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Sentimental Reasons

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1. Introduction

Among the things we do, some we do for reasons and some we don't. When we act intentionally, for instance, we normally have some reason for doing what we are doing. We believe for reasons and choose for reasons. We do not, at least not in the same sense, sweat, feel tired, or digest our food for reasons. Other examples are somewhat less easy to categorize. For example, it might not seem as immediately clear whether we feel emotions for reasons; there is, after all, a long tradition of thinking of the emotions as interfering with our ability to act and think rationally or in line with reason. While emotions certainly can interfere with our ability to remain rational, though (we all know what it's like for our

emotions to get the better of us), this doesn't necessarily mean we have no reasons for our emotions. And on reflection, it is quite natural to think that we do: when you feel angry or relieved, for instance, there will be, except perhaps in marginal cases, something that made you angry, or something that you feel angry or relieved *about* or *by*. It is quite natural here to use the language of reasons: your reason for feeling angry is that your friend betrayed you; the reason for your relief is that the operation is finally over.¹

Things seem even less clear if we turn to consider whether we *love* for reasons.² While a number of philosophers have claimed that we do not love for reasons, many insist that we do. Interestingly, even among those who hold that we love for reasons, there is remarkable disagreement as to what sorts of things those reasons are, so much so that it seems sensible to consider carefully just what it is that the disagreement is about: what should an account of 'reasons for love' seek to account for? The aim of this chapter is to try to reach a degree of clarity about this question and in doing so to shed some light on debates about reasons for love. To this end, I will first, in the next section, give a brief overview of some leading views about reasons for love, showing how different kinds of considerations seem to pull us towards very different views. I will then introduce a distinction commonly made in discussions of reasons for action, between three different roles that reasons can play, or between three different interests that commonly figure in our talk about 'reasons'. As I'll

¹ There is of course much more to be said about the relationship between emotions, reasons and rationality. For a seminal discussion see De Sousa (1987). See also Deonna and Teroni (2012).

² If love is an emotion, the point here is that things are less clear in the case of love than they are in the case of certain other emotions. But perhaps love is not itself an emotion, even though it is intimately connected with emotions. Either way, I will argue later that there are significant differences between love and emotions like anger and relief, such that love deserves separate treatment.

explain, it is attractive to see these interests or roles as coinciding in a certain way when someone does, thinks or feels something 'for a reason'. One way to understand the nature of the debate about reasons for love, I will suggest, is that many of those involved in this debate assume that the same kind of coincidence of interests must be present in the case of love if indeed we love 'for reasons'. In the end, I'll suggest that we might make better sense of love if we were to drop this assumption.

2. Reasons for love

Do we love for reasons? It can be tempting to say that we don't. In a romantic mood, the suggestion that love is based on reasons can look absurdly or even creepily high-minded, cold-hearted and calculating. Love, after all, is the paradigmatic *passion*. Compared with the actions we take and attitudes we hold for reasons, love comes from somewhere deeper in our soul. We don't *decide* to love: we fall in love; love overcomes us, sweeps us off our feet, carries us away; love is, in Nick Zangwill's phrase, 'gloriously arational' (Zangwill 2013). On the other hand, though, love seems closer to those emotions that we do (plausibly) feel for reasons than it is to clearer examples of things we do but not for any reason, such as sweating, digesting, or feeling tired. Love, from the lover's perspective, feels like a 'fitting' response to the beloved, in something like the way that anger feels like a fitting response to being wronged, or fear a fitting response to imminent danger. Moreover, loving someone seems to involve our valuing or caring about them, and the things we value or care about are not, from our point of view, arbitrary or selected merely by chance: they seem to us worth valuing, worth caring about. What could make something worth valuing except a reason to value it?

So there is some pressure to say that we love for reasons. Trying to say anything much about what sorts of things those reasons are, though, proves to be rather more difficult – more difficult, notably, than in the case of our other examples of 'reasons-responsive' phenomena. Reasons for believing seem clearly enough to be concerned with the *truth* of the

things we might be inclined to believe. The fact that the streets are wet, for instance, might be a reason to believe that it has rained, because it suggests that it has in fact rained. Reasons for feeling emotions generally concern whether the ‘object’ of the emotion (the thing, event or person towards which the emotion is felt) exemplifies what is called the *formal object* of the emotion: danger or fearsomeness for fear, wrongfulness or insult for anger, and so on (see Deonna and Teroni 2012 for a detailed exposition of this idea). So, for instance, my reason for feeling angry at you might be that you betrayed my trust, this being a case of your wronging me. Reasons for action appear to be more diverse and there is a greater degree of disagreement over what unites them, but we can at least say that they broadly relate to the *point* of taking one or another course of action.³ Your reason for taking your umbrella when you go out, for instance, might be that it seems likely that the rain will return and that the umbrella will help keep you dry; your reason for apologizing to me might be that you did me wrong and apologizing will be the first step to mending our damaged relationship. If we suppose that there are indeed reasons for love, though, what sorts of things might *they* be?

An initially appealing strategy would be to analogize love to emotions like fear or regret and to say that reasons for love concern whether the actual or potential ‘object’ of love – the actual or potential beloved – instances the ‘formal object’ of love. As the formal object of fear is the fearsome, and that of regret is the regrettable, so the formal object of love, we might suggest, is the lovable (compare Naar 2017b). So, reasons for love might be facts about a

³ One way to explicate this idea, for example, is to say that reasons for action relate to the good at which the action aims: the good in question gives the action its point (e.g. Raz 1999). A different approach appeals to the desires of the agent: the point of acting is to satisfy one's desires (e.g. Schroeder 2007). Perhaps the right account combines both ideas somehow (e.g. Chang 2011), or appeals to something else such as norms or rules or rationality (e.g. Korsgaard 1996). Since our present concern is with love, not action, there is thankfully no need for us to take a stand on this difficult issue here.

person that suggest that that person is lovable, or perhaps properties of the person in virtue of which they are lovable. However, while this suggestion makes for a nice linguistic consistency with emotions like fear and regret, it doesn't fit very well with how we ordinarily think about love, at least if we are using 'lovable' in its everyday sense. To be lovable in that sense is, roughly, to be easy to love. In particular, certain qualities, perhaps including things like charm, a gentle wit, kindness and innocence might tend to make one who possesses them lovable. Surely, though, lacking such qualities doesn't mean that nobody has any reason to love you. Most people, I suspect, will have someone – a friend, a family member, perhaps even a romantic partner – whom they love and care about despite that person's not being particularly lovable. Moreover, a complete stranger might be exceedingly lovable without this giving *me* any particular reason to love them.

The appeal to 'lovableness', then, seems not to give a very satisfactory account of what reasons for love consist in. We might however think that this first attempt does get something importantly right, namely that reasons for love consist in personal qualities or properties of the beloved. Sometimes the qualities of a person that give us reason to love them will be ones that make them lovable, but they might also often include qualities that would not so naturally fall under this heading, such as, perhaps, cleverness, resilience or bravery. Even among authors who agree on the basic idea that reasons for love are personal qualities, though, there is disagreement as to what the relevant qualities have in common. Neil Delaney, for instance, argues that we want to be loved for properties that we take to be central to our conception of ourselves (Delaney 1996; also compare Keller 2000), while Kate Abramson and Adam Leite hold that reasons for love consist in 'morally laudable' qualities of the beloved's character (Abramson and Leite 2011). While these might sometimes coincide, they can obviously come apart. Most of us do not conceive of ourselves exclusively in terms of our morally laudable qualities.

The idea that personal qualities are reasons for love looks appealing because it seems both to capture the idea of love as a response to another person as such (as opposed to, say,

anger, which, while typically directed at a person, is usually a response to something that they have done rather than to who they are or what they are like) and, since different people have different qualities, to offer the beginnings of an account of why we love some people and not others. Yet some of the most compelling criticisms of the so-called ‘quality view’ are in fact based on the apparent shallowness of the account that it offers of the latter phenomenon, the ‘selectivity’ of love. Love, as we ordinarily think of it, involves a deep attachment to particular individuals. A series of objections to the quality view have been taken to show that it cannot make sense of this aspect of love:

- *Universality*: If my reasons for loving you are qualities you have, should anyone else who is aware of those qualities love you too and in the same way?

- *Promiscuity*: Should I love, in the same way, anyone else who has the same qualities?

- *Trading up*: If someone else has the same qualities to a greater degree, should I love them instead, or more?

- *Inconstancy*: If you lose the relevant qualities, should I stop loving you? (adapted from Setiya 2014, p. 255)

It seems very plausible that the answer to each question should be negative. This imposes an explanatory challenge upon a proponent of the quality view. One way in which they might attempt to meet this challenge is to say that the reasons for loving someone are not ‘requiring’ or ‘maximizing’ (Abramson and Leite 2011; Jollimore 2011; Setiya 2014). To say that reasons for love are not requiring would mean that they can make a person fitting or ‘eligible’ to love without *obliging* anyone to love them. To say that they are not maximizing would mean that from the fact that there is more reason to love person B than person A it does not follow that you ought to love person B rather than person A. If the reasons for love are non-requiring and non-maximizing, this allows us to respond to the four objections listed above in the following ways. First, if my love for you is justified, it may follow that anyone else who is aware of the qualities that justify my love has sufficient reason to love you and could in principle love you justifiably. However, it does not follow that they must

love you: the qualities in question make it appropriate for them to love you, without making it inappropriate for them not to love you. Second, if the qualities that justify my love for you do not require me to love you, then I am also not required to love anyone else with the same qualities. Third, since the reasons for love are not maximizing, I am not required to love anyone who possesses the same qualities to a greater degree or extent.

This addresses the objections from Universality, Promiscuity and Trading Up. What about Inconstancy? One possible deflation of the challenge is this (compare Jollimore 2011): everyone, or just about everyone, has some good qualities. If love is not maximizing, perhaps it does not take very much for love to be justified, and it is enough that the actual or potential beloved have some good qualities. Moreover, it is part of loving someone, at least normally, to see the good in them, so that once you already love someone you will not easily take them to have *no* good qualities. If so, then the kind of change of character necessary for one to lose one's justification for loving someone might have to be really quite extreme: they might have to become a kind of monster. In that case, perhaps one really ought to stop loving them.

Even if the challenges from Universality, Promiscuity, Trading Up and Inconstancy can be addressed in these ways, though, there is a further and more difficult challenge to the quality view. This is presented by Niko Kolodny as the problem of *Nonsubstitutability*:

If Jane's qualities are my reasons for loving her, then they are equally reasons for my loving anyone else with the same qualities. Insofar as my love for Jane is responsive to its reasons, therefore, it ought to accept anyone with the same qualities as a substitute. But an attitude that would accept just as well any *Doppelgänger* ... that happened along would scarcely count as love. (Kolodny 2003, pp. 140–1)

Making the reasons for love non-requiring and non-maximizing does not help here. The point about nonsubstitutability that poses the problem for the quality view is not just that I am not required to love the *Doppelgänger*; it's that a willingness to accept the *Doppelgänger* as

a substitute or replacement for Jane would show that I did not really love her at all. The point of the nonsubstitutability objection is that love (as Kraut 1987 emphasizes) picks out the beloved as a particular individual. Personal qualities, being the kind of thing that can in principle be shared by multiple people, seem insufficiently 'particular' to explain this aspect of love.

Different authors have sought to resolve this difficulty in different ways, but a common strategy is to appeal to historical or relational factors to explain why one person's love for another picks out that other as a particular individual. An influential version of this approach is developed by Kolodny (2003), who argues that your reason for loving someone you love consists in the fact that you have a valuable relationship with them. Because your relationship with another person is a relationship with *them* and no one else, this explains the nonsubstitutability of the beloved in an attractively straightforward manner. Moreover, there seems to be something right in the idea that your love for another person has something importantly to do with your personal history with them, particularly when that history is relatively long and the love is deep and abiding. If you ask yourself why you love your partner, you might, in line with the quality view, think about all the wonderful things about them. Equally, though, you might, as the 'relationship view' would suggest, think about all the times you have had together, the things you have done for and with one another, your struggles and triumphs and adventures and so on. The relationship view neatly explains why such past events should seem significant.

With that being said, the relationship view still strikes many as implausible in important respects (for criticisms of Kolodny's account see for example Smuts 2014; Setiya 2014; Na'aman 2015; Protasi 2016). A central concern is that the view loses the idea that love is in the first instance a response to another individual, not to one's relationship with that individual. Other authors have sought to preserve this idea whilst taking advantage of the relational aspect of Kolodny's account, suggesting that the presence of a relationship with the other person is a kind of background condition, so that other considerations – in

particular, considerations about the other person's qualities or character – are the lover's reasons for loving them, but that they only count as such in a suitable 'relational context' (Abramson and Leite 2011; Naar 2017b; forthcoming). When you think about your history with your partner, on this view, what matters is the qualities of character that they expressed in those past interactions with you: the ways in which they showed you their kindness, generosity, courage and the like.

Again, though, there are problems. How does this kind of view explain parents' love for their children, for instance? It's doubtful whether infants in particular have any morally laudable qualities of character, and certainly they will not have had much opportunity to express any such character in interactions with their parents, yet it goes without saying that parents normally feel profound love for their infant children. Indeed, familial love can pose problems even when the beloved is an adult. People who are seriously lacking in good qualities of character are often still loved by their parents or siblings. Perhaps there is something pathological or irrational about a parent's love for their amoral or vicious offspring – but perhaps not. We often speak of 'unconditional love' as something admirable, not something to be condemned.

We might be encouraged, by all these difficulties, to try a radically different approach. Some authors, for instance, have argued that the reasons for love are minimal and universal: that someone's mere humanity (Setiya 2014), or perhaps their personhood (Velleman 1999), is sufficient reason for loving them. This has the appealing implication that it is never a mistake, never inappropriate or unfitting, to love another human being. There is nothing wrong with loving a vicious family member – or indeed anyone else for that matter. But while this sounds like a nice idea, it lacks any obvious way of accounting for the selectivity of love. It seems from my point of view that I have special reasons for loving my partner of many years, reasons I would not have for loving anyone else and especially not some

random stranger. Yet my partner and the stranger are just as much human beings, just as much persons.⁴

3. Disentangling ‘reasons’: explanation, understanding, justification

In seeking a unified account of reasons for love, we seem to be pulled in different directions. Moreover, we seem to be pulled in these different directions by different kinds of considerations. The ideas of love as a response to another person, as involving a kind of appreciation of that person, and the idea that we want to be loved for who we are suggest a view of reasons for love as personal qualities of the beloved. What I've called the selectivity and particularity of love, its character as an attachment to a particular individual as such, emphasize the significance of historical and relational factors. Both personal qualities and historical–relational factors seem to be relevant in explaining *why* we love the specific people we love. And a view that emphasizes either one of these factors in characterizing reasons for love seems to risk conflict with an appealing ethical ideal according to which no one is unworthy of love and that it is never inappropriate to love someone.

The multifariousness of considerations at play here makes it difficult to arbitrate between different theories. If we are pulled in different directions by different kinds of considerations, which should we prioritize? This in turn points us towards a more basic question: what exactly is it that these theories are disagreeing about? That is, what is a theory of ‘reasons for love’ supposed to explain? One way we might try to gain some clarity here is to think about the more general notions of ‘a reason’ and of doing things ‘for reasons’. As we noted earlier, there are phenomena other than love to which these notions are more obviously applicable – notably, belief and intentional action. Questions about reasons for belief and action and

⁴ Velleman (1999, pp. 370ff.) makes an attempt at squaring this circle. Setiya (2014) avoids it by allowing that while someone's humanity is sufficient reason to love them, having a relationship with them can provide a further, more forceful reason to love them.

what it is to believe or act for a reason have also received rather more philosophical attention than the corresponding questions about love. By looking at some distinctions and ideas developed in discussions of reasons for action and belief, then, we might hope to bring some more clarity to our questions about reasons for love.

It is commonplace in the philosophy of action to make a distinction between kinds of reasons, in particular between *justifying* (or 'normative'), *explanatory*, and *motivating* reasons. Another way to put it, which allows for the possibility that one reason might justify, explain and motivate, is that these are different *roles* that reasons can play (Alvarez 2010). Even less committally, we might just distinguish different *interests* that can be operative in our talk about reasons: sometimes we are concerned with what we ought to do or with a person's justification for what they did; sometimes we are interested in *why* someone did what they did; sometimes we are interested in what motivated the person to do what they did, or on what grounds or basis they did it (compare Fogal 2018).

To illustrate the distinction, let's take a concrete example. I knock your favorite cup off the table. The cup smashes on the floor, leaving tea and shards of china all over the parquet. You might well want to know why I did this. Anything that accurately answers that question (hence that explains my action) we can call an explanatory reason. Suppose I knocked the cup off the table because I saw a face at the window and it made me jump. In this case, the fact that I saw a face at the window is an explanatory reason for my action – it's a reason why I knocked the cup off the table. It needn't be the only such reason: we could equally cite the fact that the face startled me, that I am a jumpy person, that the cup was too close to the edge of the table, and so on. In general, a whole host of factors will be relevant for the purposes of explaining any given action. Which constitutes the best or most relevant explanation will depend on various factors – most obviously, on what is already known or assumed in the context of explanation.

Now, consider another version of the example where a different explanation is available. Suppose I knock the cup off the table in order to get back at you for some perceived slight.

Here we can explain my action in a special way: by giving *my reasons* for knocking the cup off the table. Maybe I did it because I wanted to get my own back at you, or because you offended me, or because I thought you deserved to have your favorite cup ruined. These are still ‘explanatory reasons’ in a perfectly good sense, but they are also *my reasons* in a sense that the explanatory reasons considered above were not. When we say that I knocked the cup off the table because you offended me, or because I want to upset you, we explain my action, but we explain it specifically by showing what point there was, from my point of view, in taking that course of action, thus revealing my purpose or intention in doing what I did. These kinds of explanations make sense of my action by showing what motivated me so to act. Hence the kinds of factors cited in such explanations are commonly called motivating reasons.

Something like the distinction between explanation in general and a narrower kind of explanation in terms of the person's own reasons seems to have application beyond the case of action, including to phenomena – in particular to certain sorts of psychological states or attitudes – with regard to which the language of ‘motivation’ seems less apt. So, for instance, if you ask me why my friend believes that 5G makes people sick, ‘Because they read it online’ seems to give something like the kind of explanation we are interested in, while ‘Because they're a paranoid conspiracy theorist’ doesn't. The former tells us something about the basis on which my friend believes this claim and so tells us something about their reasons for believing it, even though it doesn't identify a ‘motivation’ for believing it.⁵ Similarly, the

⁵ Beliefs can sometimes be motivated. People do sometimes engage in motivated reasoning or wishful thinking, believing things that they want to believe because they want to believe them. We tend to think of such beliefs as irrational, and it seems that believing in this way involves some degree of self-deception, with the believer convincing themselves that they actually have good grounds for believing as they do. While this phenomenon may

density and speed of traffic might explain my fear of crossing the road by giving my reason for feeling afraid. Again, though, the traffic does not *motivate* me to feel frightened; it simply frightens me. It's plausible, then, that we might make a similar distinction regarding love, even though love isn't something we normally think of as involving motivation in the way that action does. In light of this, I'll henceforth use the term *personal reasons* rather than the more action-specific 'motivating reasons'.

This also raises a question, though. If it isn't just their connection with motivation that makes personal reasons distinctive, what is it? A reasonable first pass, I think, is that personal reasons-explanations provide a distinctively *interpersonal* form of understanding. What explanations in terms of a person's own reasons distinctively do is to enable us to understand things like actions, thoughts and emotions from the point of view of their agent or subject. In particular, they enable us to see the actions, thoughts and feelings that they explain not merely as things that were, say, likely to happen given the conditions mentioned in the explanation, but rather as things that at least to some extent *made sense* to the person whose actions, thoughts or feelings they were. For now, we can think of personal reasons as serving a specific interest, an interest in interpersonal, 'empathetic' understanding. We will look at one way of explaining what's distinctive about this kind of understanding, and hence about personal reasons, in the next section. First, though, we need to consider the final term of our tripartite distinction: justifying reasons.

Consider again my action of breaking the cup. We've so far considered a broader and a narrower sense of the question 'Why did you do that?' Another kind of question you might reasonably ask concerns what philosophers call the *normative* status of my action: whether it was appropriate, sensible, worthwhile, right, justified and so on or, put in the language of reasons, whether there was good reason for me to do what I did. Our interest in asking such

be more common than we would like to admit, it probably shouldn't be our paradigm of believing for a reason.

questions is not primarily a concern with why the action was taken, but with whether the action should have been taken, or whether there was anything to be said in favor of taking it.

There will often be a certain overlap between justifying reasons and personal reasons. If I believe something on the basis of a sound inference, then the premises of that inference should both explain and justify my belief. Nonetheless, the interests of justification and interpersonal understanding are in principle distinct, as can be illustrated by the case of the cup. The explanation of my breaking the cup in terms of your having slighted me makes my action perfectly intelligible: you can understand what point I saw in doing what I did. Yet, accepting the explanation as an explanation, you might still object that I shouldn't have done what I did. A perceived insult, you might say, is no good reason to destroy someone else's property. My action was not justified. If, on the other hand, I knocked the cup off the table in order to distract the assassin who was sneaking up behind you, this might justify my action – to make my taking that course of action right or appropriate.

Again, the same distinction also applies to attitudes such as belief and emotion. The emotions are of particular relevance for our purposes in this chapter: love, while perhaps not an emotion in itself, is clearly a passion in a way that beliefs and actions are not. Take again my fear of crossing the road. It's plausible that fear is in general *appropriate* or *fitting* when the object of fear is threatening, dangerous or fearsome (Deonna and Teroni 2012). So there is a kind of normative standard that applies to fear. We can think of justifying reasons for fear as considerations that bear on whether this standard is met in a given case. In our example, it is indeed dangerous to cross the road because of the density and speed of the traffic: the density and speed of the traffic are reasons for me to feel afraid. By contrast, if I'm afraid of a perfectly harmless spider there is no such justifying reason: my fear might be perfectly intelligible, but it isn't fitting or appropriate.

Having distinguished these different interests at play in reasons-talk – explanation, first-personal intelligibility, justification – can we start to make better sense of the difficulty we faced in accounting for reasons for love? One obvious suggestion is that different accounts of

reasons for love – as personal qualities, as historical relationships, as mere humanity – emphasize one or other of the different interests of reasons-talk.

To take a specific example, the central challenge to the simple quality view – the main proponents of which present it primarily in terms of one person's reasons for loving another, or the reasons for which one person loves another (Delaney 1996; Keller 2000), suggesting that it is intended in the first instance as an account of personal reasons – was that it fails to explain why love does not accept substitutes, because if qualities are your reason for loving one person then they should equally count as reasons for loving another person. Note that this move only makes sense if we are talking about reasons *to* love, that is justifying reasons. If the properties of a particular loaf of bread at the bakery make it suitable to buy, then another qualitatively identical loaf of bread will be just as suitable to buy. So, all else being equal, rationally speaking, I ought to be indifferent between the two loaves. If I in fact buy the first loaf, though, then its qualities may be among my personal reasons for buying it, but I have no personal reasons for buying the second loaf (at least not in the sense of 'personal reasons' sketched above), simply because I didn't buy it: there is no action of buying the second loaf to be explained. If all that we wanted the qualities of the beloved to do, then, in their capacity as 'reasons for love', was to provide a special kind of understanding of love – understanding love from the lover's point of view – it's not at all clear that the nonsubstitutability problem would be any problem at all.

Perhaps, then, the resolution to our puzzle about reasons for love is simply to treat the distinct interests of justification, explanation and understanding separately. This would, however, involve a significant departure from the way that many have proposed to understand reasons. While we can in principle distinguish justifying, explanatory and motivating reasons for action, belief and emotion, it is nonetheless attractive to think that there is also a certain unity or interdependence between them. One way to capture this unity is in the idea that action, belief and emotion are *responsive* to reasons.

4. A confluence of interests: 'responding' to reasons

Personal and justifying reasons, as we have already observed, can overlap. Perhaps this is more than a mere coincidence. In cases where a reason that justifies an action, belief or emotion also makes it interpersonally intelligible, it often seems that the reason serves the latter role in part in virtue of serving the former: sometimes an action (for instance) 'makes sense' to a person precisely because it is something that that person has good reason to do. Specifically, this dovetailing of interests seems to occur when someone does something *for a good reason*, or *because there is good reason to do it*. You believe that it has rained because the streets are wet: you believe that it has rained because you recognize the wet streets as good evidence that it has rained. The wetness of the streets not only both justifies your belief and explains it from your point of view, but, it seems plausible to say, it does the latter in virtue of doing the former. This kind of connection between justifying and personal reasons suggests another way of thinking of what's distinctive about the latter. Actions, beliefs and emotions are all subject to justifying reasons: each action, belief or emotion has considerations that count for or against it. It's natural to think that ideally, our doing, thinking and feeling should be appropriately sensitive to such considerations. We should, ideally, do these things on the basis of good reasons. Our actions and attitudes, that is, should be *responsive* to their justifying reasons. To respond to a justifying reason in this way, you first need to be aware of it. If, as many philosophers have argued, justifying reasons are facts (see for example Alvarez 2010; Kolodny 2005; Lord 2018; Parfit 2011; Raz 1986; 1999; Scanlon 1998), then being aware of a justifying reason plausibly means, at the very least, believing that the fact obtains.⁶

⁶ A number of philosophers have argued that it means actually knowing the fact in question (e.g. Hornsby 2008; Hyman 1999; McDowell 2013; Williamson 2000). Whether this is right isn't important for our purposes here, so I will simply focus on belief.

Crucially, we can respond to our beliefs as reasons even when what we believe is not true. Where what we believe is not true, though, it cannot (at least on the view we are here supposing) be a justifying reason. Yet when we act or think or feel on false beliefs in this way, our actions and attitudes are still potentially susceptible to the kind of interpersonal understanding that I have suggested is provided by personal reasons. Moreover, even when our beliefs *are* true, the facts on which we act are sometimes our personal reasons without being genuine justifying reasons – as, for example, when I break your precious cup in retaliation to a mild insult. Personal reasons, then, cannot simply be defined as those justifying reasons in response to which a person does what they do. However, there is still some hope for understanding what makes personal reasons special by appeal to the notion of justifying reasons. In particular, we might seek to understand personal reasons as things that *seem* to the person like (justifying) reasons for acting, thinking or feeling as they do in response (Alvarez 2010; Scanlon 1998). It may well be that a minor slight is no reason to damage someone's property. It might even be that you didn't actually slight me at all and I simply misinterpreted your remark. There was no justifying reason, then, for me to break your cup. Perhaps, though, I did what I did because it seemed to me as if there was such a reason: I believed that you slighted me, and this seemed to me, in my anger, like a reason to destroy something you value. The special way in which my personal reasons explain my breaking the cup, on this way of thinking, is that they reveal how there seemed to me, at the time, to be some justification for acting in that way. This, just maybe, gives us a way of explaining what is distinctive about personal reasons: they explain a person's actions or attitudes by showing us how, *from that person's point of view*, there was something to be said for acting, thinking or feeling as they did (compare Davidson 1980, p. 9).

Note how this picture unifies our understanding of justifying and personal reasons. Our personal reasons are, loosely speaking, just what seem to us to be justifying reasons. As long as we have a reasonable understanding of what sorts of facts in general count in favor of what kinds of responses, then it will make sense, given this 'reasons-responsiveness' picture,

to address questions about justifying and personal reasons together. Determining what sorts of things justify responses will tell us a lot about the reasons for which people respond, and looking at people's personal reasons might help us think about what kinds of considerations justify. Of course, people can make mistakes, often very serious ones, about what's justifiable, so we will have to be careful. The point is just that, on this 'reasons-responsiveness' picture, the two kinds of reasons are not *wholly* separate.

Through the lens of 'reasons-responsiveness', we can begin to see why separating out the different interests of reasons-talk as I suggested in the last section could seem misguided. If love is reasons-responsive in the present sense, the questions of what justifies love and of what explains it from the lover's point of view are not so separate. In saying what justifies love, we would say a lot about what makes sense of it for the lover; understanding how love makes sense to the lover could tell us a lot about what seems to us to justify love. The difficulties we came across in our overview of the different theories of reasons for love would not, in this case, be easily resolved by distinguishing justification and interpersonal understanding, because these two interests, while distinct, are nonetheless intimately interconnected.

Indeed, the assumption that love is reasons-responsive in something like the present sense seems implicit in many of the authors we have discussed. Niko Kolodny comes close to making it explicit, basing some of his arguments on the premise that what normally sustains emotional concern (which he takes to be partly constitutive of love) is a good guide to the normative (that is, justifying) reasons for it (Kolodny 2003, p. 162). Even where there is no such explicit methodological claim, it is not uncommon to frame discussion in terms of love's 'reasons-responsiveness' (see especially Abramson and Leite 2011; 2018),⁷ and more

⁷ Abramson and Leite (2018) express scepticism about the analysis of reasons-responsiveness as necessarily running via the agent's judgements or beliefs. Nonetheless, they maintain that love is reasons-responsive and seem clearly to think that an account of

generally to move somewhat freely between claims about the psychology and intelligibility of love on the one hand and claims about its appropriateness or justification on the other.

Recall the objections to the quality view of reasons for love: the problems of Universality, Promiscuity, Trading Up, Inconstancy and Nonsubstitutability. Each of these appeals to what seems like an intuitive judgment about the psychological character of love. We don't just think that it's wrong, irrational or inappropriate for love to be transferred, to treat one's beloved as fungible or to be ready to 'trade up'; rather, we think (and this is reflected in the way that the challenges are typically expressed) that an attitude that behaved in this way *would not be love*. This is a claim about the nature of love, about what it is to love someone. Yet the objections presuppose that this must be explained in terms of the kinds of justifying reasons to which love is subject. Similarly, one major problem with the idea that someone's mere humanity or personhood is sufficient reason to love them was that it doesn't provide an explanation (first- or third-personal) of why we love the particular people we love – it doesn't give us a satisfactory account of personal reasons for love. There seems, then, to be an underlying assumption to the effect that the way love behaves psychologically must be explained in relation to the justifying reasons to which it is sensitive. An obvious explanation for that assumption is the further assumption that in so far as we love for reasons, love must be reasons-responsive in something like the sense I have sketched in this section.

5. Love as a sentiment

But is it plausible that love is reasons-responsive in this sense? Is it plausible to think of love as sensitive to facts in the same sort of way that actions and beliefs are? There are, after all, very significant differences between love and these other 'reasons-responsive'

love's justifying reasons needs to make sense of its psychology in something like the way outlined in the previous paragraph.

phenomena. Consider some of the characteristic ways in which intentions and beliefs are formed and revised. Through reasoning, deliberation, judgment and choice, we have the capacity to consider what reasons there are for and against believing or doing this or that and then determining what to think or do in light of these considerations. When relevant new information arises, we can change our minds, stop doing what we are doing, revise our plans or change our beliefs. In part because of this, intentions and beliefs are 'fragile' (as Wollheim 2003 puts it), readily changing in response to changes in our situation. Part of the reason it makes sense to expect reasons for acting and believing to play a privileged role in explaining what we think and do is that we possess such rational 'control' over them: generally (and idealizing somewhat) we wouldn't be doing what we are doing, or thinking what we are thinking, if there didn't seem to us to be good reason for so doing or thinking.

Love, at the very least, looks considerably less 'fragile' – more *substantial*, we might say – than intentions and beliefs. Love seems to belong to a category of psychological states sometimes called 'sentiments': deep, long-lasting, affective orientations towards specific things, which manifest in a diverse range of ways in our emotions, thoughts, actions and motivations (Deonna and Teroni 2012, pp. 106–9; Naar 2017a; 2018). Sentiments are not formed by choice or judgment but develop gradually over time, typically through repeated interaction with the thing or person towards which they are directed. The point here isn't just that a sentiment takes some time to 'set in' and that once it has done so it tends to stick around, as a bath might take a long time to fill and a similarly long time to drain. Rather, it's that any given instance of a sentiment – one person's love for another, a person's appreciation of a certain genre of music, another's distrust of authority – is naturally understood as being shaped by a kind of developmental history, in something like the way that an individual person is shaped by their developmental history (compare Rorty 1987; Grau 2010). Indeed, we might say that a good deal of a person's being shaped by their history consists in the shaping of their sentiments.

One's love for another person, on this picture, grows, persists and develops through the course of one's ongoing interaction with that person, one's thinking about them and so on. Love can strengthen as it matures, or it can fade away. An excited romantic love can mature into something deeper but less emotionally intense; romantic love can change into platonic affection; a platonic love between friends can turn into something more romantic. Moreover, if love is a state of this kind, it will naturally tend to persist. It needn't persist indefinitely, of course – people do fall out of love – but it seems doubtful that love needs to be *sustained* by anything like the lover's beliefs about why they love the person they love, in the way that we might think a person's intention to do something must be sustained by beliefs about why they are doing what they are doing. If this is right, it makes a difference to how one person's love for another will ordinarily be explained.

Consider, by way of analogy, traits of character or personality. We tend to think of character as being relatively (not to say completely) fixed, and hence much less 'fragile' than attitudes or stances like beliefs or intentions. By the same token, a person's character is not very 'responsive' to such factors as what they believe – including to what they believe about how their character ought ideally to be. If you are a very agreeable person, for instance, you will not easily become significantly less agreeable, even if you think it would be better if you were, say because you think you're too much of a pushover. This relative insensitivity of character to beliefs is reflected in how we tend to think a person's character should be explained. We have a general picture of what kinds of factors are responsible for character in which a person's genetic predispositions, their environment and their experiences – particularly their upbringing and experiences in childhood – as well as the complex interactions between these factors, play major roles. Our picture is one on which character is strongly shaped by events in the individual's past and by aspects of their biological constitution much more than by their current beliefs. In so far as character is indeed shaped by events in a person's past in this way, character will be explained *developmentally*: that is, to

make sense of what a person is like now, we need to take a historical view and try to see *how they came to be* that way.

If love is less fragile than belief and intention, if it is the kind of state that develops over time, we might expect it to be rather more like character in this regard too. If so, we should expect love to be less sensitive to presently obtaining facts that might bear on whether it is 'appropriate' or 'fitting', or to the lover's present beliefs about such facts. This in turn suggests that such facts and beliefs will be less privileged in our explanations of love than they are with respect to action, belief and emotions. It also suggests that love will be more naturally explained in a historical or developmental way than are things like belief and intention. While this distinction is probably best viewed as one of degree rather than an absolute categorical difference, it is nonetheless significant for our thinking about love and reasons.

The distinction between these different kinds of explanation can be nicely illustrated by considering an account of reasons for love that might superficially seem to be supported by the idea that love exhibits historical development: Kolodny's relationship view. Historical relationships play a central role in Kolodny's account, but still love is not, in the picture he presents, explained historically. The reason one has for loving another person, on Kolodny's account, is simply the fact that one has a certain kind of relationship with that person. Love is causally sustained by one's ongoing recognition of that fact. The history itself explains love at best indirectly, through the lover's belief that there is such a history. The changing character of love over time is explained by the lover's changing beliefs about the nature of their relationship with their beloved, not directly by the events in which the relationship consists. This contrasts with the idea that events themselves, especially emotionally powerful experiences, leave their marks on us and on our emotional and affective

dispositions – marks that do not depend wholly on the sustained influence of beliefs about the events in question.⁸

The more we see love as explained developmentally, the less it seems to fit the model of reasons-responsiveness outlined earlier: if history is explanatorily significant in this way, the lover's present beliefs have only limited influence on it. This could be taken to favor a 'no reasons' view of love. If we assume that only reasons-responsive attitudes are subject to reasons and, further, that something like our model of reasons-responsiveness is correct, this would imply that there are no reasons for love. Indeed, a recent paper by Yongming Han argues against the view that there are justifying reasons (of the kind that he calls 'fittingness reasons') for love precisely on the basis that such reasons plausibly do not play an important role in explaining why we love the people we love (Han forthcoming; see also Smuts 2014). Similarly, if reasons-responsiveness is the only way to make sense of the distinction between personal and merely explanatory reasons, then if we doubt love's responsiveness to reasons we will thereby doubt the existence of personal reasons for love.

One way to try to avoid these skeptical conclusions would of course be to insist that love is reasons-responsive, perhaps by seeking to articulate a less demanding account of reasons-responsiveness. I won't try to assess the prospects for that line of reply here. What I instead want to do, in the final section, is to suggest an alternative way forward.

6. Divergent interests

We've seen that there are serious difficulties for the idea that love is reasons-responsive in the sense outlined in §4. Yet something in the claim that there are no reasons for love rings false. A straightforward explanation of this is that, even if they do not align in the way that they do in the 'reasons-responsiveness' model, nonetheless the characteristic interests

⁸ Contrast, with Kolodny's account, the resolutely historical view of love in, for instance, Grau (2010).

expressed in our talk of reasons – in particular, the interest in interpersonal understanding – do apply to love. Love still, it seems, characteristically ‘makes sense’ for the lover in a distinctively first-personal way, and we might still seek to understand another person’s love from that first-personal perspective. And it is at least not obvious that love’s non-responsiveness to justifying reasons would mean that there was no sense in which love can be more or less appropriate or fitting. However, if love’s responsiveness is indeed limited, if putative justifying reasons do not tend to play the major role in explaining love, then it may be that in order to do justice to the interests expressed in the language of ‘reasons’ – to understand what makes love appropriate or inappropriate; to make sense of love from the lover’s perspective – we cannot expect them to fall so neatly together.

Adopting this approach would mean refraining from the assumption that there is a unified set of concerns to be addressed through an account of ‘the reasons for love’. Instead, we would recognize that there are questions about justification and appropriateness on the one hand and questions about psychology, phenomenology and understanding on the other. There might of course be connections between these concerns, but the nature of those connections will itself be something that needs to be worked out. Crucially, we would not assume that the interesting psychological aspects of love are necessarily secondary to, or derivative from, facts about what justifies it. The possibility of separating the respective interests of justification and understanding in this way suggests a re-examination of some of the accounts of reasons for love we looked at at the start of this paper. For instance, one objection we raised against an account like Setiya’s, on which love is justified simply by the other’s mere humanity, was that it fails to give a satisfactory picture of why we love the particular people we love. Perhaps it is simply a mistake to expect that from an account of what justifies love. Objections to an account like Setiya’s would, on this approach, need to take a more directly normative form: for instance, showing that there are some people whom it would be inappropriate to love.

This approach would also suggest that ‘What are the reasons for love?’ is unlikely to be the most perspicuous framing for the interesting issues concerning our first-personal understanding of love. Once we drop the assumption that love must be made intelligible by apparent justifying reasons, there is no obvious reason to expect that there is one single kind of consideration that makes love intelligible.⁹ The pressing challenge will be to explain what the ‘intelligibility’ of love consists in if not the kind of subjective justification that, on the reasons-responsiveness picture, constitutes the first-personal intelligibility of intentional action and belief. Note, though, that there is good reason to think that our first-personal perspective on love will be of a different character from that which we have on our beliefs and intentional actions. In as much as love is characteristically explained in historical terms, the facts that explain one’s love for another may be beyond one’s ken in a way that the ‘apparent reasons’ that characteristically explain actions and beliefs are not. In as much as we understand our love for others historically, then, our self-understanding may in this regard involve a much greater degree of speculation, vagueness, and storytelling.

However, there is another, perhaps deeper, thought about intelligibility and understanding that we might pursue once we depart from the assumption that love must be made intelligible by (apparent) justifying reasons to which it is a response: namely, that making one’s love intelligible to another may not be primarily a matter of giving an explanation of why one loves – in other words, that personal reasons may not after all be a subset of explanatory reasons. If, for instance, we think of love as involving a kind of appreciation of the beloved, as some authors have suggested, then talking in the right way about what you appreciate in your beloved might help another to understand your perspective as lover in the sense that they can come to see what you see in your beloved (compare De Sousa 2015, chap. 4) – even if such features aren’t major factors in explaining *why* you love that particular person.

⁹ Compare Fogal’s (2018) ‘deflationary pluralism’ about motivating reasons for action.

In recommending this approach to addressing the set of questions represented by talk of ‘reasons for love’, I don’t mean we should assume that there will be no interesting connections between our interests in justifying, explaining and understanding love. The suggestion is rather that the differences between love on the one hand and action and belief on the other are great enough and of such a kind that we should not, at least in the first instance, assume that the best way to understand love is to try to fit it into a picture of reasons devised primarily to characterize action and belief. Indeed, given the extent to which the language of ‘reasons’ has come to evoke that kind of picture, a final methodological suggestion might be that this language is, as far as possible, better avoided. Even if we don’t endorse a ‘no reasons’ view of love, we might consider trying out a ‘no “reasons”’ methodology in thinking about it.¹⁰

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