

January 2011

## Romantic Love

Thomas H. Smith  
*University of Manchester*, [thomas.smith@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:thomas.smith@manchester.ac.uk)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.pacificu.edu/eip>

 Part of the [Philosophy Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Smith, Thomas H. (2011) "Romantic Love," *Essays in Philosophy*: Vol. 12: Iss. 1, Article 6.

# Romantic Love

**Thomas H. Smith**

Published online: 11 January 2011

© Thomas H. Smith 2011

## Abstract

Nozick provides us with a compelling characterization of romantic love, but, as I argue, he under-describes the phenomenon, for he fails to distinguish it from attitudes that those who are not romantically involved may bear to each other. Frankfurt also offers a compelling characterization of love, but he is sceptical about its application to the case of *romantic* love. I argue that each account has the resources with which to complete the other. I consider a preliminary synthesis of the two accounts, which I find wanting. The synthesis I then favour relies upon two thoughts: (i) each romantic partner has loving concern for a plural object *viz.* the two of them, and (ii) romantic partners are, in addition, beloved of a plural subject, *viz.* the two of them. A corollary is that Frankfurt is wrong to think that, whilst self-love is a pure form of love, romantic love is an impure form of love, for romantic love just is a form of (plural) self-love. In an appendix, I defend the coherence of the thought that love can have plural *relata*.

## I. Romantic Love<sup>1</sup>

Romantic love, as I understand it, is the form of love appropriate to all and only couples. That is not to say that all couples are such that each loves the other in the romantic mode: some have never loved each other; others have loved each other, but no longer do. Neither is it to say that only couples are such that each loves the other, in the romantic mode: circumstances may prevent two lovers from being a couple (Heloise and Abelard). My claim is normative: whilst not every couple is a loving couple, every couple is such that it is appropriate, or fitting, that each loves the other, in the romantic mode; and whilst not every pair of romantic lovers is a couple, every pair of romantic lovers is such that it is appropriate, or fitting, that they are a couple.

I cannot specify any condition that is necessary and sufficient for being a couple. A candidate condition would be that two people are, in *some* sense, set on “going through

---

Corresponding Author: T.H. Smith  
University of Manchester  
email - thomas.smith@manchester.ac.uk

life together” (although not necessarily their *whole* lives together), but this condition is too vague to be especially informative. Many parents and children, and friends, and siblings, are likewise set on “going through life together”. And to beef up the proposed condition by adding “in the manner distinctive of couples” is to render it circular. For two people to be a couple, it is not necessary that they are in, or even that they have ever had, a sexual relationship. Neither is it necessary that they live together. It is not even necessary that either or both parties *wish*, or have wished, either to be in a sexual relationship, or to live together. Moreover, as far as I can see, these conditions are not, either severally or collectively, sufficient for being a couple.

Does it matter that I elucidate romantic love in terms of a concept – the concept of a couple – that I cannot elucidate in terms of conditions that are necessary and sufficient for its exemplification? No, for we must have *some* shared understanding of that concept, because there is no serious disagreement about its extension. (Compare: it is hard to provide conditions necessary and sufficient for being a *chair*, but we all know a chair when, and only when, we see one). Any group of people who share a social circle, and who are all equally informed about the goings on within that circle, will agree about which pairs of people among the circle are, and are not, couples. More carefully, they will agree at least about the *non-borderline* cases: there can be borderline instances, as there can be borderline instances of almost all everyday concepts, but this does not impugn our understanding of such concepts.

## II. Nozick on romantic love

Nozick distinguishes between the “intense state” of being *in* love, and the “continuing romantic love” which “if given the opportunity” any such state “transforms itself into”.<sup>2</sup> Simply put, romantic love has a *first stage*, with “familiar features” such as

almost always thinking of the person; wanting constantly to touch and to be together; excitement in the other’s presence; losing sleep... gazing deeply into each other’s eyes... [etc.]<sup>3</sup>

and a *second*, less piercing, stage. For Nozick, an “important” and “intrinsic” aspect of this stage, one that is not merely “something that contingently happens when love does”, is “wanting to form a *we*” with the beloved, and “wanting the other to feel the same way about you”.<sup>4</sup> He offers no complete account of what it is to want to form a “*we*”, but notes that it involves, among other things, a desire to “pool... autonomy”.<sup>5</sup> And Nozick thinks of autonomy, or, at least, of the autonomy that a lover wishes to pool, as consisting in the power and authority to settle certain practical questions by making decisions. Hence, in his view, parties *pool* their autonomy just when they come to *share* the power and authority to thus settle certain practical questions, ones that they severally or collectively face. “People who form a *we*... limit or curtail their own

decision-making power and rights”,<sup>6</sup> so as to jointly become “a decision-making locus”.<sup>7</sup> Each “transfers some previous rights to make certain decisions unilaterally into a joint pool, ... decisions will be made together about how to be together”.<sup>8</sup>

There is more to being a *we*, than this, however. For Nozick, each one of the *we* transfers, as well as some of his own autonomy, some of his own well-being, some of his own “public face” and some of his own identity to a “pool”. Nozick is not absolutely clear as to what these claims amount to. To take the case of well-being, he surely does not mean that each “limits or curtails” his own well-being in order that the *we* acquire one, i.e. that each sees to it that things go worse for him, in order that they go better for *them*. Rather, I take it, the claim is that each party “limits or curtails” his *capacity to have* a well-being that varies independently of the one he shares with the other; hence, there is a limit to the extent to which things may go badly for him, whilst they go well for them, and vice versa. Something similar appears to apply to the pooling of “public face” and of “identity”. Each party “limits or curtails” his propensity to be publicly recognized, and recognized as being worthy of such recognition, in order that *they* acquire some such propensity. And each “limits or curtails”, if not his identity, his sense of his identity as a discrete, bounded individual, in order that they acquire some such sense (“...we might diagram the *we* as two figures with the boundary line between them erased where they come together”).<sup>9</sup>

It is perhaps worth noting that, for Nozick, a romantic lover’s desire to form a *we* persists so long as his love does. Even when the desire is fulfilled, it remains present, for a lover desires not merely that a *we* is formed, but that it remains formed.

We should not confuse being a *we* with being a couple. The former is not necessary for the latter: some couples pool scarcely any autonomy, well-being, “face” or identity (perhaps such couples are not *loving* couples). Neither is the former sufficient for the latter. Close business or creative partnerships between non-couples may involve “poolings” of just the sort described by Nozick. Nor should we assume that Nozick thinks that being a *we* is either necessary or sufficient for “continuing romantic love”. It is not necessary, because circumstances can prevent romantic lovers from being a *we* (Heloise and Abelard), and not sufficient because, once again, close business or creative partners can be *wes*, even in the absence of romantic love.

What Nozick claims is that a *desire* to form a *we* with the other is a *necessary* condition of stage two romantic love (it is “not.. something that contingently happens when love does”).<sup>10</sup> I think that we should grant him this claim. Whilst couples may lack this desire, loving couples may not. And even when circumstances make being a *we* impossible, as in the case of Heloise and Abelard, it is not implausible to claim that love persists only if the desire for the impossible does too, tragically as it may be.

Nozick does not assert that a desire to form a *we* with the other is *sufficient* for romantic love. And, given the above considerations, it is easy to see why desiring this is not sufficient. One can desire to form a *we* with a prospective business or creative partner. Also, Nozick himself suggests that such a desire might be present in cases of solidarity, e.g. in cases where one works with others in pursuit of a cause, or ideal.<sup>11 12</sup>

We should not berate Nozick for failing to supply a sufficient condition, as he does not purport to give one. Neither will I give such a condition. But we might hope to do *more* than Nozick does to distinguish romantic love from non-romantic attitudes that may be present in business and creative partnerships, and among co-conspirators. I remember a time when people used to object to the use of ‘partner’ that signifies the one with whom one is a couple. ‘Why call her your partner?’ they would say (and perhaps still do), ‘You’re not in *business*’. This was always a fogeyish complaint, conservative about English, and, more often than not, about private morality, the implicit rebuke being ‘If she isn’t your *wife*, she bears no significant relation to you’. Nevertheless, there is something objectionable about ‘partner’: it under-describes the romantic relationship. For romantic partners are *partnered* in the same way, and to the same extent, as business and creative partners may be. All may enter implicit or explicit contracts, or strike bargains, that result in their pooling their autonomy, well-being, public “face” and identity, in the manner described by Nozick, and all may desire so to do. In romantic partnership, however, something else appears also to be present. It is not just that, in the case of romantic partners, the contracts and bargains concern important domestic matters, such as “where to live, how to live, who friends are and how to see them, whether to have children and how many, where to travel, whether to go to the movies that night and what to see”.<sup>13</sup> After all, non-loving couples may enter such contracts, and desire so to do. In romantic partnership, something *qualitatively* different appears also to be present. My complaint against Nozick, then, mirrors the foggy’s complaint: he under-describes romantic love, in much the same way as the mentioned use of ‘partner’ under-describes the romantic relationship. Even if we cannot beef up his necessary condition so as to transform it into a sufficient one, it is worth inquiring into whether we can find *further* necessary conditions of love that distinguish it from non-loving attitudes present in partnership. In search of a means of achieving this goal, I turn to Frankfurt’s writings.

### III. Frankfurt on love

Frankfurt imposes no restriction on the objects of love. The account is meant to apply not just to love of people, and not just to love of concrete individuals (e.g. animals, countries, paintings etc.) more generally, but to love of “more abstract” things too, such as ideals, traditions, projects, causes etc.<sup>14</sup> In summarizing Frankfurt’s account, I shall try to respect its broad scope. But I shall also follow Frankfurt in using, for brevity’s sake, personal pronouns and ‘the beloved’ to designate an object of love.

Frankfurt lists “four main conceptually necessary features”<sup>15</sup> of love.

*First*, “love consists most basically in a disinterested concern for the well-being or flourishing of [what] is loved”.<sup>16</sup> Such concern is no idle sentiment; it furnishes the lover with motives and reasons to protect the interests of the beloved:

Loving someone or something essentially *means* or *consists* in, among other things, taking its interests as reasons for acting to serve those interests. Love is itself, for the lover, a source of reasons. It creates the reasons by which his acts of loving concern and devotion are inspired.<sup>17</sup>

Loving concern is *disinterested* for Frankfurt in that “[i]t is not driven by any ulterior purpose”;<sup>18</sup> rather, a lover takes the beloved, and the beloved’s well being, to be valuable as ends in themselves. This claim is not as simple as it seems. For, as Frankfurt sees it, whilst a lover’s concern for his beloved is sometimes a *response* to his valuing him, it is always and necessarily *creative* of such valuing: “what we love necessarily *acquires* value for us *because* we love it”.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, whilst loving concern is not “driven” by an ulterior purpose, it nevertheless has an ulterior purpose. A beloved “necessarily possesses an instrumental value” for a lover,<sup>20</sup> as a beloved is a necessary condition of a lover’s loving him, which, in turn, is a sufficient condition of the lover’s *not* living a life without love, and not living such a life is of non-instrumental value to any lover, for a life without love is a life without final ends, and hence “empty and vain”.<sup>21</sup> So, for Frankfurt, a beloved is a means to a further end of his lover’s (the end of having final ends) and, furthermore, may be believed by a lover so to be (he imagines a man telling a woman precisely how his love for her gives value to his life).<sup>22</sup> What prevents loving concern from being “driven” by an ulterior purpose is that a beloved, and a beloved’s well-being, have instrumental value for a lover only if, and because, these things are valued non-instrumentally by him.<sup>23</sup>

*Second*, loving concern is for a particular *qua* particular, not a particular *qua* instance of any type(s). Simply put, a beloved is loved “for himself”. For loving concern to exist, it is neither necessary nor sufficient that the beloved have any specific qualities. Hence, even if a beloved’s qualities change, the concern persists (“Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds”), And a lover is not disposed to have loving concern for any duplicate of his beloved (“Accept no substitutes”).<sup>24</sup>

*Third*, one “identifies with [one’s] beloved: that is, [one] takes the interests of [one’s] beloved as [one’s] own.”<sup>25</sup> As one might put it, one *inherits*, or takes oneself to inherit, one’s beloved’s interests, such that one’s well-being or flourishing consists, in part, in their well-being and flourishing. To change metaphors, one is “*invested* in [one’s] beloved: [one] profits by its successes, and its failures cause [one] to suffer”.<sup>26</sup>

*Fourth*, loving concern is involuntary, in two ways. First, its *occurrence* “is not a matter of choice but is determined by conditions that are outside our immediate voluntary control”.<sup>27</sup> Second, its primary *manifestation* consists in one’s inability to form “determined and effective” intentions “regardless of what motives and reasons [one] may have for doing so... to perform (or to refrain from performing)” certain sorts of action.<sup>28</sup> In particular (although Frankfurt does not explicitly put it this way), one is unable to effectively will courses of action that one believes would, if taken, harm one’s beloved, or hinder his flourishing, and is unable *not* to will certain courses of action that one believes would, if taken, aid one’s beloved or his flourishing, and this is so regardless of one’s other motives and reasons. Hence, if I have loving concern for my Stradivarius, then I am unable to effectively will that I burn it, no matter how strong my motivation to heat my house.<sup>29</sup> However, loving concern is not experienced as a *coercive* constraint on the will. Even though “[w]hat we love... is not up to us”,<sup>30</sup> “[i]t is by our own will, and not by any external or alien force, that we are constrained.”<sup>31</sup> This is, in part, because a lover is *satisfied* with his love,<sup>32</sup> and in part because, paradoxical though it may seem, the constraints imposed by love “liberate” the lover “from the impediments to choices and action that consist either in having no final ends or in being drawn inconclusively both in one direction and in another.”<sup>33</sup>

Frankfurt does not say that these “four main conceptually necessary features” are also sufficient for love, but he comes to close to doing so, as for him they are “criteria that identify what loving essentially is”<sup>34</sup> and “indispensable conditions by which the nature of love is defined”.<sup>35</sup> The list recurs in a predecessor paper “On Caring”, and it is clear from what is said there that Frankfurt takes the necessity of the features to distinguish love from the genus of which it is a species, *viz.* concern or caring (or, as he sometimes puts it, *regarding something as important to one*).<sup>36</sup> None of the four features is necessary for the more general phenomenon, in Frankfurt’s view. Instances of the general phenomenon have in common, perhaps among other things, the presence of a “second-order” attitude of commitment to, endorsement of, and/or identification with, some “first-order” desire that a thing survive and flourish, such that the concerned agent is disposed, not only to discern, and act upon, reasons to benefit, and to refrain from harming, the object of his concern, but also to “sustain” and “refresh” the desire to do this, and to “reinforce” its influence on his behaviour.<sup>37</sup> But, in the general case, the concerned agent need not have *disinterested* concern, or be concerned with a particular *qua* particular, or identify with the object of his concern. Neither need his caring disposition *not* be under his direct voluntary control.<sup>38</sup>

In Frankfurt’s view “the true interests of anyone... are governed and defined by what he loves. It is what a person loves that determines what is important to him.”<sup>39</sup> But, in his view, it does not follow, and is not true, that love for a person always motivates one simply to try to serve his interests by protecting and promoting the things that one believes *he* loves. For first, it will also motivate one to make “a genuine effort” to discover and understand what it is that he loves,<sup>40</sup> which is often no easy task, not least

because what it is that one's beloved *says* he loves (if he says he loves anything at all) is not necessarily the last word on what it is that he *truly* loves.<sup>41</sup> Second, it will also motivate one to free one's beloved of any ambivalence that pollutes and dilutes his love, i.e. to unify his will, where it has become divided, so as to render him *whole-* and not *half-hearted*.<sup>42</sup> Third, in the limiting case in which one's beloved loves nothing, or only a few things, such that his true interests are defined by the *non-existence* or *meagreness* of what he loves, one's love will motivate one to assist him in "finding things to love", to rescue him from an "empty and vain" life.<sup>43</sup>

#### IV. Frankfurt on self-love and romantic love

For Frankfurt, "self-love – notwithstanding its questionable reputation – is in a certain way the purest of all modes of love".<sup>44</sup> The claim is not that self-love is pure in the sense of being "noble" or admirable; rather it is pure in that it satisfies Frankfurt's four conditions of love more transparently and decisively than other forms of love.

First, self-love is distinctively disinterested, in the sense that a self-lover counts no ends – and, in particular, no interests – other than those of his beloved, as reasons for willing his flourishing. Second, it is distinctively particular: we love ourselves entirely because of *who* we are, and not at all because of *how* we are. Hence, loving concern for self tends to survive even quite dramatic and irreversible qualitative changes to that self, and has no tendency at all to spread or transfer itself to qualitative duplicates. This is not so transparently or decisively the case when it comes to the love of others. Third, a self-lover's identification with his beloved is distinctively "robust and uncurtailed" simply because "his own interests and those of his beloved are identical".<sup>45</sup> Fourth, self-love is distinctively involuntary: "[w]hile the inclination [toward self-love] may not be completely irresistible, it is exceptionally difficult to overcome or to elude";<sup>46</sup> after all, it is "deeply entrenched in our nature".<sup>47</sup>

The reason is simple: we are, by nature, lovers. Almost everyone loves something, and so is motivated to disinterestedly protect and promote what he loves, and to better understand it too. And even one who loves little, or who loves half-heartedly, is, typically, motivated to extend the scope and the wholeheartedness of his love. But one who is so motivated, Frankfurt suggests, *thereby* has disinterested, rigidly focused, identifying and involuntary concern for the *lover* of what he loves, and hence loves himself. For self-love is, for Frankfurt, manifested by, and derivative of, "loving what [one] loves...",<sup>48</sup> "making a determined effort... to become clear about what [one] loves, and what that love requires",<sup>49</sup> and struggling to become less divided, more *wholehearted*, in one's love of other things.<sup>50</sup> And so, self-love is the most natural thing in the world, a by-product of our propensity to love other things.<sup>51</sup>



For Frankfurt *romantic* love is, however, quite unlike self-love. In the sense of ‘pure’ in which the latter is pure, the former is quite impure. As Frankfurt sees it:

...relationships that are primarily romantic or sexual do not provide very authentic or illuminating paradigms of love as I am construing it. Relationships of those kinds typically include a number of vividly distracting elements, which do not belong to the essential nature of love as a mode of disinterested concern, but that are so confusing that they make it nearly impossible for anyone to be clear about just what is going on.<sup>52</sup>

What are the alleged “vividly distracting elements”? For Frankfurt, they appear to fall into three categories. First, romantic love is typically *not* disinterested:

The attitudes of romantic lovers towards their beloveds are rarely altogether disinterested, and those aspects of their attitudes which are indeed disinterested are generally obscured by more urgent concerns that are conspicuously or covertly self-regarding.<sup>53</sup>

A romantic lover seeks *something in return* for his love, and for actions expressive of his love. Indeed, as Frankfurt sees it, some such desire is apt to cloud the love of one who loves *anything* other than themselves or a child of theirs. Hence:

...the love of persons other than one’s children or oneself is... nearly always mixed up with, if not actually grounded in, a hope to be loved in return or to acquire certain other goods that are distinct from the well-being of the beloved – for instance, companionship, emotional and material security, sexual gratification, prestige, or the like. It is only when the beloved is the lover’s child that love is likely to be as free of such calculated or implicit expectations as it is almost invariably free of them in the case of a person’s love of himself.<sup>54</sup>

The second “distracting element” is the “various powerful emotions”<sup>55</sup> that attend upon love. These include “strong feelings of attraction”<sup>56</sup> and a “yearn[ing] for reciprocity”.<sup>57</sup> By contrast, love *simpliciter*, as Frankfurt conceives of it, is not primarily or even essentially an “affective” but rather a “volitional” phenomenon.<sup>58</sup>

The third distraction is the fact that romantic lovers “often enjoy the company of their beloveds” and “cherish various types of intimate connection with them”. By contrast, with love *simpliciter*, it is not “essential that a person like what he loves.”<sup>59</sup>

## V. A synthesis?

A natural thought is that each of Nozick's and Frankfurt's accounts has the resources with which to complete the other. What is missing from Nozick's account, what distinguishes romantic partnership from, say, business partnership is the disinterested, rigidly focused, identifying and involuntary concern that Frankfurt describes. And what accounts for what Frankfurt sees as the vivid distractions of *romantic* love, is the desire to form a *we* with the other that is, on Nozick's view, a condition of such love.

As it stands, however, this proposal is not entirely satisfactory. First, even if we add to Nozick's necessary condition of romantic love, the further putatively necessary condition that a lover bear Frankfurtian love for his beloved (or, as I shall say, that he *Frankfurts* him), we still do not distinguish it from attitudes that fall short of romantic love, but which may be present among business or creative partners. After all, Marks and Spencer, say, may have (i) each desired to form a *we* with the other, and (ii) each *Frankfurted* the other, without bearing any distinctively *romantic* love for each other. And the same is true of Marx and Engels, or Lennon and McCartney.

Secondly, insofar as the proposed synthesis may explain what Frankfurt takes to be to be the "conspicuously or covertly self-regarding" "urgent concerns" of romantic lovers, in terms of a desire to form a *we*, it does not explain *away* Frankfurt's worry that, to the extent to which such love is self-regarding, it is not love.

Nozick has things to say that will dispel this worry, to some extent. For first, lovers' desires to form a *we*, will, if fulfilled, tend to make them less self-regarding, as their autonomy, capacity for well-being and identities will become to some extent merged. Secondly, he clearly thinks that such desires are not entirely self-regarding:

...it distorts romantic love to view it through the lens of the egoistic question "What's in it for me?" What we want when we are in love is to be with that person... not to *be someone who is with her or him*.<sup>60</sup>

Still, Nozick does not deny, and, at times, asserts that a desire to form a *we* may, to some extent, be "driven by an ulterior purpose", indeed, by a self-interested concern of the sort that economists attribute to economic agents. Hence:

...someone who loves you helps you with care and comfort to meet vicissitudes... Thus, love... provides insurance in the face of fate's blows. (Would economists explain some features of selecting a mate as the rational pooling of risks?)<sup>61</sup>

And (in an extended passage where he explicitly pursues an economic analogy):

Under some conditions it will be economically advantageous for two... trading firms to combine into *one* firm, with all allocations now becoming internal.<sup>62</sup>

If the desire to form a *we* is, even in part, motivated by enlightened self-interest, that suffices to justify Frankfurt's worry that romantic love is impure love.

I think, however, that there *is* a way to integrate Nozick's account and Frankfurt's account, in a manner that will both distinguish romantic love from other forms of love (as Nozick's account does not do), and dispel Frankfurt's worry that romantic love is an impure, non-paradigm case of love (as he himself is unable to do).

## VI. An alternative synthesis

We can profit by paying attention to the ways in which each one of two people who love each other, in the romantic mode, benefits from this love. Some of the benefits will derive from their capacities to do certain things that one can only do with another, i.e. things that one cannot do alone. But this is not the whole truth. There are plenty of things that can only be done jointly, from which we derive benefits, regardless of whether they are done with a romantic lover. Many of the things lovers do, however, bring *distinctive* benefits *just when* they are done by loving couples, e.g. having children, or seeing a film, or attending yoga classes. But even this is not the whole truth. Of especial interest are those activities, such as snuggling up, or holding hands, or going for walks, or chatting together about the day's events, or looking into each other's eyes, or simply *rubbing along* together (sharing the same space), which are, on the face of it, beneficial not because they serve some further end of either party, but because the parties accord non-instrumental value to them. When parties engage in such activities they do so *disinterestedly*, for they need have no further end – no “completion” – in sight; the activities are valued as ends in themselves, and are so simply because they are carried out by one and one's lover. Moreover, couples derive distinctive benefits from discovering new activities of these sorts, or new ways to engage in activities of these sorts, new ways to hold and touch and regard each other.

In saying that these activities are performed disinterestedly, I do not mean to deny that each party derives pleasure from them. The claim is that neither party engages in these activities *in order* to further some end or interest distinct from the activity itself, including the end of experiencing pleasure.<sup>63</sup> Or rather, the claim is that this is so just when romantic lovers derive distinctive benefits from such activities. The pleasure that often accompanies such activities is not unimportant, however. It is important for a number of reasons, not least because it confirms each party's appreciation of the activity as valuable: the pleasure provides one with a *way of knowing* that the activity is

indeed valued.<sup>64</sup> Still, it is, I submit, a distortion to say that activities of the relevant sorts are performed by lovers *in order* that pleasure be felt.

In saying that these activities are performed disinterestedly, I do not mean simply to deny that they are driven by any self-regarding or egoistic motive. I mean also to deny that they are driven by any other-regarding or altruistic motive. It is not just that neither party engages in such activity in order to further some end or interest of his own (such as that of feeling pleasure). Neither party engages in such activity in order to further some end or interest of the other one (such as that of feeling pleasure).

It is for these reasons that I did not include, among my examples, the joint activity standardly held to be a paradigm instance of those distinctively engaged in by romantic lovers, *viz.* sex, or “sexual gratification”, as Frankfurt unromantically puts it. Sometimes – often, perhaps – when a couple, even a loving couple, has sex, each party does have a further end or “completion” in mind: their own orgasm and/or their partner’s orgasm. Hence, if we narrow our focus to the case of sex, it is easy to agree with Frankfurt that romantic love is beset with “calculated or implicit expectations”. But snuggling up, going for walks, and chatting together, are unlike sex in this regard.

The sorts of activities from which business and creative partners, and co-conspirators derive distinctive benefits differ importantly from the ones I have mentioned. Even when such partners are very close, such that they desire to form a Nozickian *we* with each other, and also *Frankfurt* each other, the shared activities distinctive of their relationships are performed with a further end in sight, be it the closing of a deal, or the production of an artwork, or the pursuit of an ideal or cause.

What is the best *explanation* of the fact that romantic lovers value engaging in certain shared activities, and finding new ones to engage in, as ends in themselves, whereas business and creative partners, even *loving* business and creative partners do not? Presumably, it is a difference in the ways in which such partners love each other. But, I hazard, neither Frankfurt nor Nozick can plausibly thus explain the difference.

Consider Frankfurt first of all. Since the activities are pursued with no further end in sight, it cannot be that, in engaging in them, either party is acting on the reasons given to him by his Frankfurtian love for the other, *i.e.* that he acts in order serve the other’s interests or flourishing. For the same reason, it cannot be that he acts in order to serve his own interests or flourishing. Frankfurt might take a more nuanced view, however. He might say that whilst lovers do not participate in such activities *in order* to serve such interests, they value such activities because they *express* love for the other, and/or love for oneself, and/or the hope and expectation that one is beloved of the other. I reply that, whilst such activities *are* plausibly held to be valued because they play an expressive role, what are expressed are not attitudes of these sorts. For attitudes of these sorts are expressed by one’s doing something *for* or *to* the beloved, whilst (as one

hopes) they do something similar *for* or *to* one. And this is a forced, unnatural way of describing the activities in question. They are more naturally described as the doing of something *with* another (e.g. chatting with them, walking with them etc.). It is hard to see how doing something with another can be expressive of concern one has *for* them, or *for* oneself, or of a hope that such concern is returned.

Now consider Nozick. One might think that he is in a better position to account for the distinctive value that lovers ascribe to the relevant activities. For he may say that the activities are valued because they express the shared autonomy, well-being and identity that the romantic lovers have and desire to continue to have. No doubt there is some truth in the observation that the activities express a shared well-being and identity. But, first, this doesn't account for their *distinctive* value, for, again, the activities of business and creative partners, and co-conspirators, can play a similarly expressive role. And, second, it is hard to see how such activities could express a shared *autonomy*, conceived of, à la Nozick, as a capacity for joint decision. For, more often than not, agents do not jointly *decide* to engage in such activities, and, by so doing, settle open practical questions that they severally or collectively face. Rather, they feel *bound* to engage them. If anything, it is not a shared capacity for choosing, but constraints on capacities to choose, that the activities express. They are valuable, in part, because the parties could not *but* engage in them, on at least some occasions when the opportunity arises. As Frankfurt might put it, each is unable to form "determined and effective" intentions "regardless of what motives and reasons he may have for doing so... to perform (or to refrain from performing)". Hence, sometimes, no matter how urgent the requirement to clean the house, or get on with one's work, snuggling up, chatting together, and so on are *irresistible*. Nevertheless these constraints are not experienced as coercive. Again, as Frankfurt might say, "[i]t is by our own will, and not by any external or alien force, that we are constrained."

These considerations suggest a hypothesis. Each lover participates, with the other, in doing things of the mentioned sorts out of *Frankfurtian love*: his love for the activities, which, in turn, is expressive of his love for the plurality of agents of them. The latter love has the four features Frankfurt lists, it is disinterested, rigidly focussed, identifying and involuntary. But it has, as its object, a plurality of people, oneself and one's partner. It is neither other-directed nor self-directed but *self-and-other-directed*. As Krebs has nicely said, "Love is neither altruistic nor egoistic; it is "nostristic"".<sup>65</sup>

The hypothesis accommodates Frankfurt's view almost completely. He is quite right about the nature of love, according to the hypothesis. It is just that he overlooks the possibility that love may have a plural object. In particular, he overlooks the possibility that each one of two lovers may love, not just the other but the *two of them*, collectively. Such love, I hypothesise, is distinctive of romantic love, it finds expression in doing things, of the sort described, *with* one's beloved, things valued for themselves, simply because they are expressive of such love for a plurality.

The hypothesis also accommodates Nozick's account in the following way. Whilst he is right to say that lovers want to form and sustain a *we*, what he neglects to observe is that something distinctive of romantic love is that the desire in question is no *mere* desire; it is Frankfurtian loving concern, which is, unlike the desires to form *wes* had by business or creative partners, both a disinterested, and an involuntary one.

Let me try to further explain the hypothesis by way of an analogy. Consider the giving of token gifts. One gives a token gift – a birthday card perhaps – not always in order that the recipient derive pleasure from the gift, or even from its receipt. Often one knows that little pleasure will be had. Rather, one judges that gift-giving is non-instrumentally valuable as an expression of one's love, a "token of one's affection", as it is said.<sup>66</sup> Likewise, one sometimes gives *oneself* a gift, for much the same reason. When one "treats oneself" to a hot bath, or new item of clothing, or walk in the woods, one's reason is sometimes likewise expressive: the treat is non-instrumentally valuable as an expression of one's loving concern for oneself ("because I'm worth it"). Likewise, I want to suggest, the sorts of shared activities under discussion resemble token gifts given, collectively, by a loving couple, *to* themselves. And they possess non-instrumental value as expressions of their loving concern *for* themselves.

The hypothesis seems to me to accord with the phenomenology of engaging in the sorts of activities that I have specified. What one *feels* is not 'I do this with you because I *Frankfurt* you, and I'm hopeful that you do this with me, for the same reason'. Rather, it is '*We* are doing this because each of us *Frankfurts us*'. In other words, the feeling that characteristically accompanies such activities is that they are expressive of a loving concern that the each of the parties bears towards *them* (plural).

Moreover, the hypothesis accounts for the fact that romantic partners do not merely value engaging in shared activities of the sort described, they also value discovering new activities of these sorts, or new ways to engage in activities of these sorts. For recall that, for Frankfurt, love motivates one, not merely to protect and promote the things loved by one's beloved, but to make "a genuine effort" to discover and understand what they love, to free them of ambivalence regarding what they love, and (where they love nothing) to assist them in "finding things to love". In just the same way, it seems to me, each of two romantic lovers are motivated, not only to protect and promote the things that they love to do together, but to try hard to understand what these things are, to free themselves of ambivalence regarding them, and (in the limiting case where they struggle to find any activities that they love to do together) to assist them in finding things that they love. Furthermore, this project is not merely one of discovering things that they *each* love, but one of finding things that they *together* love. In short, just as a lover wishes an *individual* whom he loves to be wholehearted with regard to what he loves, so a romantic lover wishes the *plurality* whom he loves to be,

as it were, *collectively* wholehearted with regard to the things that they love. This, I take it, is the truth in the cliché that two hearts may become one.

My proposal might be developed by exploiting Nozick's distinction between (as I have put it) stage one and stage two romantic love. At stage one, when the love is still "blossoming", it is characteristically accompanied by *uncertainties*. The lover is unsure as to whether he "really" loves the beloved, and as to whether he is "really" loved in return. He is unsure as to whether he and the beloved are right for (suited to, compatible with, good enough for) each other. Such uncertainty is one cause of the *hunger* and *excitement* that is characteristic of being in love: a hunger to *find out more* about the beloved, and also, about oneself, and excitement at the prospect of future encounters. But it can also generate anxiety: the fear that one may be making a mistake, or taking a considerable risk. As a consequence, those at this stage typically love hesitantly, even querulously. These uncertainties and their concomitant excitements and anxieties can account for many of the "distractions" described by Frankfurt: the strong emotions, the enjoyment of the other's company, together with its disinterested aspect. A lover at stage one does indeed seek something in return: what he seeks is that he be *loved* in return, a matter regarding which he is uncertain.

At stage two, however, uncertainty has lapsed, and its concomitant distractions have too. No doubt some strong emotions and enjoyment of the other's company are still typically present, but no more "distractingly" so than they are in the case of parental and self-love. What *is* still undeniably present are "urgent concerns" and "hopes" of the sort that trouble Frankfurt e.g. for "companionship, emotional and material security, sexual gratification, prestige, or the like". But Frankfurt is wrong to view these as "conspicuously or covertly self-regarding", and hence as *contaminating* the love that (as he allows) is present. For each stage two lover desires that these goods be acquired, not by him, and not by his beloved, but by them, collectively, and does so because he loves them, collectively. Strictly speaking, no doubt, Frankfurt is right to allege that each lover desires something "distinct from the well-being of the beloved", if by 'beloved' is meant, one's partner in love. But it is likewise distinct from the lover's *own* well-being: what is desired is *their* well-being. Moreover, whilst their well-being is distinct from the well-being of either one of them, it is not *disjoint* from it: after all, each one of them is one of the couple whose flourishing is desired.

In summary, it may be conceded to Frankfurt that *stage one* romantic love contains "elements, which do not belong to the essential nature of love as a mode of disinterested concern". It may also be conceded that these elements *distract* romantic lovers. Indeed, they may drive them to distraction. But they need not distract the *theorist*. It is an overstatement to say that these elements are "so confusing that they make it nearly impossible for anyone to be clear about just what is going on". Whilst they may make it hard for the lovers to know what is going on, the theorist ought not to be confused. All that is going on, at stage one, is the blossoming of love, as conceived

of by Frankfurt, accompanied by the uncertainty characteristic of such blossoming – such love is imperfectly disinterested *insofar* as it is fragile and new. At stage two, there is yet another love: love for the couple. There is now *no* disinterested element. Granted, each lover wants to *be with* his partner, but not in order that he do something *to* or *for* him, in the hope or expectation of something “in return”. The “yearnings” are not for “reciprocity”; they are for togetherness, and for its flourishing.

Of course, I do not mean to deny that those who love each other, in the romantic mode, have various egoistic motivations. What I mean to deny is that these are provided by, or in any way “mixed up with” their love. The necessities of living together, as many couples do, require one to enter mutually advantageous contracts, and to strike mutually advantageous bargains, out of enlightened self-interest. But the necessities of romantic love do not require that one *ever* acts out of plain self-interest.

What I have suggested so far is that we should think of romantic love as consisting in *inter alia* Frankfurtian love that *each* romantic partner has for the *two* of them. As one might put it, *they* are collectively beloved of each one of them. But it seems to me that, when romantic love flourishes, *they* are also, collectively, the *lovers* of themselves. For just as, as Frankfurt observes, one who loves other things, and who is motivated to better understand what he loves, and to extend both the scope and the wholeheartedness of his love, *thereby* loves himself, so, any couple who share a love for other things, and who are motivated to better understand what it is that they love, and to extend both the scope and the wholeheartedness of their shared love for other things, *thereby*, *collectively*, love themselves. Just as for one “[t]o be wholehearted [about what one loves] *is* to love oneself”<sup>67</sup>, so, for any couple to be collectively wholehearted about what they jointly love *is* for them to collectively love themselves.

A final corollary ought to be noted. Recall that, for Frankfurt, whilst self-love is pure, romantic love is impure. We are now in a position to see that, unless we unduly restrict our conception of self-love, this claim is self-contradictory. For romantic love *is* self-love. What it is *not* is singular self-love, i.e. an instance of a person’s loving himself. What it *is* is plural self-love, i.e. an instance of some persons’ loving themselves. Hence, if Frankfurt meant to speak quite generally about self-love, then his judgement that self-love is “the purest of all modes of love” is correct if and only if his judgement that romantic love is impure is incorrect. If, on the other hand, Frankfurt intended his claim of purity to apply only to cases of singular self-love, then nothing in what he has to say about such love, or about romantic love, supports his claim. At the very least, if what I have said is right, he owes us an explanation of why the love of one for oneself is pure, when the love of many for themselves is impure. My challenge to him is this: how can a difference of *number* make for one of *purity*?



## VII. Friendship

I have deliberately said little about friendship. My overriding concern has been to distinguish romantic love from the attitudes present in business and creative partnerships, and among co-conspirators. We saw that neither a Nozickian desire to form a *we*, nor Frankfurtian love of one for the other sufficed for such a distinction. What I have suggested is that plural Frankfurtian love, held, by the lovers, for *themselves* does suffice. But it may be thought that close friends also plurally instantiate self-love, in just the manner, and for just the reasons, that I have described.

I reply as follows. Whilst it is true that close friends may participate in plural self-love, they do not typically desire to form a Nozickian *we* each with the other. They may, of course, like romantic lovers, and business and creative partners, wish to “pool autonomy” to some extent, but they typically do *not* desire to pool their “public faces” and their “identities”: they do not want to “limit or curtail” their propensities to be publicly recognized, in order to collectively acquire some such propensity, or to “limit or curtail” their identities as individuals, in order to collectively some such identity. Hence the Nozickian desire is critical in distinguishing romantic love from the love of friends, just as plural Frankfurtian loving concern is critical in distinguishing it from the love of close associates. The reader will notice that I choose my words carefully. I say that friends do not *typically* have the Nozickian desire. What I now grant is that *when* and *insofar* as they have it, and also have Frankfurtian love (both each for the other, and of the plural reflexive variety), they do qualify as romantic partners, albeit romantic partners of a distinctively chaste variety. I am satisfied with this corollary. As is illustrated by the cases of Butch and Sundance, Sebastian and Charles, and Holmes and Watson, friendship can have a romantic cast.

## VIII. A logico-metaphysical appendix: the coherence of the notion of plural self-love

Some readers may be sceptical of the claim that love can be borne by anything other than an *individual*, to anything other than an *individual*. To them I offer this appendix. Loving is a textbook example of a non-symmetric dyadic relation. By that two things are standardly meant:

- (1) The relation has two argument places for the things that it relates.
- (2) The relation differentially applies to the occupants of its two places.

The standard way of understanding claim (1) is that loving is an incomplete entity. More particularly, it has two “gaps”. The relation is completed or “saturated” just when those gaps are filled, and they are filled just when the relation relates something that

loves, to something it loves. Finally, since loving is a universal, not a particular, there is, in principle, no limit to the number of occasions of its completion.

The standard way of understanding claim (2) is as follows. The relation of loving is inherently directional. Hence, whenever it relates things, it applies to the things it relates (the occupants of its argument places) *in a given order*. Hence, as it is sometimes put, whenever the relation is saturated, whatever occupies the first place bears the relation *to* whatever occupies the second place. A symmetric two-place relation is such that, for any things that saturate it, it applies to them in both directions. Hence, quite generally, it does not differentially apply to things. Or (to amend the letter but not the spirit of that claim), it applies differentially to any things it relates, but in both possible ways. A non-symmetric relation is not thus symmetric. It is not the case that for any things that saturate it, it applies to them in both directions. Hence, quite generally, it does differentially apply to things. Alternatively put, it is not the case that, for any things it relates, it applies differentially to them, in both possible ways. That is why if I love you, it does not follow that you love me.<sup>68</sup>

I have laboured these familiar points so as to distinguish them from a dogma with which they are often associated, but which they do not entail. The dogma is this:

- (3) An argument place is a place for exactly one thing.

I call it a dogma because (a) it is widely accepted; (b) it is unsupported by the theoretical assumptions underlying (1) and (2); and (c) it is contradicted by our pre-theoretical intuitions regarding dyadic relations, and *n*-adic relations more generally.

Re: (a), I have nothing to add to what other dissenters have noted. MacBride reports that in the *Principia*, Russell and Whitehead classify universals according to the number of entities by which they may be completed, thereby assuming without argument that, for any universal, there *is* some unique number of entities with which it combines. The assumption does not yet entail (3), but does when recast as a subtly stronger one (one which, as MacBride reports, has become “fossilized in the textbook strata”), *viz.* that for any relation, the (supposedly) unique number of entities by which it may be completed also numbers its argument places.<sup>69</sup> Oliver and Smiley suggest that the rot set in even earlier, first in Peirce’s claim, in his “The Logic of Relatives”, that “every relationship concerns some definite number of correlates”, defended by what Oliver and Smiley call a “lame” analogy with a particular theory of chemical valency contested even in Peirce’s time, and long since discredited, and later in Frege, who, whilst mostly concerned with predicates, not the relations or (on his view) functions they name, restricted his focus to ones that always combine with a fixed number of singular variables or terms, and sought to analyse away natural language sentences that appear to use predicates of a different sort.<sup>70</sup> As MacBride, and Oliver and Smiley, lament, the influence of these founders of modern logic on our thinking about relations,

which has, in part been mediated by their influence on more recent influential authors like Armstrong,<sup>71</sup> Dummett<sup>72</sup> and Strawson,<sup>73</sup> has been immense.

Re: (b), the theory underlying (1) is of childlike simplicity. The main theoretical primitive is the notion of a *gap*, a gap that may be *plugged*. And as any workman knows, in the ordinary way of things, a gap may be plugged by many things as easily as it may be plugged by one. Similar remarks apply to the theory underlying (2). The main theoretical idea is that of *discriminable* gaps, gaps that may be distinguished either by their order, or intrinsic nature, or in some other way.<sup>74</sup> But again, as any workman knows, in the ordinary way of things, each one of some discriminable gaps may be plugged by many things as easily as it may be plugged by one. Hence, nothing in the theory that underlies (1) and (2) should give succour to (3).

Re: (c), it suffices to list some counter-examples. *Fighting* is dyadic. It has a gap for *whomsoever fights* and a gap for *whomsoever is fought*. But, as Morton noted, each gap may be filled by more than one thing. As he writes "...it can relate, say, four objects ('Adam and Bill fought... Yuri and Zero')." <sup>75</sup> Likewise, *causing* is dyadic.<sup>76</sup> It has a gap for *whatever it is that causes* and a gap for *whatever it is that is caused*. But, as MacBride notes, each gap may be filled by more than one thing. A man's death may be caused by a plurality of events. And such a plurality may have a plurality of effects, of which the man's death is but one. Hence as MacBride puts it, the relation "appears to relate different numbers of contributory causes to their joint effects".<sup>77</sup>

It may be countered that the fighting relation has gaps, not for "whomsoever" fights and is fought, but for a person (or animal) that fights, and a person (or animal) that is fought. Likewise, it may be objected and that the causing relation has gaps, not for "whatever it is" that causes and is caused, but for an event (or state of affairs etc.) that causes, and an event (or state of affairs etc.) that is caused. But the objection begs the question in favour of (3). There is no antecedent reason to doubt that, whenever a relation of fighting or causing is instantiated, its arguments are divided, by its argument places, not necessarily into two *things*, but into two *groupings* of things, groupings of, in principle, any cardinality. After all, I may think of *whomsoever is at the door* without prejudice as to their number: perhaps it is the postman at the door, perhaps it is some carol singers. And I may think of *whatever I eat for breakfast tomorrow* without prejudice as to its number: perhaps I will eat a cereal bar, perhaps I will eat some apples. Likewise, I may think of *whomsoever fights*, *whomsoever is fought*, *whatever it is that causes*, and the like, without prejudice as to their number. And that I may is evidence that these relations may relate some things to some things.

Similar points may be made about other *n*-adic relations. *Sitting in a circle* is monadic: it has a single gap for *whomsoever sits in a circle*. But this gap can be filled by any number of things. A flexible man can sit in a circle, but so can thirty schoolchildren. *Introducing* is triadic: it has a gap for *whomsoever introduces*, a gap for *whomsoever*

*is introduced* and a gap for *those to whom the introduced are introduced*. But each gap can be filled by any number of things. Bill can introduce Barack to George, but, equally, the Clintons can introduce the Obamas to the Bushes.

It may be objected that these alleged counter-examples do not refute (3). All they show is that many *predicates* have “gaps” each of which may be filled by a list of several *terms*, or by a term for a list of several things, i.e. a plural term. And, it may be urged, the existence and natures of predicates are an unreliable guide to the existence and nature of corresponding properties and relations. After all, ‘is not self-instantiated’ corresponds with no property, on pain of a version of Russell’s paradox.

I reply that whilst predicates are not the last word, they are the first word,<sup>78</sup> in that, if a predicate does not correspond with a property or relation, then there is an intuitive or theoretical reason why. In the case of ‘is not self-instantiated’ a reason may be given, but I see no such reason in the case of ‘fought’, ‘caused’, and the like.

An objector may persist, however. He may say that even though the theory underlying (1) and (2) does not support (3) and our pre-theoretic intuitions contradict it, it is nevertheless more credible than its negation, on general theoretical grounds. For a world in which it is true is *simpler* than one in which it is false; since simplicity is a virtue in a hypothesis, we have good reason to accept (3), rather than its negation.

I reply that simplicity is but *one* of the theoretical virtues. Another is explanatory power, which includes the power to “save the appearances”. Another is ontological economy. As far as I can see, the defender of (3) cannot save the appearance that relations like fighting and causing each sometimes relate some things to some things, *except* by offending against ontological economy. I now explain why.

Surely the most promising strategy for saving the appearances would be to find a way of showing that any truth that appears to predicate fighting, causing, or any like relation, of, in the first place, some things, and, in the second place, some things (or of, in the first place, some *thing*, and, in the second place, some things, or of, in the first place, some things, and, in the second place, some *thing*) may be analysed as one in which the relation is only ever predicated of, in the first place, a thing, and, in the second place, a thing. If this could be shown, then it would perhaps be reasonable to assume that any such *analysans* is a more perspicuous report than its *analysandum*, because the former and not the latter is consistent with (3), and simplicity is a virtue.

This is not the place for an exhaustive survey of every conceivable attempt at such analysis.<sup>79</sup> Suffice it to say that the most immediately plausible strategies of analysis *either* deliver an *analysans* that is inequivalent to its supposed *analysandum*, *or* offend against ontological economy. To see this, consider again Morton’s example:

- (i) Adam and Bill fought Yuri and Zero

At a first attempt, (i) might be analysed thus:

- (ii) Each one of Adam and Bill fought at least one of Yuri and Zero, and  
Each one of Yuri and Zero was fought by at least one of Adam and Bill

...which could be further analysed as a conjunction of disjunctions, thus:

- (iii) Either Adam fought Yuri or Adam fought Zero, and  
either Bill fought Yuri or Bill fought Zero, and  
either Yuri was fought by Adam or Yuri was fought by Bill, and  
either Zero was fought by Adam or Zero was fought by Bill.

But neither (ii) nor (iii) is equivalent to (i) as there are circumstances in which (i) is true and (ii) and (iii) false. For there are possible circumstances in which (i) is true, but in which neither Adam nor Bill fights anyone *by himself*. For Adam and Bill might together operate a two-man weapon (e.g. a piece of heavy artillery operable only by two people). Furthermore, it might at the same time be the case that Yuri and Zero together operate a like weapon, such that each pair forms a unified target for the other pair. So it is possible that neither Yuri nor Zero is *by himself* fought by anyone. Hence (i) can be true in circumstances in which *each conjunct* of (ii) and (iii) is false.

I see no way to patch this problem. And whilst other analyses are possible, e.g.

- (iv) A composite object (call it a team) made up of Adam and Bill fought a composite object (call it a team too) made up of Yuri and Zero,

or

- (v) An event of fighting was such that Adam partook of it (*qua agent*), and Bill partook of it (*qua agent*), and Yuri partook of it (*qua patient*) and Zero partook of it (*qua patient*), and no other people partook of it,

these offend against ontological economy by explicitly quantifying over entities – teams in the one case, events in the other – to which (i) is not explicitly committed.

This completes my case for (3)'s being a dogma that should not be assumed. Hence, whilst *loving* is a non-symmetric dyadic relation, relating *something that loves* to *something loved*, we should not assume that it always relates some *thing* that loves to some *thing* loved. In particular, we should not assume that it never relates *some things* to *themselves*, that is, that on no occasion of its completion it is completed by, in the

first place, some things, and, in the second place, those things. If the foregoing is right, an instance of romantic love is an instance of plural self-love, thus conceived.

---

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to participants in two events at the University of Manchester where some of this material was presented: *Love in Our World* (November 2008), and my M.Res. seminar on love (Autumn 2009).

<sup>2</sup> R. Nozick. (1989) *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations* New York: Simon & Schuster, ch. 8 “Love’s bond” pp. 69-70. (All subsequent Nozick references are to this text).

<sup>3</sup> p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> p. 73 fn.

<sup>8</sup> p. 71.

<sup>9</sup> p. 73.

<sup>10</sup> p. 70.

<sup>11</sup> p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> Nozick does say (p. 82) that “the romantic desire is to form a *we* with [a] particular person *and* with no other”, but I do not see how he can justify this claim. It may be true that the romantic desire is to form a *romantic we* (i.e. a romantic partnership) with one and no other, but in the absence of a fuller account of romantic desire, he cannot – as far as I can see – justify excluding the possibility that one who has this want *also* wants to form non-romantic (e.g. business or creative) partnerships with others.

<sup>13</sup> p. 71.

<sup>14</sup> H.G. Frankfurt. (2004) *The Reasons of Love* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 41. (Except where otherwise stated, all subsequent Frankfurt references are to this text).

<sup>15</sup> p. 79.

<sup>16</sup> p. 79.

<sup>17</sup> p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> p. 79.

<sup>19</sup> p. 39.

---

<sup>20</sup> p. 59.

<sup>21</sup> p. 90. See also pp. 57-59, and H.G. Frankfurt. (1999) *Necessity, Volition, and Love* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 7 “On the Usefulness of Final Ends”; ch. 14 “On Caring” pp. 177-8.

<sup>22</sup> p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> p. 59: “final ends are instrumentally valuable just because they are terminally valuable”; p. 61: “the benefit of loving accrues to a person only to the extent that he cares about his beloved disinterestedly”.

<sup>24</sup> p. 44. A similar claim can be found in Nozick pp. 81-2.

<sup>25</sup> p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> p. 61. Nozick has a similar thought (pp. 70-1): “Bad things that happen to your loved one happen to you... so too do good things”. But, insofar as I understand him, Nozick’s explanation of this is that a lover wishes to transfer some of his own well-being and identity to a shared pool. Hence, for Nozick, things that happen to your loved one do not *directly* happen to you; rather they happen to a *we* – or, more carefully, are desired by you to happen to a *we* – and thereby happen to you. Frankfurt offers no such explanation; for him, it seems, a lover’s investment in a beloved is unmediated by any such *we*.

<sup>27</sup> p. 80.

<sup>28</sup> p. 46 See also H.G. Frankfurt. (1988) *The Importance of What We Care About: philosophical essays* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 7 “The Importance of What We Care About”; H.G. Frankfurt. (1999) *Necessity, Volition, and Love* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 9 “On the Necessity of Ideals”; ch. 14 “On Caring” pp. 170-2.

<sup>29</sup> Frankfurt enters a caveat, however. (p. 46-7; p. 66 fn. 12) As one may love different things, to different degrees, one’s love for something may not constrain one’s will in this characteristic manner when one has a greater love for something else. Hence, whilst, in normal circumstances, Abraham’s love for Isaac excludes his having the ability to effectively will to kill him, there are possible circumstances (of the sort described by the story) in which this is not so, given his greater love for God.

<sup>30</sup> p. 46.

<sup>31</sup> p. 46.

<sup>32</sup> p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> pp. 65-6.

<sup>34</sup> p. 80.

<sup>35</sup> p. 80.

<sup>36</sup> H.G. Frankfurt. (1999) *Necessity, Volition, and Love* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 14 “On Caring” p. 165ff. The list also appears in Frankfurt’s Tanner Lectures, published as (2006) *Taking Ourselves Seriously & Getting It Right* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press p. 40ff.

---

<sup>37</sup> p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> It is interesting to contrast love, as understood by Frankfurt, with hate. I conjecture that hate resembles love in that (i) it consists “most basically” in a “disinterested concern” for the *ill-being* or *thwarting* of what is hated. Perhaps too (ii) the object of hate is hated *for itself*, not for its qualities. Certainly (iii) a hater “invests” himself in what he hates in that his *well-being* consists, in part, in its *ill-being*. But (iv) whilst hate is involuntary, it is not essential to hate, as it is to love, that its subject reflectively endorse the constraints that it imposes upon his will. One who hates may *hate* hating what he hates, or at least be ambivalent about this condition. By contrast, one who loves must be *satisfied* with his loving what he loves (even if he need not *love* this condition). One who is ambivalent about, or scornful of, the concern that he has for someone, or something, does not truly love that person, or thing.

<sup>39</sup> p. 85.

<sup>40</sup> p. 88.

<sup>41</sup> p. 87.

<sup>42</sup> See pp. 89-90, and p. 91ff. for more of Frankfurt’s views on the importance of wholeheartedness.

<sup>43</sup> pp. 89-90.

<sup>44</sup> p. 80.

<sup>45</sup> p. 81.

<sup>46</sup> p. 81.

<sup>47</sup> p. 82.

<sup>48</sup> p. 85.

<sup>49</sup> p. 88.

<sup>50</sup> p. 95: “Since [one freed of the disease of ambivalence] cares wholeheartedly about the things that are important to him, he can properly be said to be wholehearted in caring about himself. Insofar as he is wholehearted in loving those things, in other words, he wholeheartedly loves himself. His wholehearted self-love consists in, or is exactly constituted by, the wholeheartedness of his unified will.”

<sup>51</sup> p. 85: “[t]his love is necessarily derivative from, or constructed out of, the love that people have for things that are not identical with themselves”.

<sup>52</sup> p. 43.

<sup>53</sup> H.G. Frankfurt. (1999) *Necessity, Volition, and Love* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 14 “On Caring” p. 166.

<sup>54</sup> p. 83.



<sup>55</sup> H.G. Frankfurt. (1999) *Necessity, Volition, and Love* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 14 “On Caring” p. 166.

<sup>56</sup> p. 42.

<sup>57</sup> p. 42.

<sup>58</sup> p. 42.

<sup>59</sup> p. 42.

<sup>60</sup> p. 80.

<sup>61</sup> p. 71.

<sup>62</sup> p. 78.

<sup>63</sup> Here I am indebted to C. Vogler. (2002) *Reasonably Vicious* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, ch. 4 “Pleasure” p. 77 ff.

<sup>64</sup> Here I am indebted to E. Millgram. (1997) *Practical Induction* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, ch. 6 “How to Keep Pleasure in Mind”.

<sup>65</sup> A. Krebs. (forthcoming) “Dialogical love” *The Philosophy of Martha Nussbaum (Library of Living Philosophers)* Chicago, IL: Open Court, retrieved from <http://ethics-etc.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/krebs.pdf> (p. 2 on this pdf). H-B. Schmid. (2005) “‘Nostrism’: Social Identities in Experimental Games” *Analyse & Kritik* 27 p. 179, attributes the term ‘nostristic’ to Ortega y Gasset. As Schmid explains Ortega y Gasset’s idea, “‘Nostristic behavior’ is neither self-directed (or egoistic) nor other-directed (or altruistic) but oriented towards our shared goals and concerns”.

<sup>66</sup> Compare T.M. Scanlon. (2000) *On What We Owe to Each Other* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 252, on what he calls the *representative value* of choosing a gift for one’s beloved.

<sup>67</sup> p. 95.

<sup>68</sup> It is possible to account for the differential application of non-symmetric relations without supposing that they are inherently directional. K. Fine. (2000) “Neutral relations” *Philosophical Review* 109, considers two such accounts. On the first account, the argument places of such relations are, inherently, characterized by roles played by anything that occupies them. In the case of loving, there is the “lover” role and the “beloved” role. The relation differentially applies simply because to occupy the one role is not to occupy the other, and does not entail occupation of it. On the second account, differential application is grounded in the obtaining of relations between completions of relations. For example, if Anthony’s loving Cleopatra and Abelard’s loving Eloise are, as Fine puts it, “co-mannered”, that is, if the relation applies to its relata, in both cases, *in the same way*, then Cleopatra’s loving Anthony is not co-mannered with either completion. So, when one loves, and when one is loved, one saturates the loving relation, but in ways distinguished by the class of *other* completions of it, with which one’s saturation of it is co-mannered.

<sup>69</sup> F. MacBride. (2005) “The Particular-Universal Distinction: A Dogma of Metaphysics” *Mind* 114 pp. 568-571.

- 
- <sup>70</sup> A. Oliver and T.J. Smiley. (2004) “Multigrade Predicates” *Mind* 113 pp. 632-638.
- <sup>71</sup> D.M. Armstrong. (1978) *Universals and Scientific Realism* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Vol. II ch. 19, “Relations”.
- <sup>72</sup> M.A.E. Dummett. (1981) *Frege: philosophy of language* London: Duckworth p. 24.
- <sup>73</sup> P.F. Strawson. (1974) *Subject and Predicate in Logic and Grammar* London: Methuen p. 5, p. 23.
- <sup>74</sup> See note 68.
- <sup>75</sup> A. Morton. (1975) “Complex Individuals and Multigrade Relations” *Noûs* 9 p. 310.
- <sup>76</sup> Although see J. Schaffer. (2005) “Contrastive Causation” *Philosophical Review* 114 for the dissenting view that it is a four-place relation.
- <sup>77</sup> F. MacBride. *op. cit.* p. 579.
- <sup>78</sup> I paraphrase J.L. Austin. (1970) *Philosophical Papers* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 185: “...ordinary language is *not* the last word: in principle it can everywhere be supplemented and improved upon and superseded. Only remember, it *is* the *first* word.”
- <sup>79</sup> For more thorough surveys, see A. Oliver and T.J. Smiley. (2001) “Strategies for a Logic of Plurals” *Philosophical Quarterly* 51; T. McKay. (2006) *Plural Predication* Oxford: Oxford University Press, ch. 2 “Against Singularism”; B-U. Yi. (2005) “The Logic and Meaning of Plurals. Part I” *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 34, and (2006) “The Logic and Meaning of Plurals. Part II” *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 35.