseworthy, given that so few of us possess virtuous character in the Aristotelian sense. And if we do attain such an ideal, it is only after a long process of habituation.<sup>23</sup> One problem with evaluating the moral worth of friendship in terms of the ideal virtue friendship is that it tends to downplay the morally praiseworthy attitudes and

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22. Here I am in agreement with Jeske's contention that "Character friendship is a tempting ideal, but, I think, it is clear that it betrays our actual moral experience, and overestimates the role of choice in the determination of friends," 22.

23. The range of persons considered to be initially justified in loving themselves is simply too narrow on Whiting's account. Take for instance the merely continent person, or even the incontinent person. Such persons, according to Aristotle, know what rational and morally praiseworthy action consists in, and wish to perform such actions. The continent person succeeds, but does not do so from a stable disposition or virtuous character. Nevertheless, the fact that the continent person performs the right actions and wishes to do so presupposes that she loves herself, and is moreover justified in loving herself. Even the incontinent person is justified in loving herself to the extent that she *wants* to perform the right sorts of actions, even though she fails to do so. In both cases I suggest that self-concern *entails* the desire to become virtuous and that desire is enough to justify concern for self and others, despite the fact that she has not attained the ideal of possessing a virtuous character.

actions of less than virtuous persons who, despite their moral shortcomings nevertheless have genuine concern for their friends as ends in themselves.

A further question to consider is precisely what Whiting means by “character-based” friendship. It is worth noting that in her earlier article “Friends and Future Selves,” Whiting construes character broadly as including not just moral excellences, but *all* of the qualities for which a person may be praised. Such qualities may include athletic or artistic ability, empathy, industry, etc.<sup>24</sup> But clearly someone with artistic or athletic ability is not necessarily *morally* virtuous or excellent. Although such persons demonstrate certain excellences, they need not be excellences of *character*. If Whiting still holds to this broad notion of virtue or excellence in “Impersonal Friends,” then her account of what justifies one’s concern for another is more true to our actual experience, given that we tend to be drawn to other persons for a variety of reasons not necessarily related to their virtuous character. But then it is less clear why concern for another based upon these sorts of non-moral excellences ought to be considered morally praiseworthy.

### 3. VELLEMAN ON “LOVE AS A MORAL EMOTION”

J. David Velleman provides an account of love similar to Whiting’s account of friendship insofar as he describes love of as the valuing of another based upon her

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24. “Impersonal Friends,” 4; cf. “Friends and Future Selves,” *The Philosophical Review* Vol. 95, no. 4 (Oct., 1986): 572-3.

generic and impersonal features.<sup>25</sup> On his account, love in general is subject to moral appraisal because, as he understands it, love is a rational response to impartial features of the one loved. Accordingly, Velleman claims that the apparent psychological conflict between love and morality can be reconciled by “rethinking the partiality of love.”<sup>26</sup> Like Whiting, Velleman attempts to avoid a certain problematic feature of qualitative theories of love according to which the person is loved for accidental features such as her charm or beauty, or her “yellow hair.”<sup>27</sup> Love, he contends, is morally praiseworthy to the extent that is based upon the impartial nature of a person as a rational being, given his view that rationality comprises the very essence of a person. Accordingly, Velleman’s descriptive account of love is even more impersonal and impartial than Whiting’s in that he holds love is a response not to the substance or content of the character of the person *qua* virtuous, but rather to something as altogether generic as the person’s essence *qua* rational being. On his account love is not a partial response to particular person considered as valuable in herself and to the one who loves her given the nature of their relationship; rather, it is an impartial

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25. Note that the accounts are not altogether parallel. Whiting’s argument concerns the *initial justification* for developing a friendship with another based on the content of her character. Velleman’s argument has to do with *what love is* and the impersonal value of its *object*. What the two views share in common is the assumption that what the agent is responding to in the normative paradigm of friendship or love is some generic feature of the one loved, and moreover, that the impersonal and impartial nature of one’s concern is what makes such concern moral.

26. “Love as a Moral Emotion.” *Ethics* 109 (1999): 338-374.

27. An allusion to Yeat’s poem “For Anne Gregory,” n. 83. Anne, the protagonist of the poem, does not want to be loved for accidental features such as her yellow hair, but for herself and for herself alone.

response to a person *qua* rational. Hence, for Velleman, love is moral insofar as it entails the valuation of a generic feature of personhood, i.e. an instance of rational nature.

In elucidating his descriptive account of the nature of love, Velleman appeals to Iris Murdoch's account of love as "an exercise of justice and realism and really *looking*" (343).<sup>28</sup> He identifies a connection between this sort of attention and the Kantian notion of respect, the respect due to *all* persons as the appropriate response to their value as beings with essentially rational natures.<sup>29</sup> Velleman appeals to the Kantian ideal of the "rational will," which Kant identifies as the intelligible essence of a person indicating that this is the person's "true or proper self" (344). Hence a person, by virtue of her true nature as an instance of rational nature is "a self-existent end,"<sup>30</sup> and, as such, is the proper object for reverence and respect. Velleman qualifies his account of the valuation of a person's rational essence suggesting that it amounts to

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28. I cannot here address the plausibility of his reading of Murdoch, but for an argument that Velleman misrepresents her account of love see Elijah Millgram, "Kantian Crystallization," (*Ethics* 114, no. 3): 511-513.

29. Anticipating the objection that Kantian respect amounts to an attitude toward moral law and thus has nothing to do with love for a person, Velleman argues that when Kant speaks of reverence for the law, he is really speaking about an attitude toward a rational being, or more precisely, an "idealized rational will" (344). On his interpretation of Kant, love for the law just is love for a person; hence he thinks it possible to compare the Kantian notions of reverence and respect with the moral attitude of love for a person. Both are responses to the value of persons as rational natures. I shall not here be concerned with the plausibility of Velleman's interpretation of Kant, but with his general account of the nature of love.

30. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 4:437. On Velleman's interpretation, self-existent ends are "the objects of motivating attitudes that regard and value them as they already are," unlike other ends which are "the objects of attitudes that value them a possibilities to be brought about" (357-358).



the capacity to be actuated by reasons, a capacity which Kant identifies with the capacity for a good will. Velleman specifies this capacity not in terms of intellect, even practical intellect, but rather as “a capacity of appreciation or valuation—a capacity to care about things in that reflective way which is distinctive of self-conscious creatures like us” (365). He thus juxtaposes the Kantian notions of reverence and respect with the phenomenon of love arguing that love, like respect, is a kind of valuation of what is essential to all human beings as instances of rational nature. But the difference between love and respect, Velleman suggests, is that respect is the “required minimum,” response to the value of a person *qua* rational, whereas love is the “optional maximum,” response to one and the same value (366).

Velleman claims that what is essential to love “is that it disarms our emotional defenses toward an object in response to its incomparable value as a self-existent end,” (365). In the case of love for another person, he claims that love, like Kantian respect, is an “arresting awareness” of value in a person which entails treating persons as ends in themselves. But where Kantian respect amounts to arresting *self*-love and thus preventing one from using another person as a means to achieving one’s self-interested aims, Velleman contends that love “arrests our tendencies toward emotional self-protection from another person...Love disarms our emotional defenses; it makes us vulnerable to the other,” (361). The response to the value of the other as a rational nature, i.e. the recognition of the capacity for valuation like our own, is what creates the possibility for loving another by allowing the agent to

suspend his emotional defenses opening up the possibility of “really looking,” and thus putting himself in the vulnerable position of seeing the other as capable of valuation and love. Velleman thus takes love to be impartial and, in his view, morally praiseworthy, insofar as its object is the value of a person *qua* instance of rational nature which he takes to be the essence of personhood, and thus an essential quality of *all* persons. Nonetheless he recognizes we do not respond to *all* persons with love. He suggests that there may be many reasons for this. One reason is that we are “imperfect interpreters” of the expressions of personhood and such expressions are themselves imperfect. He appeals to the constitutional limitations of human beings: we can only love so many persons, given the sort of emotional resources love demands. Thus Velleman contends that there are “many reasons for being selective in love, without having to find differences of worth among possible love objects” (372).

Velleman criticizes attempts of contemporary analytic philosophers to provide an adequate account of love insofar as they are committed to analyzing love in conative terms (351-353). He contends that the underlying problem is the failure of such philosophers to adequately distinguish between *aims* and *ends*. Conceiving of love in terms of an aim to be achieved obscures the proper object of love, which he insists is not a result to be achieved, but rather the beloved person herself understood as self-existent end. Velleman indicates that contemporary philosophical analyses of love miss the mark because of the assumption that love is to be analyzed in terms of an aim (354). He claims that this assumption leads to the erroneous conception of love

according to which “love is a particular syndrome of motives—primarily, desires to act upon, or interact with, the beloved” (352-3). He characterizes contemporary analyses of love as in terms of an attitude directed toward the result of “benefiting and being with” the one loved.<sup>31</sup> Such analyses, Velleman thinks, suggest that, “love is essentially a pro-attitude toward a result, to which the beloved is instrumental” (354). He finds such views objectionable insofar as they fail to treat the one loved as a “self-existent end.” Rather than viewing love in terms of an attitude toward a result, Velleman suggests that we should view it as an attitude toward a *person*, namely the beloved herself. As a self-existent end, a person has incomparable value—a value she possesses by virtue of her rational nature. On his view, conceiving of love as a way of valuing *persons* (as opposed to a desiring to achieve particular *results*) is the key to describing it appropriately in moral terms.

#### 4. PROBLEMATIC FEATURES OF VELLEMAN’S ACCOUNT

Velleman’s account of the moral evaluation of love differs from Whiting’s character-based account in that he takes *all* persons insofar as they are instances of rationality to be worthy objects of love, and hence does not limit those considered worthy of our love (or friendship) to virtuous persons. This may view may appear a less elitist and hence a more desirable theory of what makes love morally praiseworthy. Still, Velleman’s account of love as a moral emotion seems inadequate

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31. See, for example, Gabrielle Taylor, “Love,” 156-157. See page 352 for Velleman’s caricature of analytic philosophers on the nature of love.

as a description of what really constitutes the nature of love—love is more appropriately thought of as the valuation of an individual person valued *as such* not, as Velleman contends, the valuation of a person *as an instance of rational nature*. Moreover, the person loved is valued as *special* by virtue of her individual worth, and also on account of the relationship of the one who loves with the one loved. Velleman’s description of love as a valuation of a person *qua* essentially rational is not only too *generic*, but it’s also *unrealistic* to think that love is an attitude toward “an idealized rational will.”<sup>32</sup>

One of the primary worries concerning Velleman’s account of love as the valuation of an essentially rational nature is that it is response to a value with respect to which any one person is no different from another.<sup>33</sup> Hence, it would appear that his explanation of love cannot account for certain descriptive features of love, in particular that the one who loves values the one loved as *special* and as *irreplaceable*.

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32. It is worth noting that Velleman is providing a descriptive account of love generally, (in opposition to the sort of conative analysis of love he attributes to the contemporary philosophers), rather than providing an account of the sort of love which can be considered moral: “I am inclined to say that love is likewise the awareness of a value inhering in its object; and I am also inclined to describe love as an arresting awareness of that value. This description of love seems right, to begin with, as a piece of phenomenology, just as the conative analysis of love seems implausible, to begin with, on phenomenological grounds. Love does not feel (to me, at least) like an urge or impulse or inclination toward anything; it feels rather like a state of attentive suspension, similar to wonder or amazement or awe,” (360).

33. In one sense Velleman’s account of love and morality is more plausible than Whiting’s, insofar as he does not limit the scope of the persons one is justified in loving to those with a virtuous disposition. But in another sense, his account of the proper object of love is too broad, insofar as he holds that every person is equally a candidate for love merely by virtue of their rational capacities, and it is simply a matter of accident that one comes to “really see” the rational essence of certain persons as opposed to others.

Anticipating this sort of worry, Velleman appeals to the Kantian distinction between a dignity and a price indicating that the value of a person as a self-existent end is the former rather than the latter (364). Whereas something valued in terms of a price admits of comparison and can be replaced by something of equivalent value, the value of a person must be understood in terms of a dignity. By virtue of possessing this sort of value, the individual person is to be valued in such a way that his worth cannot be compared to that of any other person. Thus Velleman contends, “the value that we must attribute to every person requires that we respond to each person alone, partly by refusing to compare him with others. The class of persons just is a class whose members must be appreciated *as individuals* rather than as member of a class,” (367, emphasis mine). The point is that although one judges all persons to possess the same value by virtue of their rational nature, the mode of appreciation in response to such a value requires that one appreciate the individual person “in and by himself.” Hence, Velleman contends that one may attribute the same value to each person while still viewing each individual person as *irreplaceable*.<sup>34</sup>

Velleman holds that the value of each individual person is incomparable to that of other persons; still he does not give a plausible etiology of how one comes to love certain persons as opposed to others. This is particularly evident when it comes to

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34. Velleman appears to overlook the fact that attributing “the same value” to each individual implies the very sort of comparison which he rejects as inappropriate. I am grateful to Scott MacDonald for pointing out this inconsistency in Velleman’s account.

parental love. If Amy and John have a child it is unlikely to think that they come to value her as an instance of rational nature. Their love for the child as irreplaceable is evident long before they develop an appreciation for her worth as an instance of rational nature. Rather, she is irreplaceable to them by virtue of being *their* child.<sup>35</sup> Of course they are delighted when the child develops certain personal characteristics and exhibits behaviors that are reflective of a rational nature, but it is unlikely that such characteristics and behaviors serve as the basis of their initial or ongoing valuation of her. Moreover, Velleman's account of the etiology of love cannot account for cases where a person is never able to actualize their rational capacities. Even if Amy and John's child turned out to have severe mental disabilities which precluded her ability to actualize her rational capacities for valuation and love, it is far from unreasonable to think that they would love her anyway as is evident in the case of so many parents who love and dedicate their lives to the care of such a child, indicating the inherent value of the child despite the fact that she will *never* be able to develop the rational capacities that Velleman takes to comprise the "true and proper self."<sup>36</sup>

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35. Velleman may well respond that parental love is not the sort of love he has in mind on his account. When ruling out romantic love, he qualifies what sort of love counts as moral: "When I say that love is a moral emotion, what I have in mind is the love between close adult friends and relations—including spouses and other life-partners" (351). But why rule out parental love, especially given that such love is plausible conceived of as paradigmatic given the sort unselfish concern for another it so often entails? Here the confusion concerning the various sorts of love among contemporary philosophers is glaringly apparent, given that others, viz. Frankfurt, takes the love of a parent for his or her small child to be the paradigmatic form of love.

36. Such cases of loving an infant or a mentally disabled child deserve further consideration, and unfortunately I cannot elaborate upon them here. It should be noted, however, that such cases

But quite apart from the case of parental love, Velleman's descriptive account of love doesn't seem to capture how one comes to love one's friends nor does it provide a plausible account of the maintenance or continuation of such love. First, one rarely comes to love one's friends *qua* instance of rational nature, even where that is understood to be the capacity for valuation and love. Rather, one comes to find certain characteristic of a person attractive to oneself for various reasons, many of which have nothing to do with serving as "an expression or symbol or reminder of his value as a person," (371). Moreover, it is not merely finding certain characteristics of a person attractive that initially grounds one's love for one's friends, even those characteristics which seem most promising as indications of a person's essentially rational nature. One must *interact* with the other in order to develop the sort of concern characteristic of genuine love.<sup>37</sup> For instance, I may admire and respect President Obama as a result of observing certain characteristics indicative of his rational nature, but my appreciation of these characteristics don't give rise to love or friendship, given that I have never personally interacted with the man. And the characteristics and behavior of certain persons I do love often do *not* necessarily serve as reminders of their essentially rational nature. Yet I continue to love them and to

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are special and do not represent paradigmatic instances of love, in particular the kind of love characteristic of friendship. Typical instances of love involve valuing the rationality and moral agency of the persons one cares about. Still, it is important to consider that even those incapable of actualizing such capacities are nevertheless worthy of our love.

37. Cf. Kolodny, 174-175.

recognize their essential worth as the individuals they are, as well as their worth *to me* as persons with whom I have a shared history and ongoing commitment.

Secondly, Velleman's account of what makes love moral is open to the same problem as Whiting's account of character based friendship—the assumption that what makes love moral is the valuation of an impersonal albeit essential feature of the one loved, in Velleman's case the idealized rational will. However, his insistence on the impartiality of love obscures certain normative features of love by failing to account for the priority or preference we ought to give certain persons as opposed to others.<sup>38</sup> It is not only that one ought to love certain persons in particular, but also that one ought to love certain persons in particular ways. Velleman's account cannot distinguish the different kinds of love we ought to have for our child as opposed to our lifelong friend, or our spouse. If love just is a response to a person's rational nature, it doesn't seem to give us reason to respond differently in different kinds of relationships and to develop the levels and kinds of concern appropriate to each.

In what follows, I will argue that Aquinas provides a more compelling account of love. On his view that love is somehow impersonal or impartiality that makes it a morally praiseworthy, but rather what love demands of us. This does not amount to merely “arresting our emotional defenses” thereby making us vulnerable to the other. What makes love moral, rather, is that it involves committing ourselves to another

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38. Ibid, 177.



and making her happiness and wellbeing an ongoing priority to us. This entails not only valuing the one loved as an end in herself, but further, a “going out” from oneself to take up the concerns of the other as our own. Moreover, Aquinas provides normative reasons for the level and kinds of concern we ought to have for another in accordance with the sort of relationship we have with her. His theory of love accounts for the fact that that love by its very nature is personal and partial; nevertheless he provides normative reasons for why we ought to love *all* persons, albeit in a more general and impartial manner.

#### B. AQUINAS ON WHAT MAKES THE LOVE CHARACTERISTIC OF FRIENDSHIP MORALLY PRAISEWORTHY

One virtue of Aquinas’s account of love is that it is broad enough to include many different kinds, marking out a certain range of phenomena to which *amor* corresponds which are in keeping with general accounts of what we would call love. Aquinas distinguishes between several types of love (*amor* understood in its general sense), identifying the love characteristic of friendship (*amor amicitiae*) as the paradigmatic type of love for another person. He provides a descriptive analysis of the psychological phenomena characteristic of various sorts of love. On Aquinas’s account, certain kinds of love are moral. But what does it mean for love to be moral? In one respect, love is the sort of thing that is subject to moral evaluation inasmuch as there are proper objects of love and improper objects of love, depending upon the objective goodness of such objects. When it comes to the love of *persons*, the *ordering*

of our loves is subject to moral evaluation: we should love certain persons *more* than others on the basis of their moral goodness or virtue in a certain sense. Nevertheless, Aquinas's account differs from that of Whiting's Aristotle insofar as we have normative reasons to love *more* those who are more closely connected to us than those who are more virtuous.

When it comes to love of persons, love characteristic of friendship is morally praiseworthy insofar as it entails desiring what is good for the other *for the other's own sake*. However, this gives rise to a particular problem concerning whether love must be strictly motivated by other-directed concern in order to count as morally praiseworthy, or whether it the other-directedness of our love can be ultimately motivated by happiness or eudaimonia as its final ultimate end. Contra Whiting, I argue that love need not be fundamentally other-directed in order to count as moral, since ultimately self-directed aspect of love aims at an objective good—the perfection of the moral agent which entails desiring the good of another for the other's own sake.

There is a certain amount of overlap between these accounts of the relation between love and morality, and Aquinas does not always make clear what he precisely has in mind, but I will attempt as far as possible to distinguish the different respects in which he considers love to be morally praiseworthy. Since the paradigmatic form of love, *amor amicitiae*, concerns love for another *person*, such love will serve as the focus of this section of the chapter. However, it will prove useful to rehearse the features

central to his account of *amor* in general in order to grasp what distinguishes the kinds of love he considers morally praiseworthy.

My ultimate aim is to show how, according to Aquinas, the love characteristic of friendship is morally praiseworthy inasmuch as it is essentially other-directed, but that the other-directed aspect of love need not and should not preclude it's being sought ultimately part of one's own good. Moreover, I will argue that such love is an essentially *personal* and *partial* relation insofar as the one loved is valued in and of herself rather than *qua* virtuous or *qua* instance of rational nature. Nevertheless, insofar as the love characteristic of friendship belongs to the will, and the *formal* object of the will is the good considered in a universal or all things considered sense, such love is directed toward a particular person apprehended by the subject *as good* in some respect (although not necessarily as morally virtuous, as Whiting would have it), and to this extent may be viewed as taking into account an impersonal point of view. Still, the *immediate* object of love is *this* particular person as apprehended as good in some respect. The subject's ongoing concern for the particular individual is primarily based in upon her *relationship* to the one loved.

I begin with a distinction crucial to understanding Aquinas's account of the love characteristic of friendship which will provide insight into why the ongoing concern constitutive of this sort of love is morally praiseworthy not because it is directed toward a person considered as virtuous, but because it is directed toward a particular person with whom one is closely connected. Then I will consider his

normative account of the proper order of love which not only allows for but also *requires* partiality insofar as we have reasons to prioritize the love of certain persons with whom we are specially related.

#### 1. *AMOR AMICITIAE* AND *AMOR CONCUPISCENTIAE*

On Aquinas's account, the best kind of love one person can have for another is *amor amicitiae* (where *amor* is construed in the broad sense of the term). This sort of love belongs not to the sensory appetite as does the passion love (*amor* construed in the strict sense of the term), but to the will or rational appetite of a human being and thus necessarily involves choice.<sup>39</sup> *Amor amicitiae* is a form of *dilectio* or intellectual love. Because it belongs to the will, the objects of *dilectio* and its forms are directed toward a good conceived of universally, either some *general* good such as justice, or a *particular* object or end apprehended *as good* in a general or universal sense. One might worry, however, that since the object of the will is some object or end apprehended *as good*, that love (*dilectio*) and hence the love characteristic of friendship (*amor amicitiae*) must be ultimately directed toward some impersonal object or end or generic good in the manner suggested by Whiting and Velleman. Aquinas's account of the love characteristic of friendship as a form of *dilectio* appears to suggest that the one loved is loved primarily *qua* good rather than *per se*. Hence, it would seem that Aquinas's

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39. *ST* I-II 26.3.

account of *amor amicitiae*, the paradigmatic form of love for another person, is impersonal after all.

To draw such a conclusion, however, is unwarranted. *Dilectio* is indeed a response to the apprehended value of the beloved object or end. Hence one's apprehension of the object loved as something good to be pursued is a necessary condition for *dilectio* since *dilectio* pertains to the will and one cannot rationally will or love something unless it is apprehended as good in some respect. Accordingly, *dilectio* requires that the lover recognize the good instantiated in a particular individual in order for that individual to be its object. But according to Aquinas, the good considered in a universal sense is not the *immediate* object of love but rather its *formal* object.<sup>40</sup> The immediate object of *dilectio*, however, is not the good in general, but a *particular individual* which the agent apprehends *as good* in this general or formal sense. Hence, even though *dilectio* is directed toward an individual of a particular sort, the individual *per se* is the immediate object of love, whereas the universal good instantiated in that individual is its formal object.<sup>41</sup>

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40. *Dilectio* belongs to the will and the formal object of the will is something apprehended *as good*. Cf. *ST* I-II 8.1, 8.1 ad 2.

41. To be sure, Velleman doesn't explicitly appeal explicitly to this sort of distinction between formal and immediate object of will. Perhaps if he were to do so, his account of the object of love would be more plausible. He might say that love is impartial insofar as its *formal* object is the rational essence of the person loved, where the *immediate* object is the particular person loved *qua* rational being. It is a weakness of his account that Velleman appeals only to the impartial features of love excluding particular, non-accidental reasons we have for loving *this* person rather than another.

Aquinas describes *amor amicitiae* as a species of *dilectio* insofar as it belongs not to the sensory appetite but to the rational appetite or will of a human being. It is a special form of *dilectio* insofar as its object must be someone or something to which the agent can wish good *for the other's own sake*. Although in one sense, the agent can wish good to a non-rational being such as a beloved pet, paradigmatic cases of *amor amicitiae* concern love for other *persons* since only persons can partake in higher sorts of goods constitutive of happiness given their essentially rational nature. To see why Aquinas holds that only persons are the proper objects of *amor amicitiae*, it will prove useful to carefully examine a distinction crucial to Aquinas's account of love. Aquinas first introduces the distinction between love characteristic of concupiscence or desire (*amor concupiscentiae*), and the love characteristic of friendship (*amor amicitiae*) in his treatise on the passions (*ST I-II 26.4*), although this may appear somewhat misleading given that *amor amicitiae* is not a passion since it belongs to the will. He distinguishes *amor amicitiae* from *amor concupiscentiae* by virtue of the end toward which each is directed:

The motion of love (*amor*) tends toward two ends, namely toward the good which one wishes to someone, either to himself or to another, and toward the one to whom he wishes good. Accordingly, one has *amor concupiscentiae* for the good he wishes to someone, and has *amor amicitiae* for the one to whom he wishes good (*ST I-II 26.4*).<sup>42</sup>

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42. Sic ergo motus amoris in duo tendit, scilicet in bonum quod quis vult alicui, vel sibi vel alii; et in illud cui vult bonum. Ad illud ergo bonum quod quis vult alteri, habetur amor concupiscentiae, ad illud autem cui aliquis vult bonum, habetur amor amicitiae.

According to this passage, *amor concupiscentiae*, the love characteristic of desire, ultimately refers to the sort of desire one has for an object one wishes for another, or for oneself. Aquinas explains that this is the sort of love one might have for non-rational objects such as wine or horses since one does not wish goods to such objects for their own sakes, but for the sake of someone else. Hence, when x loves y with *amor concupiscentiae*, x loves y either *for the sake of x* (i.e. herself), or *for the sake of some other person z*. Consider, for example, my love of a good ice wine. In loving the wine I do not wish good to the wine; rather, I wish good either to myself, or to someone else whom I believe will take pleasure in the wine.<sup>43</sup> In the case of *amor amicitiae*, on the other hand, x loves z for the sake of z where z is something I wish good to for its own sake.<sup>44</sup> For example, when I love my sister with *amor amicitiae*, I wish good to her for her sake, not for the sake of any good that may accrue to me or to anyone else by loving her.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, it is my *sister* who is the immediate object of my love, not the

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43. It might be said that I wish good to the wine by treating it with care in order to preserve its integrity, but this is only because I want the wine to be well preserved for my own enjoyment or the enjoyment of my friend.

44. For the most part, Aquinas reserves the term “*amor amicitiae*” for the love of another person, but this account need not be limited to persons. I can, for instance, wish good to my dog caring about her wellbeing for her own sake, without referring her good back to myself. However, as indicated above, it would be irrational to wish my dog the highest good of happiness or eudaimonia since rational beings are capable of this end.

45. Of course on a eudaimonist account of human motivation all acts are undertaken for the sake of one’s final ultimate end, but this need not and indeed does not preclude loving another for her own sake insofar as the acts associated with *amor amicitiae* are not instrumental but either partly constitutive or a specification of one’s own happiness. Upon reflection one may see that this is so, but generally one’s own happiness is not the *direct* motivator in loving another with the love characteristic of friendship. Cf. Scott MacDonald, “Ultimate Ends in Practical Reason.”

good I wish to her. Notably, there is a sense in which I also love myself with *amor amicitiae*; this is precisely what I do in wishing my own good.<sup>46</sup>

One may love another person *merely* with the love characteristic of desire (*amor concupiscentiae*), but this would not be to love that person for his own sake but rather as a good one wishes to oneself. For example, one might love someone simply because she finds him amusing and his company pleasurable. However, in this sort of case, the one loving fails to love the other for the other's own sake; she loves him as a means to her own pleasure or delight rather than as an end in himself.<sup>47</sup> Of course in the love characteristic of friendship, the one loving does delight in the one loved, but her concern extends beyond her own good to the good of another which is sought for the sake of the other, as will become clear in Aquinas's account of how *amor amicitiae* and *amor concupiscentiae* are related to one another. Aquinas goes on in the passage to explain how the two kinds of love are inextricably connected but in such a way that the latter is subordinate to the former:

This division is made in accordance with what is prior and what is secondary. For that which is loved with *amor amicitiae* is loved simply and

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46. In this case  $x$  loves  $x$  for the sake of  $x$ .

47. There are certain parallels between this and Aristotle's description of friendship based upon pleasure. However, it is not the case that such friendship on Aristotle's account is *entirely* instrumental. One can wish good to the other for the other's own sake, even in the pleasure friendship, although this sort of friendship is not *complete* as is the friendship based upon virtue, where the good one wishes to the other are those goods pertaining to virtue and partly constitutive of the other's happiness.



per se, whereas that which is loved with *amor concupiscentiae* is not loved simply or on account of itself, but it is loved for another.<sup>48</sup>

In loving someone with *amor amicitiae*, then, there is always some desired good which is not loved primarily for its own sake, but rather for the sake of another who is loved for her own sake.

In his illuminating study of the relation between knowledge and love in the moral theology of Aquinas, Michael Sherwin has suggested that *amor amicitiae* and *amor concupiscentiae* are not actually two forms of love but one, stating that “human love always has two components, one of which is subordinate to the other.”<sup>49</sup> While Sherwin is right to think that the two forms of *amor* always occur together in a hierarchical form, his interpretation is somewhat misleading insofar as it is at odds with how Aquinas himself distinguishes these forms as at least conceptually distinct from one another. Appealing to Aristotle’s account of friendship of which benevolence is a characteristic feature (Cf. *EN* viii 2, 3), Aquinas contrasts the two forms of *amor* as follows:

Not every kind of *amor* has the character of friendship (*amicitia*), but *amor* which is together with benevolence (*benevolentia*), namely, when we love someone in such a way that we wish good to her. But if we do not wish

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48. Haec autem divisio est secundum prius et posterius. Nam id quod amatur amore amicitiae, simpliciter et per se amatur, quod autem amatur amore concupiscentiae, non simpliciter et secundum se amatur, sed amatur alteri. (Cf. ST I 60.3 where Aquinas distinguishes between loving something as a subsisting good, i.e. in that we wish well to it, and loving something as an inherent or accidental good, i.e. that which we wish to another).

49. Michael Sherwin, *By Knowledge and by Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005) 75.

good to the thing loved, but we wish its good for ourselves, just as we are said to love wine or a horse or something of that sort, it is not love characteristic of friendship (*amor amicitiae*), but love characteristic of a certain desire (*cuiusdam concupiscentiae*), for it is ridiculous to say that someone has friendship for wine or for a horse (*ST II-II 23.1*).<sup>50</sup>

As the passage suggests, Aquinas conceives of the two forms of *amor* as clearly distinct. Only *amor* together with benevolence (*benevolentia*), i.e. wishing good to another for her own sake, has the character of friendship.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, there is always a sense in which benevolence is present, even when it is not explicit. For in wishing the good of the wine or the horse for myself, I could be thought of as showing benevolence to myself. So it is not the wine or the horse in this example which I love with *amor amicitiae*, but rather (in a certain sense) myself. Hence, in loving an object with *amor concupiscentiae*, in effect I love *myself* with *amor amicitiae*. Accordingly, Sherwin is correct in claiming that in each instance of *amor*, there is both a good loved for the sake of someone else or oneself (*amor concupiscentiae*), and that for the sake of which the first good is loved (*amor amicitiae*). While these two forms of *amor* are not the *same*, as Sherwin claims, they always occur together. What Aquinas's account of

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50. Non quilibet amor habet rationem amicitiae, sed amor qui est cum benevolentia, quando scilicet sic amamus aliquem ut ei bonum velimus. Si autem rebus amatis non bonum velimus, sed ipsum eorum bonum velimus nobis, sicut dicimur amare vinum aut equum aut aliquid huiusmodi, non est amor amicitiae, sed cuiusdam concupiscentiae, ridiculum enim est dicere quod aliquis habeat amicitiam ad vinum vel ad equum.

51. However, as suggested above (cf. note 42), the one to whom one wishes good for its own sake need not necessarily be another person. In the case of the horse, I can desire the hay (and go buy it) for the horse's sake. Aquinas seems to overlook this possibility in the passage quoted, however, it is implied by his tripartite analysis of love described elsewhere. I am grateful to Scott MacDonald for pressing me to consider this further.

the hierarchy of *amor concupiscentiae* and *amor amicitiae* suggests is that *amor* always presupposes a tripartite structure: x loves y on account of z (or on account of x). Hence, any instance of *amor concupiscentiae* entails *amor amicitiae*. But the hierarchy is not limited to particular goods like wine or horses. It also applies to more universal goods such as virtue, happiness, or even *caritas*, i.e. the love characteristic of friendship for God.

## 2. CARITAS AND AMOR AMICITIAE

In keeping with the Christian tradition to which he belongs, Aquinas believes that the most significant of personal relationships is an individual's relationship with God. Union with God is the final ultimate end, the highest good in which human beings find their fundamental desire for happiness wholly fulfilled. Such union with God is made accessible to a human being through the theological virtue *caritas*<sup>52</sup>—*viz.* the love of a person for God, or more precisely, friendship toward God (*amicitia ad Deum*). *Caritas* is the disposition or virtue which directs a human being to her final and complete end in which she is united in intimate and everlasting friendship with God. Aquinas insists that even the universal good of *caritas* cannot be loved with *amor amicitiae* since it must be loved derivatively, either for one's own sake or for the sake of someone else, in this case God.

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52. *Caritas* is generally translated as the English word "charity." However, since the English translation has many related but distinct senses (for instance, benevolence or generosity to the poor), I shall leave the Latin untranslated so as to preserve its specifically Christian association with the love a human being has for God and for his neighbor.

Aquinas makes this point clearly in addressing the question of whether we should love *caritas* out of *caritas*:

In accordance with friendship, something is loved in two ways. In one way, as the friend himself for whom we have friendship and to whom we wish good things, and in the other way, as the good that we wish to a friend. It is in this way and not the first that *caritas* is loved out of *caritas*, because *caritas* is the good that we wish for all things which we love (*diligere*) out of *caritas*. And the same is the case with happiness and other virtues (*ST II-II 25.2*).<sup>53</sup>

So *caritas* itself is not loved with *amor amicitiae*. Rather, one loves *God* with *amor amicitiae*. *Caritas*, along with all other virtues, and even one's own happiness, is not loved simply and *per se*, but always on account of the *person* to whom one wishes these goods (which in the case of *caritas* is ultimately God). The reason is that universal goods such as the virtue of *caritas* and the final ultimate end of happiness are *impersonal* goods; the love *amor amicitiae* is paradigmatically directed toward *persons*, i.e. rational beings capable of partaking in the highest and best goods. So while it is true that one loves a good one wishes to another, this good is not the immediate object of *amor amicitiae*. *Amor amicitiae* entails wishing good to another for the other's own sake, which is precisely what makes such love morally praiseworthy.<sup>54</sup>

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53. Per amicitiam autem amatur aliquid dupliciter. Uno modo, sicut ipse amicus ad quem amicitiam habemus et cui bona volumus. Alio modo, sicut bonum quod amico volumus. Et hoc modo caritas per caritatem amatur, et non primo, quia caritas est illud bonum quod optamus omnibus quos ex caritate diligimus. Et eadem ratio est de beatitudine et de aliis virtutibus. Cf. *Car. VIII ad 16*.

54. This will be important for understanding how, when it comes to the love of *persons* out of friendship, even though every person aims at their own happiness as their final ultimate end, the truly happy person loves God more than self in the most complete or perfect form of love, i.e. *caritas*.

Aquinas's account of *amor amicitiae* could be construed as somehow impersonal insofar as it entails apprehending the person loved as good in some sense. But the apprehension of a person as morally virtuous or even as an instance of an essentially rational nature is not what makes such love morally praiseworthy. Rather, the moral value of *amor amicitiae* must be attributed to its being the sort of love which entails desiring the good of another person for that person's own sake.

### 3. *AMOR AMICITIAE* AND SELF-INTEREST

Thus far I have argued that the morally praiseworthy feature of *amor amicitiae* as depicted by Aquinas is not that its object is impersonal, but that it entails desiring the good of one's friend *for the sake of the friend*. Nonetheless, on Aquinas's account of the best kind of love between persons, the good of the other is only one of two ends which comprise the love characteristic of friendship. In his description of love and its effects in the *Prima Secundae*, Aquinas indicates that one of the ends of love is the fulfillment of the agent's own desire for a certain sort of union with the one loved (*ST* I-II 28.1).

Accordingly, Aquinas distinguishes love from pure benevolence insofar as it has a twofold end: 1) the good of the beloved friend which is desired for the friend's own sake, and 2) the culmination of one's love in some sort of union with the beloved

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I will consider this in more detail in the final chapter.

friend.<sup>55</sup> This latter end is in a certain sense a form of *amor concupiscentiae*, since it is directed toward fulfilling the desire of the one loving.

Of the two ends the agent desires in the act of loving, the first is essentially benevolent or other-directed, but the second is essentially self-directed. The agent desires to be united with the other for her own sake. So although *amor amicitiae* entails wishing and promoting the good of another for the other's own sake, it still has an essentially self-interested component given Aquinas's complete account of the ends of love. The desire for union makes it such that love, even the best kind, is partially but essentially self-interested, and hence may not be considered by some as a moral phenomenon after all. At best, it entails a sort of mixture of motives. After delineating Aquinas's distinction between kinds of union and their relation to love, I argue that the desire for union does not after all undermine the essentially moral nature of *amor amicitiae*.

#### 4. *AMOR AMICITIAE* AND UNION

In his account of the effects of love, Aquinas appeals to three kinds of union which comprise the appetitive motion:

For a certain union is the cause of love. And this is *substantial union* with regard to the love with which one loves oneself, but with regard to the love with which one loves other things it is a *union of similitude*. Also there

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55. In his analysis of Aquinas's account of God's love in *SCG*, Norman Kretzmann argues that understanding love solely in terms of *benevolence*, i.e. desiring the good of the other for the other's own sake, is "drastically incomplete." A complete account of the love characteristic of friendship must also include of what he calls *univolence*, i.e. desiring or willing some sort of union with the person loved for her own sake. Cf. *The Metaphysics of Theism*, 241-242.

is a certain union which is essentially love itself. This is the *unio according to the bond of affection*. This is compared to substantial union in that the one who loves stands in relation to the object loved as he stands to himself in the case of *amor amicitiae*, but as to something belonging to him in the case of *amor concupiscentiae*. Finally, a certain union is the effect of love. And this is *real union*, which the one who loves seeks with regard to the object of love (*ST I-II 28.1 ad 2*).<sup>56</sup>

As the passage indicates, Aquinas sees the different kinds of union as related to love in three ways: 1) the *cause* of love is substantial union (*unio substantialis*) as it pertains to the love of oneself, or the union of likeness (*unio similitudinis*) as it pertains to love of another, 2) union according to the bond of affection (*unio secundum coaptationem affectus*) just *is* love, and 3) real union is the *effect* of love when the object of love is attained.

As concerns the union of likeness (*unio similitudinis*), Aquinas distinguishes two different kinds: the *actual possession* of similar qualities, and the *potential possession* of certain qualities which one does not possess, but is inclined toward. He indicates that the former kind of likeness is the cause of *amor amicitiae* while the latter is the cause of *amor concupiscentiae*. The kind of likeness Aquinas identifies as the cause of the love characteristic of friendship, then, is the possession of a similar qualities between two persons “as if possessing one form,” (*quasi habentes unam formam*) such as shared humanity or something more particular (*ST I-II 27.3*).

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56. Quaedam enim unio est causa amoris. Et haec quidem est unio substantialis, quantum ad amorem quo quis amat seipsum, quantum vero ad amorem quo quis amat alia, est unio similitudinis, ut dictum est. Quaedam vero unio est essentialiter ipse amor. Et haec est unio secundum coaptationem affectus. Quae quidem assimilatur unioni substantiali, inquantum amans se habet ad amatum, in amore quidem amicitiae, ut ad seipsum; in amore autem concupiscentiae, ut ad aliquid sui. Quaedam vero unio est effectus amoris. Et haec est unio realis, quam amans quaerit de re amata.

Accordingly the union of likeness *causes* the union according to the bond of affection, or love itself. In the above passage and in the earlier passage quoted above describing the appetitive motion to which love gives rise (*ST* I-II 26.2), Aquinas uses the term *coaptatio* to identify love, a term which refers to a bond or apprehension of something as somehow appropriate or suitable to oneself. In the case of *amor amicitiae*, this bond is caused by the apprehension of sort of similarity between oneself and the one loved. Elsewhere, Aquinas uses the term *complacentia*, which adds to *coaptatio* the connotation of finding the object pleasing to oneself, and thus suggests how love gives rise to the desire which culminates in real union.<sup>57</sup>

With respect to *amor amicitiae*, the union of likeness entails that the person loved stands to the one loving in such a way that the one loving stands to himself. The one who loves wishes good to his friend in the same manner that he wishes good to himself. He treats the friends as he treats himself as a result of his love for the other caused by the possession of similar qualities as indicated above. This may include certain similarities shared by family members, such biological ties or a common history, or those shared by friends such as similar tastes, concerns, goals, or projects. The kind of love one has for the other varies in accordance with the different kinds of shared similarities.

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57. The suitability (*coaptatio*) of the sensory appetite or the will to some good, that is, the very state of finding the good thing pleasing (*complacentia boni*) is called either sensory *amor*, or intellective or rational *amor*. Therefore sensory *love* is in the sensory appetite just as intellective love is in the intellective appetite (*ST* I-II.26.1).



Finally, real union (*unio realis*) involves the actual presence of the beloved object. In the case of the love characteristic of friendship this involves spending time with the one loved, sharing in conversation, mutual goals and projects, and other important life activities. In real union, the appetitive motion comes to rest in the pleasure or joy one takes in being with the other.<sup>58</sup> Still, it is worth noting that even when the motion of love is realized in real union with the other, love itself, i.e. the union of affection, does not cease; love is present during the entire appetitive motion, remaining even when its object is attained. Hence, whether the beloved is present or absent, love endures (*ST* I-II.28.1).

So we have seen that it is central to Aquinas's account of love that it is partly constituted by the agent's desire to be united with the other, and for this reason cannot be *entirely* disinterested. Union between the lover and the beloved is one of the two ends of the love characteristic of friendship; it is this end in which the appetitive movement of love comes to rest when the one who loves experiences pleasure or joy in the culmination of his love. The potential worry that Aquinas's account of love as a desire directed toward union with another is that love is really a form of *amor concupiscentiae*: the agent desires such union for his own good and not for that of the other. Hence although *amor amicitiae* is disinterested insofar as it entails wishing for

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58. Aquinas indicates that pleasure or joy attendant upon such union is last in the order of execution, but first in the order of intention and as such constitutes the aim of the motion of love. Cf. *ST* I-II 25.2.

and promoting the good of the other for the other's own sake it appears to be interested given that *as a form of love*, the agent aims toward a sort of union with the one loved which terminates in the agent's own pleasure or delight (Cf. *ST* I-II 25.2 delineated above).

This objection, however, is unfounded. Aquinas provides a complete account of what the best kind of love between persons plausibly consists in insofar as it entails both desire for the good of one's friend and the desire to be united with her in some respect. It is morally praiseworthy in that it entails desiring the good of one's friend for her own sake, but this in no way precludes the desire for the enjoyment of being united with her. Indeed the desire for and the actual union may partly constitute not only one's own good but also that of the other.<sup>59</sup> Both friends benefit from such union given that it is part of the objective good of each friend to be united in some sort of fellowship with another person. So although it is part of the good of the agent to enjoy a sort of union with the other, such union itself also benefits the other. Hence there is no real conflict between the two ends toward which *amor amicitiae* is directed.<sup>60</sup>

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59. "It is the privilege of friends to take joy in one another's presence, in living together, and in conversation," (*SCG* I.91). Cf. Aristotle, *EN* IX 1171b29-1172a1.

60. In considering the love characteristic of friendship as an essentially moral phenomenon, it is worth noting precisely how Aquinas conceives of the two ends of love by virtue of where they are placed in his taxonomy. The first end, i.e. the good of the other which is sought for the other's own sake, is explained in question 26 of the *Prima Secundae* where Aquinas is considering the very nature of *love itself*. In the fourth article where he distinguishes *amor amicitiae* from *amor concupiscentiae*, Aquinas indicates that an essential feature of the former is that its end is the good of the person

## 5. AMOR AMICITIAE AND ECSTASY (*EXTASIS*)

In addition to union, one of the other effects of love Aquinas identifies is ecstasy (*extasis*), which he uses in the sense of being placed outside of oneself (*ST I-II 28.3*). In his account of ecstasy, Aquinas indicates another respect in which *amor amicitiae* is *other-directed* in a way that *amor concupiscentiae* is not, and is *as such* an essentially moral phenomenon. One kind of ecstasy pertains to the appetitive power insofar as the appetite is moved beyond oneself toward another. In Aquinas's words, "someone is said to undergo ecstasy (*extasis*) when the appetite of that person is carried toward another person, in some sense going out from oneself" (*ST I-II 28.3*).<sup>61</sup> Love causes ecstasy by moving a person toward another simply, in such a way that is does not refer back to his own desire for union but essentially involves wishing and doing good to the other for the other's own sake.

Aquinas's account of the distinction between *amor amicitiae* and *amor concupiscentiae* again plays a crucial role in specifying how the love characteristic of

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loved sought *for her own sake*. The desire for real union is an effect of love, whereas the affective union is love itself. So love itself *entails* loving the other as an end in herself, but gives rise to the desire for real union, which is not love itself, but an *effect* of love (Cf. *ST 27.1*). Accordingly, it is reasonable to think that real union doesn't belong to the *nature* of love although it is nonetheless one of the two *ends* of love. What the taxonomy suggests is that the love characteristic of friendship is moral by virtue of its very nature insofar as other-directedness is an essential feature of such love. So it is true that the love characteristic of friendship is *interested* with respect to the desire for real union with the one loved, in which the motion of love terminates. Nevertheless, love itself with respect to the love characteristic of *friendship*, is essentially *other-directed* given the very nature of what it is.

61. Secundum appetitivam vero partem dicitur aliquis extasim pati, quando appetitus alicuius in alterum fertur, exiens quodammodo extra seipsum.

friendship causes a sort of other-directedness lacking in the love characteristic of desire.<sup>62</sup>

Amor directly causes the second kind of ecstasy [that belonging to the appetitive power], absolutely (*simpliciter*) with respect to *amor amicitiae*, but with respect to *amor concupiscentiae* not absolutely but in a certain respect. For concerning *amor concupiscentiae* the one who loves is carried outside himself, namely, insofar as he seeks enjoyment from something external to him, since he is not content to enjoy the good which he possesses. But because that person seeks to possess the external good for himself, he does not go out from himself absolutely, but rather, such affection concludes in an end within himself. But concerning *amor amicitiae*, the person's affection goes out from himself *absolutely* because he wishes good to his friend and devotes himself [to his friend's good] as if managing his own concern and care, *on account of the friend himself*.<sup>63</sup>

In the case of *amor concupiscentiae*, the agent is carried outside of himself in the sense that he seeks to attain something he does not already possess. Concerning, for example, the love for wine, the agent goes out from himself to the extent that he seeks to enjoy something external to him. Upon apprehending the bottle of wine, he is carried outside of himself in the sense that he seeks to attain for himself something he does not already possess, i.e. a glass of wine. But he is carried outside of himself only in a limited respect since his affection for the wine terminates in his possession

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62. Cf. *On Love & Charity*, tr. Peter A. Kwasniewski (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008): 144, note b.

63. Sed secundam extasim facit amor directe, simpliciter quidem amor amicitiae; amor autem concupiscentiae non simpliciter, sed secundum quid. Nam in amore concupiscentiae, quodammodo fertur amans extra seipsum, in quantum scilicet, non contentus gaudere de bono quod habet, quaerit frui aliquo extra se. Sed quia extrinsecum bonum quaerit sibi habere, non exit simpliciter extra se, sed talis affectio in infra ipsum concluditur. Sed in amore amicitiae, affectus alicuius simpliciter exit extra se, quia vult amico bonum, et operatur, quasi gerens curam et providentiam ipsius, propter ipsum amicum.

and enjoyment of it. Hence, his affection comes back to him upon his attainment of object loved.

On the other hand, in the case of *amor amicitiae*, the agent is carried outside of himself absolutely (*simpliciter*) insofar as his affection is not directed back toward himself, but rather remains outside of him (keeping in view that in accordance with Aquinas's eudaimonism, *amor amicitiae* itself is ultimately a constitutive part of the agent's own final ultimate end or happiness). The end of the love characteristic of friendship is *external* to the agent insofar as the agent desires and devotes himself to the good of the other, not on his own account but on account of his friend. He takes up the cares and concerns of the beloved friend the sake of her good, rather than for his own—the concern remains outside of him. For instance, in loving my sister with the love characteristic of friendship, I am carried outside of myself insofar as I desire and devote myself to her and to her good. In practical terms, it is if I were taking up her concerns as I would my own. If she needs something, for instance to sell her house, I wish good to her insofar as I desire for her sake that the right buyer comes along. Furthermore, I am moved to seek her good thus acting on her behalf, perhaps by taking the time to help her set up the house for a showing, or watching her children so that she is freed up to do so. By taking up her concerns in this way I am placed outside of myself. In contrast to *amor concupiscentiae*, my desire for her good remains outside of me.

In sum, there is a sense in which, on Aquinas's account, the love characteristic of friendship is *interested* to the extent that one of its desired effects is the real union between the lover and the beloved. Nevertheless, it is just as true to say that such love is *disinterested* or other-directed insofar as another of its effects is the agent's going out from himself to take up the cares and concerns of the his beloved friend in such a way that the end of the agent's affection is not directed back toward himself, but *remains outside of himself* in the one loved.

#### 6. AMOR AMICITIAE AND HAPPINESS

Still, there is a deeper worry with the moral nature of Aquinas's account of even the very best kind of love between persons. Although desiring the good of another for her own sake is compatible with enjoying union with the other and is disinterested in the sense that the agent goes out from oneself in *extasis*, moral theorists like Whiting find it objectionable that the *basic grounding* of the goodness of friendship, in accordance with Aquinas's eudaimonist account of human motivation, is that it is partly constitutive of one's own happiness.<sup>64</sup> Hence although Aquinas holds that the love characteristic of friendship entails concern for the good of another for the other's own sake, even this sort of love appears to be non-moral to the extent that it is not *ultimately* grounded in disinterested concern for the good of the other, and is in fact ultimately justified in terms of its contribution to the agent's own

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64. I am indebted to David Gallagher's insightful discussion of this problem in "Desire for Beatitude and Love of Friendship in Thomas Aquinas." *Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996): 1-47.

happiness or fulfillment. If this is the ultimate motivation, is *amor amicitiae* genuinely morally praiseworthy?

Pulling together the features of Aquinas's account of *amor amicitiae* delineated above, we can see just how, although self-interested in a certain respect, the best kind of love for another person is morally praiseworthy. According most eudaimonist accounts of human motivation, *all* actions are *ultimately* undertaken for the sake of one's own perfect good or happiness (Cf. *ST* I-II 1.4-6). The rational agent acts for the sake of this final ultimate end, i.e. the best life for a human being in which all of her rational desires are completely fulfilled. Nevertheless, this life *includes* and is *partly constituted by* possessing certain virtues, one of which is benevolence, an essential feature of *amor amicitiae*, the best kind of friendship between persons. So one of the reasons *amor amicitiae* is morally praiseworthy is that it entails desiring the highest and best good for the other—an *objective* good constitutive of the friend's own happiness. Still, the love characteristic of friendship entails desiring real union with the other, which may be viewed as self-interested, but need not be since, as we have seen, *union with the other in the best kinds of friendship partly constitutes the happiness or objective good both of the one loving and the one loved.*

With respect to ecstasy (*extasis*), *amor amicitiae* is essentially other-directed and in this sense is what contemporary philosophers may consider altruistic. The agent desires the objective good of the other, and promotes this end in such a way the agent's affection or desire for the good of the other remains outside of herself and in

the one love. The essentially other-directedness of *amor amicitiae* is another feature which makes it morally praiseworthy.

The question remains, however, whether the agent can at once desire the good of another for the other's sake when doing so is ultimately part of her own final ultimate end, or perfective of the agent herself. I believe the answer is yes. The view I have been advocating depends upon Aquinas's view of the final ultimate end as an objectively good state according to which the agent directs all of her actions and ends toward the highest good. *Amor amicitiae*, insofar as it is included in that end, is morally praiseworthy, even if it ultimately motivated by the agent's desire for her own objective good or perfection.

The fact that Aquinas's account of *amor amicitiae* entails both interested and disinterested aspects not only depicts a compelling descriptive account of what motivates such love, but moreover, provides a compelling normative account of the sort of unselfish concern such love ought to motivate. *Amor amicitiae* is a virtue partly constitutive of the agent's highest good or perfection as a human being; one's perfection as a human being entails wishing and doing good for another for the other's sake—an essentially *other-directed* virtue.

I see no reason to think Aquinas's view that *amor amicitiae* is ultimately grounded in the agent's own final ultimate end in any way takes away from the essentially other-directed character of such love. Hence, it is quite plausible to think that *amor amicitiae* is morally praiseworthy *both* insofar as it is other-directed *and* insofar



as it is a virtue which partly constitutes the objective good or the perfection of the agent. Hence, according to Aquinas, what makes love morally praiseworthy is not the impersonal or impartial nature of its object, as Whiting and Velleman contend, i.e. that love is justified in terms of apprehending the other *qua* virtuous or *qua* instance of rational nature. Rather, *amor amicitiae* is morally praiseworthy insofar as it is directed toward the good of another *for the other's own sake*, even if and in fact *because* such love ultimately contributes to one's own perfection or completion as both a rational and relational being.

#### 7. AMOR AMICITIAE AND PARTIALITY

Thus far I have drawn upon Aquinas's theory of love between persons in order to show that the morality of love does not depend upon the impersonal and impartial nature of the justification for love (initial or ongoing), but rather upon the very nature of the love characteristic of friendship as essentially other-directed and ultimately perfective of the agent. But further, Aquinas holds that the love characteristic of friendship should be *partial* inasmuch as we have normative *reasons* for prioritizing certain relationships over others based upon the particular relationships and shared histories we have with certain persons.<sup>65</sup>

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65. With regard to being partial in the sense of prioritizing certain relations over others, Whiting and Velleman could consistently agree. Both philosophers are concerned with how we come to value or continue to value certain persons on the basis of impersonal criteria—virtue or the capacity for valuation. But there is no particular relation between the thesis that we love people on account of their impersonal qualities and that we should or shouldn't prioritize some relations over others. One could agree with Whiting or Velleman about what makes her friends worthy of concern, and yet still think that certain friends, in particular those with whom she is more intimately

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to understanding Aquinas's account of the partiality of love. Significantly, unlike Aristotle, Aquinas holds that we have normative reasons for loving more those most closely connected to us than those who are more virtuous. He explicitly states as much in the midst of giving a detailed account of how one's loves ought to be ordered. Still, virtue is important insofar as the love characteristic of friendship is directed toward the objective good of the other. One's love of those closest to her entails the desire that her friend come to value those objects and ends constitutive of genuine happiness. Accordingly, such love entails wishing that the friend be more virtuous in order that he can partake more in happiness, the highest good for a human being.

In delineating his account of *caritas*, Aquinas considers questions concerning how, out of *caritas*, one's loves ought to be ordered. First, he argues *caritas* must have an order, appealing to Aristotelian natural teleology according to which things are naturally ordered toward their principle or source. Since *caritas* tends toward God as the principle of happiness, the things loved out of *caritas* must be ordered with reference to God as that the principle (*ST* II-II 26.1). Accordingly, God—the first principle of happiness—ought to be loved most of all, more than one's neighbor and even more than oneself.<sup>66</sup> Aquinas defends the Augustinian account of the order of

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connected, deserve more of her attention than those more distant, even if the more distant friends perhaps share the same qualities of character or rationality.

66. With respect to the love of self, Aquinas appeals to relation of a part to the whole,

*caritas*, explaining how God is loved first as the principle of good upon which *caritas* is founded. One loves oneself next as a partaker in this good and then one's neighbor as one who shares together (either actually or potentially) in the good. Aquinas's reason for holding that one ought to love oneself more than one's neighbor is that "unity surpasses union." One is substantially united with himself, and his partaking in the divine good is a more powerful reason for loving than his sharing together in the divine good with another (*ST II-II 26.4*). Nevertheless, Aquinas maintains that loving oneself more than one's neighbor pertains only to one's spiritual well being. One ought to be prepared to sacrifice his physical well being, and even his life, for the well being of his neighbor (*ST II-II 26.5*).

For our purposes, the most important claim Aquinas defends in his account of the order of *caritas* has to do with the ordering of one's love for her neighbors. After arguing for the sense in which we should love certain neighbors more than others, Aquinas makes that striking claim that we should have greater love for those to whom we are most closely connected than those who are more virtuous.

Before examining his defense of this claim, it will prove useful to rehearse the general reasons Aquinas gives for loving certain neighbors more than others. He again appeals to natural teleology in support of the claim that love increases in proportion

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arguing that God ought to be loved first as the universal principle of all who are able to take part in happiness (*ST II-II 26.3*). Of course much more needs to be said about self-love and the love of God, but unfortunately I cannot go into it here. For an excellent discussion see Thomas Osborne, *Love of Self and Love of God in Thirteenth Century Ethics*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005.

to the nearness of the one loved. We have reasons to love particular persons more than others due to the very nature of affection. “For the affection of *caritas*, which is the inclination of grace, is not less ordered than the natural appetite, which is the inclination of nature, for each inclination proceeds from divine wisdom” (*ST* II-II 26.6).<sup>67</sup> This is in keeping with Aquinas’s general view that grace fulfills nature rather than opposing it. He goes on to explain how the inclination of grace follows that of nature:

Now we see in natural things that the inclination of nature is proportionate to the action or motion which is appropriate to the nature of each thing, just as in the earth the inclination of gravity is greater than in water, because it is proper for the earth to be below water. Thus it is also fitting that the inclination of grace, which is the affection of *caritas*, should be proportionate to those actions which should be done outwardly, since we have an intense affection of *caritas* toward those who are more beneficent toward us. And so it is said that even with respect to affection, it is fitting that we should love more someone closer to us than another, (*Ibid*).<sup>68</sup>

Just as natural inclinations are proportionate to the action or motion appropriate to the nature of the thing, the affection of *caritas* ought to be proportionate to those actions which ought to be done outwardly. Hence we ought to love more those whose

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67. Non enim minus est ordinatus affectus caritatis, qui est inclinatio gratiae, quam appetitus naturalis, qui est inclinatio naturae, utraque enim inclinatio ex divina sapientia procedit.

68. Videmus autem in naturalibus quod inclinatio naturalis proportionatur actui vel motui qui convenit naturae uniuscuiusque, sicut terra habet maiorem inclinationem gravitatis quam aqua, quia competit ei esse sub aqua. Oportet igitur quod etiam inclinatio gratiae, quae est affectus caritatis, proportionetur his quae sunt exterius agenda, ita scilicet ut ad eos intensiorem caritatis affectum habeamus quibus convenit nos magis beneficos esse. Et ideo dicendum est quod etiam secundum affectum oportet magis unum proximorum quam alium diligere.

actions are better. But this would appear to be precisely the sort of view Whiting advocates: we ought to love more those who do more good, that is, the more beneficent (and hence more virtuous) person. So why does Aquinas then conclude that we should love more those who are more closely related to us? The answer to this question is partially found in his reply to Augustine's claim that we ought, out of *caritas*, to love all persons equally (ST II-II 26.6 ad 1; Cf. Augustine, *De Doct. Crist.* i.28). Aquinas responds by distinguishing between beneficence and benevolence. With respect to beneficence, we cannot love all equally because we cannot do good to all. But with respect to benevolence, we ought to love all equally in the sense that we wish all persons the same good of everlasting happiness. Hence, he concludes that Augustine is right with respect to benevolence: we should love all equally in wishing them the same good. But with respect to beneficence, we should love those more with whom we are more closely connected by virtue of some sort of contingent circumstances, as Augustine himself points out (ST II-II 26.6 ad 2). Thus far, all that Aquinas has shown is that we ought to love more out of *caritas* those whose actions are more beneficent toward us. And those with whom we are more closely connected due to some circumstance or another are those who are in a better position to act beneficently toward us.

This empirical observation serves as the basis for Aquinas's normative claims about the reasons we have for loving and acting for the sake of those closest to us, and accounting for the fact that the various kinds of relationships we have with

particular persons are important for determining in what way we are to act on their behalf.<sup>69</sup> Accordingly, he continues his account of the order of *caritas* by arguing in accordance with what I will call the “principle of proximity:” that one has reason to love and to act for the sake of those more closely connected to us *more than* those who are more virtuous.

Aquinas claims that we have normative reasons for prioritizing our loves in terms of proximity to us of our relations and friends, rather than those persons who are more virtuous. He gives the following reason:

But the intensity of love (*dilectio*) must take into account the relation of the one who loves with respect to the person himself. And according to this, a person loves those who are closer to him with a more intense affection—an affection directed toward that good he loves on account of them, rather than [loving] those who are better with respect to the greater good (*ST II-II 26.7*).<sup>70</sup>

Although Aquinas acknowledges that we have reasons to love virtuous persons insofar as such persons promote the greater good, he contends that we have reasons to love those persons closer to us with greater *intensity of affection*, based upon the kind of relationship and the shared history we have with them. The personal relationships we have with those close to us give us reason to desire their good more than that of

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69. Aquinas’s account of the order of *caritas* and the principles he appeals to ostensibly mark a significant departure from Aristotelian accounts of the best kinds of friendship based upon the character or virtue of the friends. Indeed, Aquinas explicitly argues that (in this life at least), love of others ought to be prioritized in terms of proximity as opposed to virtue (*ST II-II 26.7*).

70. Sed intensio dilectionis est attendenda per comparisonem ad ipsum hominem qui diligit. Et secundum hoc illos qui sunt sibi propinquiores intensiori affectu diligit homo ad illud bonum ad quod eos diligit, quam meliores ad maius bonum.

more virtuous persons who are deserving of a greater good. However, this doesn't render us indifferent to the virtue of those closest to us. Quite the contrary, Aquinas explicitly states that part of the good we desire for those close to us is that they should become better persons, i.e. more virtuous, and thereby attain greater happiness (*ST II-II 26.7*).

We may recognize that persons like Nelson Mandela or Mother Teresa have great virtue and have brought about great goods for the poor and oppressed persons of this world. This gives us reasons to love them and to desire their good. But it would seem somehow inappropriate for us to love such persons with more intensity than those who are closer to us, given the fact that we don't have close personal relations with them. We respect and admire those who are more virtuous because of the good they have done in the world, but we don't *know* them as we know, for instance, our close friends. Hence, we don't have reason to love them and promote their good over and above those with whom we have close relationships. When Nelson Mandela dies each of us will have reason to mourn on account of the fact he was a great man who helped bring about the end of Apartheid through his suffering and leadership. But it is right to think that we have greater reason to be affected by the death of a close personal friend, or parent, or especially the death of our own child. In fact it would be inappropriate, or even wrong, to be more upset by the loss of a person of great character, than we are about someone close to us in one of these ways. For these reasons, Aquinas is justified in claiming that it is normatively

appropriate to love our close friends and family members with greater intensity on the basis our personal relationships and shared histories with them.

Aquinas specifies a further reason why we should love more those with whom we are more closely connected insofar as we are connected in *more ways* to such persons than we are to persons we love exclusively out of *caritas*. *Caritas*, the love of human beings for God, entails also the love of neighbor, an extension of our love for God (*ST* II-II 25.1). Out of *caritas* we have reason to love those persons with whom we are merely acquainted, or even those we don't know at all. But with respect to those with whom we are more intimately connected, we have other kinds of friendship and thus reason to love them more:

There is another manner in which, out of *caritas*, we love more those who are more closely connected to us because we love them in more ways. For with respect to those who are not closely connected to us, we have only the friendship based upon *caritas*. But with respect to those who are closely connected to us, we have certain other kinds of friendship according to manner of their connection to us (*ST* II-II 26.7).<sup>71</sup>

So while we have reason to love the virtuous and indeed *all* persons on the basis of *caritas*, we have greater reasons to love more those with whom we are connected in different ways.

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71. Est autem et alius modus quo plus diligimus ex caritate magis nobis coniunctos, quia pluribus modis eos diligimus. Ad eos enim qui non sunt nobis coniuncti non habemus nisi amicitiam caritatis. Ad eos vero qui sunt nobis coniuncti habemus aliquas alias amicitias, secundum modum coniunctionis eorum ad nos.



For example, my love for my best friend is an extension of my love for God, but there are many other reasons I love her given our long-term history as friends: the memories we share from growing up in the same neighborhood, being locker partners in high school, roommates in college, and the mutual support we have provided one another throughout the nearly thirty years we have known each other. Aquinas recognizes that we have greater reason to love certain persons more than others on the basis of being connected to them in more ways, and considers such reasons to be normative. To be sure, it is morally praiseworthy, and in fact morally *required*, for me to love Joe off the street out of *caritas*, but it would be inappropriate for me to love him *more* than I love Corri, my lifelong friend who I also love out of *caritas*, but for many other reasons as well.

Hence, Aquinas's provides a normative account of the order of *caritas* specifying how and why we are to prioritize our loves in such a way that corresponds with our natural affections. Nevertheless, his account extends beyond such natural affections to the love of those with whom we are not closely related, and beyond that to the love of our enemies. I will explore this aspect of the order of *caritas* and its demands in the final chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### AQUINAS ON IMPARTIAL LOVE

The bulk of this dissertation has been devoted to understanding how on Aquinas's account, there is an important sense in which certain forms of love can be essentially self-interested and partial and yet at once deeply moral. In particular, my intent has been to show how Aquinas's account of love developed in the right way, provides compelling reasons to think that certain forms of love, in particular *amor amicitiae*, can at once be interested and yet other-directed in such a way that may even involve great personal sacrifice. As a eudaimonist, Aquinas's moral psychology entails that all desires of a rational agent are ultimately rooted in the agent's desire for her own perfection or completion as a human being—that is, her objective good. Further, this good entails desiring the good of other persons independently, without direct reference to the agent's own good.

Moreover, I have shown how Aquinas's moral theory entails partiality insofar as *amor amicitiae* plays a central role providing the rational agent with reasons for prioritizing her own good and that of the persons to whom she has certain commitments and with whom she has a shared history. But although Aquinas's moral theory, as specified in his account of the order of *caritas*, entails partiality, it is nevertheless impartial in the sense that it provides the agent with reasons for, and in fact positively requires, loving all persons, including one's enemies. But this seems problematic insofar as it allows for a potential conflict of interest between prioritizing

the persons one loves and loving *all* persons as is proscribed by the greatest commandment of Christianity. My aim in this chapter is to show how the partiality and impartiality required by Aquinas's moral theory can be reconciled into a coherent account of human motivation.

A striking feature of *caritas* as understood in the Christian tradition is that *all* persons, even one's enemies, are properly included within its scope. The greatest commandment of Christianity is twofold requiring that one love *God* with all her heart, soul and mind, and that she love her *neighbor* as herself.<sup>1</sup> Since the term "neighbor" is inclusive, extending to all persons as actual or potential sharers of the everlasting happiness found in relationship with God, Christian love requires loving *all* persons with *amor amicitiae*.

The antecedent of this view is the Stoic doctrine that ideally, *all* human beings form a community in which all other persons are included in the scope of those to whom we have obligations. This is evidence in Heirocles's account of friendship according to which our concern for others is explained using the metaphor of concentric circles which begins with the self and ultimately extends to include the entire human race (Stobaeus 4.671,7-673,11 tr. Long & Sedley):

Each of us is as it were entirely encompassed by many circles, some small, others, larger, the latter enclosing the former on the basis of their different and unequal dispositions relative to each other.

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1. Mt. 22:36-40, Cf. Lev. 19:18, Deut. 6:5.

The first circle encompasses one's self: mind then body, the second one's immediate family, the third one's extended family, the fourth extends from one's other relations to local residents to one's fellow citizens and countrymen. Finally, the outermost circle extends to include the entire human race. Stoic virtue, according to Heirocles entails bringing those in the outer circles into the more inner circles: "The right point will be reached if, through our own initiative, we reduce the distance of the relationship with each person." There are at least two possible ways of interpreting the metaphor: 1) the virtuous person eventually fits the whole human race into his innermost circle—a view which seems quite incoherent given the constitutional limitations of human beings. As Julia Annas points out, attempting to all more persons into one's innermost circle such that one cares for all persons with equal concern.

Is problematic since increasing partiality for others can only result in the dilution of concern for those closest to us; it can never end in impartiality.<sup>2</sup> The second and more plausible interpretation is that the virtuous person brings other persons closer within his circles of concern, but nevertheless keeps the circles distinct from one another. In this case, the doctrine need not entail the less plausible view that

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2. See Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, 267-269.

we treat all persons with equal concern. Rather, the virtuous person is one who cares for more people, if not equally.<sup>3</sup>

In specifying the order of *caritas*, Aquinas draws from the Stoic tradition providing a normative account of love ranging from the particular and the partial to the more general and impartial.<sup>4</sup> In keeping with Augustine, Aquinas's account of the order of *caritas* begins with the love of God, then the love of self, the love of neighbors, and finally, one's own body (*ST* II-II, 26.1-5).<sup>5</sup> After specifying this general order, Aquinas deals with the question of whether one should love some neighbors more than others. In response to this question, he gives a detailed account of the order of love towards one's neighbors in accordance with the proximity principle (see chapter 3). Nevertheless, although one's love is properly ordered in such a way that prioritizes particular persons closest to the one who loves, love founded on *caritas* is in some sense inclusive of *all* persons.

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3. Irwin, Terence, *The Development of Ethics, Vol. I* (Oxford: OUP, 2007) 347-351.

4. While I cannot do justice to the topic here, it would be very interesting to explore the connection between the Stoic notion of a community of 'friends' and Aquinas's account of the proper order of *caritas*. I am grateful to Charles Brittain for pointing out the Stoic antecedent to Aquinas's account. Interestingly, Irwin sees the Stoic view as having its antecedent in the Aristotelian idea that there should be natural friendship between all human beings. For example, cf. 1155a16-21.

5. By placing the love of one's own body *after* the love of neighbor, Aquinas has in view that we should care about the spiritual state of others, more than our own material wellbeing, and in the most extreme case, should be willing under specific circumstances to sacrifice our bodies for the sake of our neighbor. Aquinas is quite clear that we should love our own soul more than our neighbor and thus should never sin even in order to somehow benefit one's neighbor. Cf. *ST* 26.6.

In this last chapter I will consider the other side of Aquinas's account of *amor amicitiae*, and in particular *caritas*, indicating the sense in which he thinks *caritas* (*amor amicitiae ad Deum*) actually *drives* morality insofar as it provides the very foundation for loving *all* other persons in a certain respect. In keeping with the Christian tradition, Aquinas holds that the two greatest commandments provide us with both reason and motivation for loving God, ourselves, and indeed all other persons as ends in themselves and provides an account specifying what the commandments entail as far as the order and extent of our friendship for others. Moreover, Aquinas provides an account of how these two commandments are inextricably related to each other such that one cannot genuinely love God without loving oneself and other persons, nor can one fully love oneself without loving God and hence other persons.

In what follows, I will consider Aquinas's account of what the greatest commandments amount to in terms of loving God, self, and other persons, i.e. one's neighbors. Then I will sketch an account attempting to specify his claim that love of other persons is essentially *partial* in the sense that one has normative reasons to prioritize certain relations over others. Yet, insofar as the term "neighbor" extends to all persons, one also has normative reasons to love *all* persons and must do so in some respect to fulfill the requirement of the second commandment. On Aquinas's theory then, love, in particular *amor amicitiae*, provides the very foundation of morality not only because it entails actively seeking to promote the good of particular persons as ends in themselves, but further because *caritas*, the most perfect form of *amor*

*amicitiae*, entails the extension of love to all persons as fellow participants in the everlasting fellowship of happiness found in God.

Aquinas's account of the love characteristic of friendship (and of the virtues in general) is deeply informed by his theological commitments. He considers *caritas* to be an infused virtue; unlike the natural love of God, which he describes as the inclination of all things toward God as the principle and the end of all natural beings, *caritas* is a non-natural virtue superadded to the will of rational beings by God, directing them toward their final ultimate end, the supernatural good of friendship with God (*ST* II-II 23.2; cf. *De Car.* A.1; *In I Sent.* d.17, a.1). Accordingly, God is the direct and immediate object of *caritas* (*ST* I-II 62.1; 65.3). Aquinas further indicates that *caritas* is a form of *amor amicitiae*, i.e. a form of the love characteristic of friendship which a human being has for God, and which is rooted in the fellowship we have with God based upon the happiness God shares with us:

Since there is a certain fellowship of a human being with God, in virtue of the fact that God shares his happiness with us, it is necessary that some kind of friendship be founded upon this fellowship, (*ST* II-II 23.1).<sup>6</sup>

The highest good, the final ultimate end toward which all human actions are directed is happiness which, as has been indicated, Aquinas identifies with a person's completion or perfection. Such perfection can be found only in God since God is our

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6. Cum igitur sit aliqua communicatio hominis ad Deum secundum quod nobis suam beatitudinem communicat, super hac communicatione oportet aliquam amicitiam fundari.

first principle and ultimate end. God shares his happiness with us in everlasting fellowship. This fellowship is best described as a loving personal relationship between a person and God. As such it entails a sort of mutuality. God loves human beings, sharing with us the highest good in which human perfection consists by uniting us to himself. But a loving personal relationship is reciprocal, and thus entails that we love God in return, desiring God's good as well as the union with God in which our final ultimate end culminates. To attain this end, requires the virtue of *caritas*, the most perfect form of love directed toward the highest good.

[S]ince the principle of love (*dilectio*) is God or the one loving, it is necessary that the affection of love (*affectus dilectionis*) is greater in accordance with the closer proximity of one of those principles, for...in everything in which some principle is found, order is seen in accordance with the relation to that principle (*ST II-II 26.6*).<sup>7</sup>

Aquinas's account of the order of love stems from his view that *caritas* tends to God as the *principle* or *source* of happiness upon which the fellowship of *amicitia caritatis* is based (*ST II-II.26.1*; Cf. 23.1, 25.12). God is the first principle or cause of such love and as such God is to be loved first. But God is not the *only* principle or cause of friendship. The one who loves is herself the *efficient* cause and thus also a principle of *amicitia caritatis*.

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7. Et ratio est quia, cum principium dilectionis sit Deus et ipse diligens, necesse est quod secundum propinquitatem maiorem ad alterum istorum principiorum maior sit dilectionis affectus, sicut enim supra dictum est, in omnibus in quibus invenitur aliquod principium, ordo attenditur secundum comparisonem ad illud principium.



## A. THE TWO ENDS OF *CARITAS*

As a species of *amor amicitiae*, Aquinas holds that *caritas* has two ends with respect to the love of God and other persons: (A) the real union with the other, and (B) the other's own good or wellbeing. I will begin with Aquinas's account of the love of God before going on to see how this account extends to the love of other human beings. First, all human beings desire real union with God insofar as this is the highest good in which our happiness consists in. Though some fail to recognize God as such, all human beings desire their perfection and completion and on Aquinas's account this is found in God alone. But desire for union with God is not enough; genuine *caritas* as a form of friendship also entails one's desiring and actively promoting God's good for God's own sake—not merely as a means to one's own happiness.

### 1. UNION WITH GOD

In his treatise on happiness (*beatitudo*), Aquinas begins by developing a formal account of happiness as the final ultimate end of all rational beings: that which fulfills all human desires in accordance with human nature as essentially rational (*ST* I-II 1-2). After developing his formal account of human happiness, Aquinas goes on to specify a concrete account of what such happiness consists in given his view of human nature. The formal object of the will, the rational appetite of human beings, is goodness. And love (in this case *dilectio*), insofar as it belongs to the will, has the same formal object. As indicated above, Aquinas distinguishes between the imperfect and

the perfect good of a human being, the former which can be attained in this life, and the latter which can be fully attained only in the next. He contends that the knowledge and consequently the love of God, i.e. the universal good, is what human happiness ultimately consists in:

The object of the will...is universal good, just as the object of intellect is [universal] truth. From this it is clear that nothing can bring the will of a human being to rest except the universal good. This is not found in any created thing, but in God alone (*ST I-II 2.8*).<sup>8</sup>

Knowing and loving God, who is perfect goodness personified, is what brings all rational human desires to rest and is accordingly that in which perfect human happiness consists. However, perfect knowledge and love of God is not attainable by mere human effort or by any of the acquired virtues. It requires the supernatural virtue of *caritas* infused in us by God, the virtue by which we attain God himself and accordingly ultimately fulfill the natural desire for happiness in which the final ultimate end of all rational beings consists.<sup>9</sup>

Aquinas maintains that it is the infused virtue of *caritas* by which God enables human beings to attain this sort of relationship and union with God. Accordingly, the

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8. Obiectum autem voluntatis, quae est appetitus humanus, est universale bonum; sicut obiectum intellectus est verum. Ex quo patet quod nihil potest quietare voluntatem hominis, nisi bonum universale. Quod non invenitur in aliquo creato, sed solum in Deo.

9. Aquinas gives several reasons why human beings can attain the final ultimate end only through an infused virtue as opposed to an acquired virtue. For instance, he holds that although God is supremely loveable in himself as the object of genuine happiness, nevertheless, human beings fail on their own account to love him above all things, given their natural inclination to love visible goods (*ST I-II 24.2 ad 2*). Although I cannot specify the all the details here, it is important to note that Aquinas distinguishes between the natural love of God which is, at least in principle, attainable without divine aid and the perfect love of God requiring *caritas*. Cf. *ST I-II 24.2*; *ST II-II 26.3*.

*Secunda Secundae* is devoted to an in depth account of *caritas*, specifying what it consists in and how it is crucial to attaining the sort of union with God which constitutes the final ultimate end of rational beings. Here he appeals to the authority of Augustine (*De Moribus Eccl.* xi) who contends that *caritas* is the virtue directing rational beings to their final ultimate end insofar as it is what unites them to God: “*Caritas* is a virtue, which, when our affections are perfectly ordered, unites us to God, for by it we love him,” (*ST* II-II 23.3 sc). Aquinas agrees with Augustine that *caritas* is the virtue by which the human being can attain God hence making it possible for us to be united with him in everlasting happiness.

It is worth pointing out Aquinas’s view that human beings desire happiness as the formal object in which their final ultimate end consists. However, he recognizes that many people seek to attain such happiness in the wrong sort of things (e.g. wealth, honor, pleasure, etc.). These things will never truly make human beings happy, since they fail to realize our true nature as essentially rational and social beings. Still, Aquinas thinks that some persons get it right, and hence can attain some degree of objective happiness in this life by valuing and attaining an aggregate of genuine, non-instrumental goods including, for instance, virtue, friendship, knowledge, and other such objective goods insofar as such goods fulfill our desires as essentially rational and social beings. Nevertheless, he maintains that even this sort of happiness, although genuine, is imperfect and incomplete. Perfect happiness, he believes, consists in a

supernatural union with God, which can be attained to some degree in this life, but which can be fully attained only in the next (Cf. *ST* II-II 44.6)

A significant feature of the supernatural union with God is that involves not only an intellectual, but also an appetitive component. The deeper and clearer our knowledge of God, ultimately attained in the vision God, the more we love him. And the more we love God, the deeper the union. Hence the vision of God is not only intellectual, but also affective in that it entails the love for God culminating in real union with the perfect goodness personified. Moreover, the rational agent must have some sort of intellectual cognition or understanding of God as the universal or complete good in order to love God above all things.<sup>10</sup> The intellectual recognition of God *as* the universal or complete good is required for a human being to love and hence to desire real union with God as her final ultimate end. Aquinas appeals to Augustine in explaining how some sort of prior knowledge is required for love:

Love (*dilectio*) is prior to cognition in moving, but cognition is prior to love in attaining, for something cannot be loved unless it is known as Augustine says in *de Trinitate* X. Hence we attain an intelligible end first through the activity of the intellect, just as we attain a sensory end through the activity of the sense (*ST* I-II 3.4 ad 4).<sup>11, 12</sup>

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10. Cf. Knowledge of God is not sufficient for the love of God (even the demons believe in God and shudder); one must also recognize God as the highest good who is worthy of our love and devotion. See *ST* 3.8 where Aquinas specifies that complete or perfect happiness is found in the vision of God. This may appear to suggest that happiness is a purely intellectual state. However, even in the *Prima Secundae*, Aquinas indicates that the love of God is necessary for complete happiness: "Perfection of *caritas* is essential to happiness as it pertains to the love of God, (*ST* 4.8 ad 3).

11. *Dilectio praeceminet cognitioni in movendo, sed cognitio praevia est dilectioni in*

The intellect's cognition of God as the universal good is followed by the will's response of loving God above all things. Love, then, is the principle of motion which gives rise to desire for God which, when fulfilled, comes to rest in real union with God.

Of course, real union with another requires a sort of mutuality given that, necessarily, it involves the reciprocal love of two persons. Human love is a special case insofar as the very possibility for our love of God originates in God's love for us. It is out of love that God made rational beings such that they are capable of love. God endowed rational creatures with freedom of choice hence making it possible for humans to choose to love God by accepting the gift of *caritas* which makes the real union with God, and hence perfect happiness, possible.<sup>13</sup> But *caritas*, as a form of *amor amicitiae* entails not only the desire for union with God, where union with God is seen as the ultimate satisfaction of one's own desires and, hence, one's own ultimate good. It further entails a desire for God's own good—the desire to seek and promote the ends of God *for God's own sake*. This aspect of *caritas* raises a puzzle. What can it mean

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attingendo, non enim diligitur nisi cognitum, ut dicit Augustinus *in X de Trin.* Et ideo intelligibilem finem primo attingimus per

actionem intellectus; sicut et finem sensibilem primo attingimus per actionem sensus.

12. Aquinas does well here to quote Augustine here rather than Aristotle or Boethius, given that the Franciscans claim Augustine as supporting their side of the debate concerning whether happiness consists in knowledge or love. I'm grateful to Scott MacDonald for pointing out what a clever move this is on the part of Aquinas.

13. Freedom of choice and its relation to *caritas* is an interesting issue in its own right; unfortunately, I cannot pursue it here.

for a human being to promote God's good, given that God is perfect goodness personified? What can human beings, mere parts of God's creation, possibly have to offer God that God does not already possess? I turn now to consider this aspect of *caritas*.

## 2. PROMOTING GOD'S GOOD

As Aquinas indicates in the following passage, God is goodness and the source of all goodness:

We do not love God on account of something else, but on account of himself. For he is not ordered to another as toward an end, but he himself is the ultimate end of all things. Neither is he formed into that which is good by something else, but his substance is the same as his goodness, in accordance with which, as by an exemplar, all other things are good. And neither does his goodness come from some other thing, but from him to all other things (*ST I-II 27.3*).<sup>14</sup>

God is loved on account of himself as the ultimate end given that God is perfect goodness, or goodness personified. All of creation is good insofar as God has created it.<sup>15</sup> Given God's aseity, it is worth thinking about why God created this world in the first place, what God's purposes are in creating *this* world, and how we as rational

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14. Deum non diligimus propter aliud, sed propter seipsum. Non enim ordinatur ad aliud sicut ad finem, sed ipse est finis ultimus omnium. Neque etiam informatur aliquo alio ad hoc quod sit bonus, sed eius substantia est eius bonitas, secundum quam exemplariter omnia bona sunt. Neque ei ab altero bonitas inest, sed ab ipso omnibus aliis.

15. This passage may seem to indicate that we love people on account of the qualities they have, i.e. the goodness they have as a result of being made by God who is pure goodness. Indeed, as I indicate in chapter three, the apprehension of person's goodness provides an essential background condition for loving them, even with the love of *caritas*. Still, there is an order of *caritas* which, at least in this life, is based not upon the impersonal quality of goodness, but rather upon their proximity to the one loving.

beings can seek to actively promote those purposes. If we have *caritas* for God and *caritas* is a form of *amor amicitiae*, which on Aquinas's analysis entails desiring the good of another, then it necessarily follows that we desire God's good. Thus desiring God's good for God's own sake, i.e. loving God as an end in himself, involves taking up God's ends as our own ends and ordering our own desires in such a way that they reflect God's desires. Doing so would then require the loving agent to determine what God's purposes in this world are and to act according to those purposes.

The very structure of the *Summa Theologica* provides us with a clue as to Aquinas's understanding of what God's purposes are and the part we play in promoting them. The work begins with an account of God's nature as essentially good, and the expression of God's goodness in creation as an outpouring of His love in the very act of creating the natural order and in particular rational creatures, i.e. beings made in the very image of God by virtue of their powers of intellect and choice.<sup>16</sup> After considering God's nature and creation, Aquinas then proceeds with an account of the return of all things to God, emphasizing the return of human beings and the role of grace in this process.<sup>17</sup> All things according to Aquinas's natural

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16. Cf. Norman Kretzmann's companion articles, "A General Problem of Creation: Why Would God Create Anything at All?" and "A Particular Problem of Creation: Why Would God Create This World?" in *Being and Goodness*, ed. Scott MacDonald (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991): 208-249.

17. Although my emphasis in this dissertation is not the role of grace and its interaction with human choice, it is key to Aquinas's view that *caritas* is an infused as opposed to an acquired virtue along with the theological virtues of faith and hope. *Caritas* is not something a human being can develop on her own, but rather, God through grace gives one the virtue of *caritas* (Cf. *ST I-II* 62.3).

teleology are inclined to God as their first principle and final end. But in the case of human beings *qua* rational creatures, the return to God entails the kind of love involving choice (*dilectio*). God's intention is that all persons should choose to return to God by loving God as an end in himself, indeed as one's final end. Part of God's purposes in creating rational beings with the capacity for choice is that they might enter into a loving personal relationship with God. This is made possible by the virtue of *caritas* which entails desiring God's good for God's sake.

We have seen that Aquinas holds God is goodness personified, which means there is an important sense in which human beings, or any created beings for that matter, could not add to God's goodness. But there is another sense in which human beings play a significant role in bringing about God's purposes in this world. Although God does not *need* our love to attain perfect goodness, he nevertheless desires to be united with us in friendship. A necessary condition for such friendship is that we respond to God's grace and love by taking up God's ends as our own. This entails, among other things, following God's will for us to love other persons, exercising stewardship over God's creation, obeying God's commands, and worshipping God.

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Nevertheless, it is consistent with Aquinas's view that human choice plays a significant role in deciding whether or not one embraces the virtue and seeks to develop it by seeking to be united with God and promoting God's purposes in the world. I will develop further Aquinas's account of the role of choice and the infused virtues below.



## B. THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS

Given the above account of loving God and how it is inextricably connected with the happiness or final ultimate end of every human being, it seems odd, even contrary to reason, to think that God has to *command* human beings to love him. But as Aquinas holds, by virtue of the very fact that rational beings are beings with the capacity for choice, they also have the choice *not* to love God, but rather to promote what they take to be their own self-interest in a way contrary both to their very nature as creatures made in God's image, and to God's purposes of drawing all creation to himself.<sup>18</sup> Such choices have the effect of separating rational beings from God and his love. Aquinas points out that human beings fail to love God when they mistakenly seek happiness in other things: "Those persons who sin are turned away from that in which their final end is actually found, but they do not turn away from the intention of the final end, which intention they mistakenly seek in other things," (*ST I-II 1.7 ad 1*). So while all persons act for the purpose of attaining their final end, those who sin mistakenly think their final end consists in things other than God. Still, whether or not human beings are mistaken in seeking their final end in something other than God, no one can attain their perfect or complete final end apart from *caritas*, the virtue infused by God which makes it possible for human beings to genuinely know and love God as

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18. Although the question of why rational beings would choose to not to love God, or to love other things more than God is a question of great interest, I cannot pursue it here. On Aquinas's account, it amounts to a sort of rational failure to understand what one's happiness actually consists in. Cf. *ST I-II 2* for Aquinas's consideration of some of the common views of what human beings think happiness consists in and why each is mistaken.

their final ultimate end. Aquinas contends that it is not possible for human beings to attain their final or perfect end by their own natural powers, since the knowledge of God surpasses natural human capacities (Cf. *ST* I-II 5.5). Since knowledge of the essence of God is required for the genuine love of God, Aquinas's view seems to be that human beings cannot be united with God in love by their own natural capacities.

Accordingly, given that *caritas* is an infused virtue, given to us by God, we might well wonder why God *commands* us to love him. The virtue of *caritas* actually *entails* loving God completely such that the commandment would appear to be irrelevant. Aquinas takes up this very question asking whether any precept should be given concerning *caritas*. In response, he explains that the commandments or precepts are about something due, in this case what is due to God. While some things are due for the sake of something else, others are due for their own sake. Loving God is something due for its own sake, because it directs human beings toward union with God, their final ultimate end. Aquinas thus cites Paul concerning the purpose of the commandment: "The end of the commandment is charity from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith," (I Tim. 1:5). In accordance with this passage, Aquinas gives the following account of the relation between the virtues and the precepts:

For all the virtues, about which acts the precepts are given, are either directed toward purifying the heart from the whirlwinds of the passions in the case of the virtues which concern the passions, or at any rate toward having a good conscience in the case of virtues which concern

actions, or toward having a right faith in the case of those things which pertain to divine worship (*ST* II-II 44.1).<sup>19</sup>

Aquinas thus responds to the question by telling us how the virtues are required for us to fulfill the commandment to love God by purifying our hearts from the passions (in particular the fear of punishment), performing actions from good conscience, and worshipping God from genuine faith.

But his response here falls short of telling us why the commandment to love God is required in the first place, in light of Aquinas's understanding of *caritas* as a virtue given to us by God. We can better ascertain why Aquinas thinks the commandment is necessary in his reply to the objection that the commandment actually curtails human freedom by imposing upon us an obligation which undermines our freedom to choose to love God. Aquinas replies that such obligation need not be opposed to freedom. Rather, he suggests, "The precept of love (*dilectio*) cannot be fulfilled except from one's own will," (*ST* II-II 44.1 ad 2).<sup>20</sup> Although he does not expand upon this here, it fits with what I have said above about the importance of choice as a necessary condition for a genuine loving personal relationship with God. God's purpose of developing such relationships with individual rational beings entails intention and choice on the part of both persons in the relationship. Hence, God does

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19. Omnes enim virtutes, de quarum actibus dantur praecepta, ordinantur vel ad purificandum cor a turbationibus passionum, sicut virtutes quae sunt circa passiones; vel saltem ad habendam bonam conscientiam, sicut virtutes quae sunt circa operationes; vel ad habendam rectam fidem, sicut illa quae pertinent ad divinum cultum.

20. Sed praeceptum dilectionis non potest impleri nisi ex propria voluntate.

not infuse human beings with the virtue of *caritas* contrary to their *choice* to love God as an end in himself. Accordingly, the commandment to love God does not *oppose* choice, but rather *presents* human persons with a choice. By commanding that we love him, God gives one a choice—to obey God or not to obey God. In other words, one’s choice to obey is a matter of choosing to embrace the virtue of *caritas* that God has superimposed on the will of the would-be participant in God’s love.<sup>21</sup>

So, human beings can choose to follow the commandment or not depending upon what they apprehend to be constitutive of their own happiness. Yet even when one chooses to follow the commandment, God recognizes human limitations. Accordingly, he supplies what we need to make our love pure, our actions undertaken for the right reasons, and our worship genuine. God commands what we fail to see is our highest good in order that we might choose it, and then supplies us with the disposition or state of character which enables us to follow through with our intention not merely out of sense of obligation or fear, but rather with the right sorts of motivations and desires—those entailed by genuine love.

#### 1. THE COMMANDMENT TO LOVE GOD

In accordance with the Christian scriptures, Aquinas maintains that the two greatest commandments are first, to love God with all of our heart, mind, and

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21. Certainly, there are other things to be said about the role of God’s grace and whether or not my account of Aquinas’s view is consistent with what Aquinas says about the role of grace elsewhere. This is no doubt an important issue, deserving of a more comprehensive treatment, but unfortunately I must set it aside for now.

strength, and second, which is an extension of the first, to love our neighbors as ourselves. These commandments hold us accountable to choosing that very thing for which we were intended and in which our final ultimate end consists. Moreover, I would suggest, the commandments provide an essential starting point from which human beings learn to love God habitually, such that our love becomes more than a matter of following a precept, but rather a matter of virtue which entails loving God as an expression of our deepest and most authentic desires. The commandments serve as the starting point for the desire to attain such virtue.<sup>22</sup> Aquinas thus develops an account of the two greatest commandments concerning the virtue *caritas*.

The first and greatest of the two commandments concerns the love of God above all else. Aquinas gives us some direction as to what this means in the following gloss on the text:<sup>23</sup>

We are commanded to direct our entire intention, to God, which is signified by the phrase “with your whole heart;” and to submit our intellect to God, which is signified by “with your whole mind;” and to regulate our appetite according to God, insofar as we obey God with respect to our external actions which is “to love God with our whole strength or power or might” (*ST II-II 44.5*).<sup>24</sup>

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22. Of course, as indicated above, God infuses in us the theological virtues necessary for fulfilling the two greatest commandments. God intervenes on behalf of human beings to accomplish his purpose of ultimately uniting them to himself thereby aiding them in the attainment of their highest good.

23. In this article, Aquinas considers the different ways in which the commandment is formulated in the Hebrew Bible and in the synoptic gospels, concluding that they amount to the same set of precepts.

24. Praecipitur ergo nobis ut tota nostra intentio feratur in Deum, quod est ex toto corde; et quod intellectus noster subdatur Deo, quod est ex tota mente; et quod appetitus noster secundum

Earlier in the passage, Aquinas points out that each of these three aspects of loving God is essentially related to the will: the heart is the seat of the will and hence the principle of all of our intentional actions. The intellect is that which directs the will inasmuch as every act of the will is preceded by the intellect's presentation of an object or end as the good to be pursued, which in this case is God, goodness itself. Power or strength is the capacity of the will enabling us to perform those external actions in accordance with our intentions. All three, Aquinas maintains, are constitutive of the genuine love of God manifested internally in the inclination of our heart toward God, intentionally in the pursuit of knowing God more fully and hence submitting our intellect to him, and externally through the actions we perform presumably in keeping with the intensity of our love.

Aquinas goes into the most detail with respect to the first aspect of loving God, i.e. loving God with our whole heart by directing our entire intention to God. He distinguishes between the actual perfection of love attained in heaven according to which a person's whole heart is always actually directed to God, and the sort of perfection of love one can attain in this life. In this life we attain the perfection of love when our whole heart is habitually directed toward God insofar as it does not consent to anything contrary to the love of God (*ST II-II 44.4 ad 2*). As indicated above, Aquinas's understanding of what it means to love God with our whole heart entails

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Deum, quod est ex tota anima; et quod exterior actus noster obediat Deo, quod est ex tota fortitudine vel virtute vel Deum diligere.

that our intentions are entirely directed toward God. One aspect of this requires removing ourselves from that which stands in the way of our love for God. Aquinas indicates here a negative requirement for perfection of *caritas*, distancing ourselves from temporal things: “a human being, as far as it is possible, removes himself from temporal things, even those which are permitted, because they occupy the soul, they impede the actual motion of the heart toward God” (*ST* II-II 44.4 ad 3, cf. *ST* II-II 44.3 ad 3 for other negative precepts pertaining to *caritas*).<sup>25</sup> The point is not that temporal things are bad in and of themselves, but that they are much less valuable than God. God knows that the love of temporal things hinders our ability to direct our intention toward him, the final ultimate end in whom we attain perfect happiness.

But the command to love God is much less about the negative precepts, than about the positive precepts. The *act* of *caritas* is to love God as an end in himself (*ST* II-II 27.3). I have already sketched in Part I how *caritas* includes the two ends of *amor amicitiae*: real union with God, and the active pursuit of God’s good which entails pursuing God’s purposes as if they were our own. I have further suggested that this involves playing a role in God’s grand plan of drawing all creatures back to himself out of love, and in particular human beings created for the very purpose of being in a loving personal relationship with him. It is with respect to this end that God issues

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25. Homo, quantum possibile est, se a rebus temporalibus etiam licitis, quae, occupando animum, impediunt actualem motum cordis in Deum.

the second commandment as a fulfillment of the first: to love your neighbor as yourself.

## 2. THE COMMANDMENT TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Aquinas clearly specifies that *caritas* has two proper objects: God and one's neighbor. Indeed, loving one's neighbor is actually an extension of loving God insofar as it is the *same species of act* by which we love God and neighbor:

The reason our neighbor is to be loved is God, for this is what we ought to love in our neighbor, that he is *in* God. Thus it is clear that the act by which God is loved is of the same species as that by which our neighbor is to be loved. On account of this, the habit of *caritas* extends not only to the love of God, but also to the love of neighbor (*ST* II-II 25.1).<sup>26</sup>

By same species of act, Aquinas has in view that each of the commandments is aimed toward the good common to both, i.e. the good in general.<sup>27</sup> The love of God and the love of neighbor are directed toward the good common to them all, i.e. God. They are inextricably connected to one another: the genuine love of God entails loving one's neighbor. In this passage Aquinas emphasizes that *caritas* extends to *all* persons insofar as all are *in* God.<sup>28</sup>

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26. Ratio autem diligendi proximum Deus est, hoc enim debemus in proximo diligere, ut in Deo sit. Unde manifestum est quod idem specie actus est quo diligitur Deus, et quo diligitur proximus. Et propter hoc habitus caritatis non solum se extendit ad dilectionem Dei, sed etiam ad dilectionem proximi.

27. "We love all our neighbors with the same love characteristic of *caritas*, insofar as they are directed to one good common to them all, which is God," (*ST* 25.1 ad 2). It is worth noting here that Aquinas considers all persons as being directed toward God, not just those who have been infused with *caritas*. Accordingly, we are to love all persons as somehow being *in* God, even if only potentially as opposed to actually partaking in the fellowship of happiness in community with God.

28. This may appear to suggest that we love persons according to some quality they possess



On the flip side loving one's neighbor out of *caritas* entails loving God insofar as we love our neighbor as one who is *in* God. Aquinas does not here specify what it means to be *in* God, but one obvious sense is that the neighbor belongs to God insofar as he is a creation of God and, as such, an object of God's love. We can further ascertain what it means to love one's neighbor *in* God by looking at Aquinas's account of the order of *caritas*.

We have seen that Aquinas explains the second commandment in terms of its relation to the first, indicating that the commandment to love God is inextricably connected to the love of neighbor as one who is in God or belongs to God.

Nevertheless, Aquinas argues that the love of God ought be primary:

Friendship founded upon the fellowship of happiness, which is established by God as the first principle, consists essentially in God just as in the first principle, by whom it [friendship] is conferred upon all who are capable of happiness. Hence we should love God principally and chiefly out of *caritas*, for he is loved as the cause of happiness, while our neighbor [should be loved] as likewise sharing with us in the happiness from him, (*ST* II-II 26.2).<sup>29</sup>

It is worth exploring two distinct aspects of this passage: first, the sense in which

Aquinas thinks God should be the primary object of love as the first principle or

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and it is true that being *in* God provides a generic background condition in which *caritas* is grounded. Nevertheless, this does not conflict with Aquinas's account of the *order* of *caritas*, which is grounded not only in the others being *in* God, but more specifically on the particular relationship the one loved has to us.

29. Amicitia autem caritatis fundatur super communicatione beatitudinis, quae consistit essentialiter in Deo sicut in primo principio, a quo derivatur in omnes qui sunt beatitudinis capaces. Et ideo principaliter et maxime Deus est ex caritate diligendus, ipse enim diligitur sicut beatitudinis causa; proximus autem sicut beatitudinem simul nobiscum ab eo participans.

cause of the friendship founded upon happiness, and second, why he thinks sharing in happiness is connected to and counts as a reason for loving our neighbor out of *caritas*. With respect to the first, Aquinas holds that union with God in everlasting friendship is what the happiness of all rational beings consists in, as discussed above. Given that happiness is the final ultimate end of all rational beings, and that the love of God, in particular *caritas*, is the virtue required to attain happiness, fully rational human beings love God as the source of perfect happiness. Moreover, a further and related reason why the love of God is primary is because God is perfect goodness personified, or as Aquinas puts it, God alone is *good by virtue of his essence* (*ST I* 6.1). In his account of the rational appetite or will of all human beings, Aquinas indicates that its formal object is goodness: “the object of the will is an end and a good considered universally” (*ST I-II* 1.1; Cf. 1.3). Although human beings differ as to their opinions of what the good consists in, Aquinas argues that it is to be identified with God (Cf. *ST I-II* 2.8). Hence, God is the ultimate object of the rational will insofar as God is perfect goodness and, as such, the ultimate object of desire for all rational creatures, objectively speaking. Accordingly, the love of God is primary by virtue of his being perfectly good and, as such, the first principle of happiness in whom all of our rational desires are completely fulfilled. So, the love of God is primary in the sense that a personal loving relationship with God is what the final ultimate end of human beings consists in, insofar as God, the personification of perfect goodness is the highest object of the will.

Accordingly, the happiness of all rational or intellectual beings consists in being united to God in love. Further, the passage indicates how the love of God *entails* the love of neighbor as one who, as previously noted, is *in* God in some respect. According to Aquinas, we are to love our neighbors out of *caritas* as fellow recipients of the perfect happiness which originates in God as the first principle; this love extends to all rational persons insofar as each one has the *capacity* or potential for such happiness.<sup>30</sup> Still, one might wonder why being a fellow recipient of happiness (actually or potentially) counts as a rationale for loving one's neighbor. Aquinas provides a clue later in the text where he explicitly addresses the precept to love one's neighbor. As expressed above in the previous chapter concerning Aquinas's account of the proper order of *caritas*, one reason for loving others has to do with their proximity to us. Of course, not every person is close to us in the same respect, or to the degree that our family members and close friends are. But Aquinas specifies the sense in which every person is related to us and hence properly loved insofar as every person is our *neighbor*:

The reason for loving is indicated by the term "neighbor," (*proximus*) for on account of this we ought to love (*diligere*) others out of *caritas*, because they are near (*proximi*) to us on account of [their possessing] the natural image of God, and on account of their capacity for glory, (*ST* II-II 44.7).<sup>31</sup>

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30. Cf. Jean Porter *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics* (London: SPCK, 1990), and *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005).

31. Ratio quidem diligendi tangitur ex eo quod proximus nominatur, propter hoc enim ex

Aquinas here provides two reasons specifying why we would love all other persons as those who actually or potentially share with us in happiness. The first has to do with the intrinsic value of other rational beings as naturally bearing God's image. *All* persons, insofar as they are rational beings, have been made in the image of God. Accordingly, we have reason to love all persons given that that they possess the likeness of God, the first and principle object of *caritas*. As beings made in the image of God, every person is not only the object of God's love, but exemplifies (to some extent or another) divine nature.

Second, Aquinas indicates that each person, as possessing the image of God, has the capacity for glory or to be glorified by God.<sup>32</sup> Glory consists in the goodness of the person being made known. Aquinas distinguishes genuine from false glory, indicating that false glory is based upon human knowledge which can be mistaken, whereas genuine glory is based upon God's knowledge of a person's true goodness (*ST* I-II 2.3). By "the capacity for glory" then, Aquinas presumably means the capacity for sharing in the happiness which comes from God. Since every person has capacity for sharing in such happiness, they have the capacity for glory. Hence we have further

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caritate debemus alios diligere, quia sunt nobis proximi et secundum naturalem Dei imaginem et secundum capacitatem gloriae.

32. The term "*gloria*" can be translated by the English "glory," or "glorification," Cf. *A Lexicon of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Roy J. Deferrari (Fitwilliam, NH: Loreto, 2004): 465-467. According to Aquinas, "Glory is the effect of honor and praise, since the result of our bearing witness to a person's goodness is that his goodness becomes clear to the knowledge of many," (*ST* II-II 103.1 ad 3).

reason to love all persons as beings with whom we may share in the everlasting happiness found in God.

This account of the love of neighbor as one with whom we share happiness has important implications for his understanding of what loving one's neighbor entails. Given that every person is a rational being capable of sharing in happiness as bearer of God's image, and hence a being of great intrinsic worth, we have reason to love *all* persons out of *caritas*. Accordingly, the command to love our neighbor extends to each and every person, and thus entails a sense of impartiality. In the remainder of the chapter, I turn to consider further the universalism of the second commandment and to suggest how this might fit with the particularist picture I have called attention to throughout the dissertation.

### C. *CARITAS* AND IMPARTIALITY

I have suggested how, on Aquinas's view, *caritas* transforms the rational agent's love for other persons in that it specifies who ought to be included within the scope of love. As indicated in the previous chapter, Aquinas's account of the order of *caritas* provides normative reasons why our love for those with whom we have special relationships is to be ordered in such a way that prioritizes particular persons. Yet the second commandment requires us to love *all* persons to the effect that *caritas* is universal in scope. In keeping with the Christian view that the term "neighbor" denotes each and every person, those with whom we are closely connected as well as

the stranger, those who are morally virtuous as well as the sinner.<sup>33</sup> Most strikingly, *caritas* extends even to one's enemies (*ST* II-II.25.1, 6, 8, 12). Thus, *caritas* widens the scope of friendship beyond our familial relations, or the particular persons with whom we share a natural affinity and have special relationships.<sup>34</sup>

One might object to this account, however, arguing that since the extension of the term "neighbor" is *so* broad, it can at best entail a sort of goodwill or well-wishing to other persons. This is not the case. Aquinas is careful to distinguish love characteristic of *caritas* from goodwill or benevolence insofar *caritas* is a form of *friendship* and, as we have seen, the love characteristic of friendship is directed toward two ends: the desire for the good of another for the other's own sake, and a sort of *real union* with the other. Accordingly, *caritas* entails not only goodwill, but also a sort of affection for all other persons. Aquinas explains the distinction as follows:

But love in the intellectual appetite differs from benevolence. For it brings about a certain union in accordance with the affection of the one loving for the one loved inasmuch as the one loving values the one loved as being one with him in a certain respect, or related to him, and so is moved toward her. But benevolence is a simple act of the will by which we wish good to someone, even when the union of affection for that person is not presupposed. Hence benevolence is certainly included in

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33. Recall that this theory is akin to the Stoic view of a community of friends as inclusive of all persons insofar as they share together in common humanity.

34. The proper ordering of one's loves is a moral endeavor: *Virtus dicitur ordo vel ordinatio amoris, sicut id ad quod est virtus, per virtutem enim ordinatur amor in nobis* (*ST* I-II 55.1 ad 4). Cf. *Aquinas's Ethics*, Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, Colleen McCluskey, and Christina Van Dyke (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009): 135.

love (*dilectio*) insofar as it is an act of *caritas*, but *dilectio* or love (*amor*) adds the union of affection (*ST* II-II 27.2).<sup>35</sup>

As the passage makes clear, Aquinas holds that insofar as love essentially involves an affective component, the love of neighbor transcends mere benevolence. We have seen that Aquinas identifies love with this sort of affective union<sup>36</sup> (*ST* I-II 28.1). This involves the conforming of the appetitive power to the one loved. Accordingly, *caritas* entails that the one who loves has a sort of affection toward the other. The union of affection, i.e. love itself, as we have seen, is ultimately directed toward real union with the other. With respect to *caritas*, this union is based upon the actual or potential sharing in everlasting happiness which every intellectual being may ultimately attain in a personal loving relationship with God.

Admittedly, this raises a puzzle. How is one to have affective union for all persons giving that love is something which by nature requires much of us in terms of devoting oneself to the good of others and a genuine union with the other? It seems that the affective component of *caritas* which extends to all persons insofar as they are

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35. Sed amor qui est in appetitu intellectivo etiam differt a benevolentia. Importat enim quandam unionem secundum affectus amantis ad amatum, in quantum scilicet amans aestimat amatum quodammodo ut unum sibi, vel ad se pertinens, et sic movetur in ipsum. Sed benevolentia est simplex actus voluntatis quo volumus alicui bonum, etiam non praesupposita praedicta unione affectus ad ipsum. Sic igitur in dilectione, secundum quod est actus caritatis, includitur quidem benevolentia, sed dilectio sive amor addit unionem affectus.

36. For one reading of Aquinas's notion of "affective union," cf. the introduction to *On Love & Charity*, tr. Peter Kwasniewski (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2008). According to Kwasniewski, it involves "a kind of conforming of the [appetitive] power to its object such that it moves the whole animal to pursuit of the object itself in its own proper being and goodness," (xxviii).

*in* God can only be an ideal which we strive to attain since it is difficult, perhaps impossible, for one to have union of affection with all persons. Perhaps one solution is to hold that *caritas* is an ideal. One becomes more virtuous as she becomes united in affection with more and more persons. In this case the virtue of *caritas* is something to strive for, but due to the constitutional limitations of human beings it cannot be actually attained, at least in this life.<sup>37</sup>

Accordingly, Aquinas's account of loving one's neighbor sets the bar extremely high both with respect to the scope of love's proper objects and with respect to what this love requires of us. Out of *caritas*, one is to love all other persons as rational beings with the capacity to share with us in the ultimate end of happiness, which consists in real union with God and consequently with one another. Aquinas's account of *caritas*, then, entails a sense in which all other persons are to be considered from a universalistic point of view. Moreover, as a form of friendship, *caritas* extends beyond contemporary notions of altruism insofar as it involves pursuing the good of another for the other's own sake, not merely out of a sense of duty or obligation, but as we have seen, out of the union of affection which Aquinas identifies with love.

In order to illuminate just what *caritas* requires of us with respect to loving all persons, it will prove useful to look at the most extreme case: the love of one's

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37. The implications of Aquinas's account of how the union of affection for all persons is a component of *caritas* deserves much more attention than I have been able to give it here. Unfortunately, my treatment of it here must be brief.



enemies. Aquinas specifies three ways in which we might love our enemies. He rules out the first way indicating that we should not love our enemies *qua* enemy, assuming that what is inimical to us is some evil pertaining to the person. The reason for this is that it is contrary to *caritas* to love someone insofar as they are evil.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, there are two ways in which Aquinas maintains that we ought to love our enemies out of *caritas*. The first of these is in the general respect that we are to love all persons in accordance with their nature as rational beings who bear the image of God:

One might understand the love of one's enemies as to their nature, but in a universal sense. In this respect, the love of one's enemies is required by *caritas*, since one loving God and neighbor should not exclude his enemies with respect to the general sense of *dilectio*, (*ST* II-II 25.8).<sup>39</sup>

This passage exemplifies the universalism of *caritas*: it extends to all persons insofar as all persons *in accordance with their very nature* are rational beings. Accordingly, not even one's enemy, who is a rational being, is to be excluded from the love characteristic of *caritas*. So, according to Aquinas, one is to love *all* persons, including one's enemies, by virtue of the fact that all persons naturally, insofar as they are rational beings, bear God's image.

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38. By the same rationale, we are to love sinners out *caritas*, not according to their guilt, but according to their nature as human beings, (*ST* II-II 25.8).

39. *Alio modo potest accipi dilectio inimicorum quantum ad naturam, sed in universali. Et sic dilectio inimicorum est de necessitate caritatis, ut aliquis diligens Deum et proximum ab illa generalitate dilectionis proximi inimicos suos non excludat.*

But Aquinas goes even further to say that *caritas* involves loving one's enemy in a special way which goes beyond loving them according to their nature. This belongs to the perfection of *caritas*, insofar as it is motivated exclusively by one's love for God.

But that a person might actually fulfill this act to love his enemies on account of God is not necessary, but belongs to the perfection of *caritas*. For when one's neighbor is loved [exclusively] on account of God, the more one loves God, and the more he shows love to his neighbor, not being hindered by enmity. In the same way, if someone loves some person greatly, by this love he would love that person's children even if they were unfriendly to him, (*ST II-II 25.8*).<sup>40</sup>

So, the most perfect form of *caritas* is attained when we love even our enemies where this is motivated by our love of God and the recognition of their intrinsic goodness insofar as they bear God's image. We have reason to love those who are inimical to us by virtue of the fact that God loves such persons. Appealing to the example of the natural love we have for our friends, we love those persons our friend loves on account of our friends. This ties into Aquinas's view that one of the two ends of friendship is to desire and promote the good of our friend for the friend's own sake. This may entail loving persons our friend loves, not necessarily because we are naturally inclined to love them, but because loving them is part of promoting the good of our friend. If we love our friend greatly, then we love those persons our friend loves, even if we wouldn't be naturally inclined to do so. When it comes to the

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40. Sed quod absque articulo necessitatis homo etiam hoc actu impleat ut diligat inimicum propter Deum, hoc pertinet ad perfectionem caritatis. Cum enim ex caritate diligatur proximus propter Deum, quanto aliquis magis diligit Deum, tanto etiam magis ad proximum dilectionem ostendit, nulla inimicitia impediante. Sicut si aliquis multum diligeret aliquem hominem, amore ipsius filios eius amaret etiam sibi inimicos.

love of God out of *caritas*, the more we love all persons God loves, even those who are inimical to us, not necessarily on their own account, but on account of love for God.

Accordingly, *caritas* provides us with at least two reasons for loving our enemies. The first is the general reason that we love all persons as rational beings and, as such, intrinsically valuable bearers of the image of God. This is precisely the reason we have for loving all persons, the love of our enemy simply being the most extreme case of such love. The second is the more special sense in which we love our enemy on account of God, which expresses the perfection of such love. The more perfectly we love God out of *caritas*, the more we love those God loves, even if they are inimical to us, insofar as God loves them and desires their good. This is part of what is involved in promoting God's good insofar as it entails taking up God's desires as our own, i.e. taking part in God's purpose of drawing all beings back to himself.

By looking at this most extreme case of what is required of us by the second commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves, we can see how such love is universal in the sense that it extends to all persons. But this brings up a worry concerning the partiality of love. Does loving all persons out of *caritas* permit loving certain persons more than others? Aquinas himself raises this worry. He raises the objection by appealing to Augustine's claim that we ought to love all persons equally (*De Doct. Christ.* i.28). Augustine suggests that we do good to certain persons more than others simply by virtue of the circumstance that we happen to be closer to those

who, by chance, happen to be closer to us (*ST* II-II 26.6, obj. 1). In response to this objection, Aquinas distinguishes two ways in which we might have unequal love for others:

In the first way, loving certain persons and not loving others [is fitting]. One is not required to love all equally with respect to beneficence, because we cannot benefit all persons, but with respect to benevolence, we should not have such inequality of love. But in the other way, inequality of love is the result of loving certain persons more than others (*ST* II-II 26.6 ad 1).<sup>41</sup>

Concerning the inequality of love, Aquinas rejects the claim that we are justified in loving some persons and not others. However, he does hold that there is a sense in which we are not required to love all persons *equally* with respect to beneficence, since we are not in a position to actually benefit each and every person. With respect to benevolence, on the other hand, we *are* required to love all persons equally insofar as we are to desire the good of all persons for their own sake. So, when he says that there is an inequality in love, he means that we love some persons more than others given their relation to us and by virtue of being in a position to actually benefit some more than others, although we are required to be benevolent to all persons. Thus, out of *caritas*, we are required to love all persons with respect to desiring their good.

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41. Uno modo, ex eo quod quidam diliguntur et alii non diliguntur. Et hanc inaequalitatem oportet servare in beneficentia, quia non possumus omnibus prodesse, sed in benevolentia dilectionis talis inaequalitas haberi non debet. Alia vero est inaequalitas dilectionis ex hoc quod quidam plus aliis diliguntur.

Hence, Aquinas defends the view that with respect to benevolence we are to love all persons equally out of *caritas*, reflecting the universalism of the second commandment with respect to desiring the good of all persons as intrinsically valuable bearers of God's image. Nevertheless, we also have reasons to love particular persons more by virtue of their special relationship to us, and because we are in a better position to actually benefit those closest to us. Moreover, in addition to Augustine's claim that we can only actually do good to those with whom we happen to be more closely connected, Aquinas's account of the proper order of *caritas* provides further *reasons* we have for loving such persons more than others.

As indicated in the previous chapter, Aquinas indicates that we naturally love those closer to us with greater *intensity*, due to our relationship with the person. The order of *caritas* reflects our natural tendencies insofar as the affection of *caritas*, the inclination of grace, reflects these inclinations, in accordance with divine wisdom. But as indicated in the passage above (*ST* II-II 27.2), *caritas* requires that we have genuine *affection* for others. It is not merely a matter of goodwill, according to which we wish good to others their own sake, but it enables us (at least ideally) to have genuine affection for all persons thus transcending our natural inclinations.

Still, Aquinas suggests that we have reasons to love with greater intensity those who are most closely related to us insofar as we have other forms of friendship toward such persons than the friendship based upon *caritas*. Such friendships are based upon the natural affection family members have toward one another, and the

shared interests and histories we have with particular persons. Aquinas holds that these natural ties and affections provide normative reasons for prioritizing our relationships and these are reflected in his account of the order of *caritas*. But the infused virtue of *caritas* enables us to truly love all persons based upon their intrinsic value as bearers of God's image and by virtue of the actual or potential sharing together in everlasting happiness in God.

Hence, the universalism of *caritas* does not exclude, but in fact *entails* loving certain persons more than others insofar as the grace by which we receive the virtue of *caritas* accords with our natural affections toward those who are most closely related to us. Aquinas's account provides good reason to think that the universalism of the second commandment is consistent with his account of the order of *caritas*, such that the highest form of love is at once characterized by universalism and particularism.

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