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Love and Reason

Reflections on Themes from Peter Goldie

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In the paper that Peter Goldie contributed to a special memorial issue of *Emotion Review* on the work of Bob Solomon, he expresses his appreciation for the Cole Porter song about love ‘making a fool out of me’. Nevertheless, he insists that love is neither generally *irrational*, nor simply *arational*. Love is not an affliction that ‘might have a causal explanation, as might a bruised leg’, but without ‘anything to do with reason as such’ (Goldie 2010: 61). Solomon, he writes, ‘made neither of these mistakes. He saw love as an essentially human emotion, with a complex intentional structure, having its own kind of reasons. However, I think his broadly cognitivist account tends to mask the deep and important differences between love and other emotions.’

Goldie goes on to argue against four sceptical or deflationist views about love: that there is no such thing as love; that love is socially constructed; that it is really just something else, ‘nothing but sex misspelled’, for example, or ‘a redirected desire for parental love’; or that it is ‘nothing but brain states’. He then discusses a particularly knotty problem, about the relation of love to its *objects* and the *reasons* for loving that those objects provide. To that problem, which has been troubling both philosophers (in theory) and lovers (in practice) for two and a half millennia, Goldie provides a new and original twist on a solution favoured by Bob Solomon and several others.

I first want to expand a little on what Goldie says in reply to these deflationary views, but I will also attempt to cast the views themselves in a slightly more favourable light. Even if they are not correct, the considerations that motivate them are worth attending to. This will lead me to distinguish between different ‘things called love’, and to suggest that the differences between them may suffice to undermine the unity of love. At least some forms of love seem to be ‘for reasons’. I offer a taxonomy of the objects of love that can help us to grasp what is at issue in four closely related puzzles between love, its objects, its reasons, and its causes. To these puzzles, the solution most often favoured rests on the idea of ‘historicity’. I will describe the advantages of Goldie’s special twist on that solution. Finally, I will look at the bearing on all this of some of Goldie’s positions on narrativity in *The Mess Inside*.

9.1 What Love Is Not

Peter discusses four kinds of deflationary views: that the word ‘love’ simply lacks a referent; that the concept is ‘socially constructed’ in some sense that makes it illusory; that love is ‘really’ something else, either mere sexual attraction or parental attachment; and that it consists in ‘nothing but’ brain states. He gives good reasons for rejecting each.

In philosophy, the claim that something (such as the solid objects of the material world) ‘doesn’t exist’ is sometimes refuted by kicking a solid object; a stubbed toe then passes for an existence proof. Another approach is the ‘paradigm case argument’ once popular in Oxford: this claimed to establish the existence of free will by pointing to a smiling bride, for example; for what more could you possibly want than that? Both forms of argument have been denigrated; but in the case of love, there may be enough intersubjective agreement about the identification of cases of love to support the assumption that it exists. While we might disagree on just what they all have in common, it would be absurd not to concede that there is something there to be referred to.

On the claim that love is ‘socially constructed,’ Goldie makes an illuminating analogy with language: ‘there is a myriad of different human languages, and which particular language you speak depends on your particular culture. But still, at a deeper level, there is a shared form that all human languages take, and which is constrained by certain aspects of our human nature’ (Goldie 2010: 62).

Against the claim that love is ‘really’ something else, such as sex or parental love, Goldie adduces two reasons: one is simply that neither parental love nor sex really makes a plausible candidate. (Actually, as I’ll suggest later, infantile attachment might stake a better claim). Second, Goldie borrows from the fourth objection to undermine this one. If, as the fourth objection claims, there are very specific brain phenomena associated with feelings of love, that might support the ‘nothing but’ contention; but at the same time the identification of such distinctive states, measurable by such tools as MRI machines, will underpin love’s uniqueness.

The last form of scepticism, based on the claim that love is ‘nothing but’ this or that set of brain processes, faces a compelling problem of its own. If love is ‘nothing but’ a specific sort of brain condition, then the asymmetry that constitutes the rhetorical force of the reductionist thesis is annulled. For if A is identical to B, then B is identical to A, and it follows logically that anything true of the former is also true of the latter. If love is transcendent and exalting, and also identical to brain state X, then brain state X is transcendent and exalting, and there is no deflating force in the identity statement.

These are all good points. But perhaps the deflationary arguments can be cast in a somewhat more positive light.

The question of whether there is or is not such a thing as love is a little like the question of whether God exists. Among those willing to discuss that question, theism generally faces not one but two rather different adversaries: atheism and agnosticism. The two often amount to much the same in practice, yet they feel very different, and

contrast most markedly in their attitude to the difficulty of pinning down a definition of God. The agnostic position infers from that difficulty that although I may feel quite safe in rejecting certain conceptions of God—Shiva, or Zeus, for example—someone somewhere might have a definition of God that referred to something real. The atheist, by contrast, dwells on the nonexistence of all the gods actually staking a claim, including Shiva and Zeus and the Judaeo-Christian God. Against the alternatives actually on offer, the evidence is overwhelming. That is not to deny that someone somewhere might use the word with an identifiable reference. But that needn't worry the atheist: for one can hardly be bound to endorse an utterance merely because in some language it might mean something true.

Bertrand Russell called himself an agnostic, but he was really closer to atheism in the sense just sketched. It seems to have been the policeman who booked him into a jail cell who was the agnostic. When asked his religion, Russell said 'agnostic'. After asking how to spell it, the policeman remarked, philosophically, 'I suppose we all worship the same God in our different ways'. (Russell reported that this kept him cheerful in his cell for a whole week.) If it really doesn't matter how you define God, then to believe in God must presuppose that there is some important, indeed essential feature in common between all those definitions, and that everyone's faith is directed at that common core. The atheist, by contrast, wants to insist that if we do not know what we are talking about, then it literally makes no sense to say that *'it'* exists.

That, I think, is analogous to what lies behind the contention that there is no such thing as love. If different people can apply the term to completely different circumstances, then there must be, for each such ascription, a set of truth conditions. But there need be no such thing as *'a thing called Love'*. Perhaps the word is simply ambiguous, and loves share no more common essence than do money banks and riverbanks.

There are good reasons to claim that there are three psychological processes or 'syndromes'—I will try to justify this term in a minute—each of which is sometimes referred to as love. Sometimes they go together; often, they shade into or turn into one another; but they are sufficiently different, and sufficiently often experienced independently, to suggest that as a matter of linguistic hygiene one should not use the same word for all three.

9.2 Three Kinds of Love

From the evolutionary point of view, love is about mating, and mating, like everything else, is ultimately about gene replication. The connection with our own goals and reasons is at best indirect. But we can understand something about the origins of our goals and reasons by adverting to the sub-tasks involved in gene replication. Although the mechanisms used to secure it are astoundingly diverse, one can think of efficient mating as accomplishing four sub-tasks. The first three govern adults: actual mating (sexual intercourse); assortment (mate choice); and infant care. The fourth sub-task complements the third, and constrains the successful infant: it consists in forming an

attachment to the caregiver. This rather cut-and-dried identification of the biological tasks of gene replication is confirmed by the fact that their implementation involves distinct patterns of brain chemistry. Goldie cites Helen Fisher's studies of love (Goldie 2010: 62), which can be summarized (with considerable oversimplification), as identifying different 'loves' in terms of four parameters: (a) the *type* of 'love', it is; (b) the specific sub-task it promotes for the sake of the overall task of mating, (c) the principal neurotransmitters dominantly involved; and (d) the length of time it typically lasts. (Fisher 1998: 2004).

1. **Lust** is (a) the immediate drive to mate 'with almost any semi-appropriate partner'; (b) it drives sexual intercourse; (c) its dominant neurotransmitters are a combination of androgens (testosterone) and estrogens; (d) its duration is measured in hours or minutes.
2. **Limerence** (a) is what Fisher and almost everyone else calls *intense romantic love*. The term 'limerence' was invented by Dorothy Tennov (1979) to emphasize its distinctive character. (b) Its function is to 'enable [us] to focus [our] courtship attentions on a single individual at a time, thereby conserving precious mating time and energy' (Fisher 2004: xiv). It is experienced as obsessive and exclusive preoccupation with the lover, desire for their presence and constant reciprocation, etc. (c) its dominant neurotransmitters are catecholamines (nor-epinephrine, dopamine), and (d) its typical duration is measured in weeks or months—generally up to a maximum of three years.
3. **Attachment** (a) is the kind of love that is not in itself sexual, but which can arouse the most intense distress upon loss. It appears to be governed by a distinct brain circuit that Jaak Panksepp has dubbed the 'panic circuit' (Panksepp 1998; 2005). (b) It is designed 'to enable our ancestors to live with this mate at least long enough to rear a single child through infancy together' (Fisher 2004: 78). But its roots may lie in the function of an infant and parent's attachment to one another (Bartels and Zeki 2004). (c) Its characteristic neurotransmitters are oxytocin and vasopressin. (d) The typical duration of attachment is indefinite, and is reckoned in years rather than months.

Given the distinct psychological and neural profiles of lust, limerence, and attachment, it would seem reasonable to assume that some ways of fitting them all into a life plan might be easier to achieve than others. It is perfectly true, as Goldie writes, 'that love, as such, can indeed remain after the first flush of love has gone' (Goldie 2010: 61). But if what remains is *attachment* and what is gone is *limerence*, the claim that 'love remains' trades on the ambiguity of the word 'love'.

These facts cast a new light on the question of whether love is 'socially constructed'. Just as Goldie suggested in his analogy with language, the existence of a natural faculty leaves plenty of room for differences. Even if each one of the three kinds of love I have sketched realizes a natural capacity, it is *ideology* that determines when one will be

viewed as experiencing ‘true love’. In our culture, it seems to be a widespread social fact that one is not entitled to make that claim unless one is subject to *all three syndromes at the same time*. Unfortunately, the differences noted in the temporal aspect, if nothing else, virtually guarantees that this will hardly ever be the case. And that, in turn, might provide some justification both for the deflationary view that rejects the very existence of love, and for the claim that it is socially constructed.

Goldie has drawn attention to the contrast between *emotions* (short-term feelings) and *sentiments*, which he speaks of as *dispositions*. Here is his explanation:

The sentiment will be expressed in a characteristic but highly diverse range of occurrent emotions, as well as in other thoughts and feelings, including motivations to perform various kinds of action. For example, it will be expressed in a feeling of joy when Mary’s plans work out well, in delight when she arrives at the train station after being away for a week, in anger if another person says something rude about Mary behind her back, in fear and worry if Mary has what might turn out to be a serious illness, in motivation to help her when in trouble, and so forth.

(Goldie 2010: 61)

This great variety extends not only in the actions that can be traced to the emotion, but to the specific occurrent emotions to which it can give rise. It differs in this way from an emotional disposition such as long-term resentment or anger. Long-term anger can motivate many actions, but insofar as feelings are aroused by the relevant triggers, they will mostly be feelings of *anger*. When we use the word ‘sentiment’, then, we should remember that the phenomenon in question really is significantly different from other emotions. Indeed, I am tempted to conclude that although there is something (of perhaps two slightly different emotions) we refer to as ‘feelings of love’ or ‘loving feelings’, love is not actually an emotion. I will go along with calling it a sentiment, but I’ve also been tempted to call it a *syndrome*, in that loving can occasion jealousy, rage, anxiety, hope, or indeed practically any emotion you can think of in different circumstances.

Before broaching some specific puzzles about love, I need to do a bit more taxonomy. This time, it’s about what it is to be the ‘object of love’. Attending to some complications in this concept will help us understand the puzzles they give rise to.

Goldie rightly remarks that, from the logical or grammatical standpoint, love doesn’t seem to work in the same way as fear (Goldie 2010: 64). Neither does it work like belief or desire. All these states are intentional attitudes. Belief and desire are directed at propositions; neither fear nor love is. But belief and desire can furnish a good starting point for setting up a taxonomy of objects. Goldie says attitudes involve both a *stance* and a *focus* (Goldie 2010: 63). Belief and desire are different stances, but they can focus on the same thing, namely a proposition. Furthermore, whether they are justified or not depends on the standards of appropriateness for that attitude. For belief, that is truth. For desire, it is goodness. For fear, it is dangerousness. Each answer is trivially correct in reply to the question: Why do you S it? ‘I believe it because it’s true’; I want it because it’s good; I fear it because it’s dangerous. That special kind of ‘object’ is what philosophers call the ‘formal object’ of belief, wanting, and fear,

respectively. But what is the ‘it’ we keep referring to? For fear as well as for love, there is a person or thing at which the attitude is directed. Call that the *target* of the emotion. And there are also features or properties of the target, in virtue of which it arouses fear or love: what it is, about the target, that makes it fearsome, or lovable: Goldie speaks of the ‘focus’ of an attitude, but in his usage the term seems to be ambiguous between the target and its properties. Confusing the target, its focal properties, and the emotion’s formal object makes trouble both theoretical and existential, as we shall see. So Goldie’s ‘focus’ should be bifurcated into *target* and *focal properties*.

When judging whether an attitude is justified or fitting, we look to whether in actual fact the *target* has *focal properties* that match the attitude’s *formal object*. Suppose I’m frightened of a dog, for example, because it is fierce. The dog is the target, its fierce disposition is the focal property that underpins the belief that it is dangerous. But that’s not yet the end of complications. A handy and vague way to think of an emotion’s object is that it is *what we take to be its cause*; but we can be wrong about causes. So we need yet one more distinction. If my fear of the dog is actually unrelated to any actual properties of the dog, but is caused entirely by my dog phobia, then the dog is the *target* of my anger without really being its *cause*, because it doesn’t actually have the *focal property* that would justify fear.

How does this work for love? Romeo loves Juliet (the target) because she is ‘fair’ (the focal property) which underpins her being lovable (the formal object of love). But is her being fair really the *cause* of the attitude? Lots of girls are fair. It’s at least possible that the most important cause is Juliet’s resemblance to Romeo’s mother; or some love potion that has been poured into his drink; or some purely reflexive attraction due to pheromones of which no one is aware.

These features of different sorts of object are summarized in the following table:¹

Table: A taxonomy of objects

Attitude	Formal object	Target	Focus	Causal efficacy
Fear	Dangerousness	[dog]	fierceness, rabies	perception of focal property; OR...phobia etc.
Anger	Deliberate injury	[person]	insulting character	perception of insult; OR too much coffee, etc.
Love	Lovability	[person]	fair, gentle	fair, gentle, etc. OR transference; OR unconscious memory, pheromones, etc.

I think we can now see more clearly why Goldie said that the case of love is very different from that of other emotions. We can also see how, in the traffic between focal

¹ The table, as well as some of the substance of section 9.2 and section 9.3, are adapted from my 2015.

property and cause, there lie important questions, not merely theoretical but existential, about the ‘real’ causes and reasons of ‘true’ love. Unless these notions are kept distinct, we are bound to find confusion in the minds of lovers and absurdities in the minds of philosophers. What follows is a sampling.

9.3 Love’s Paradoxes: Objects and Reasons

Among the many puzzling aspects of love, there are four that relate to its connection with reason, and to the nature of love’s object:

9.3.1 *Diotima’s paradox*

In Plato’s *Symposium*, the most famous passage concerns what is often referred to as the Ladder of Love: something that Socrates allegedly learned from a priestess, Diotima. The true object of love, Diotima claims, is the beautiful. When you are in love with a beautiful boy, you love him because of his beauty; his beauty is the reason for your love. But as soon as you realize that, you must also realize that the same reason commends any number of other boys as well. You should then, in consistency, extend your love to any and all other boys, whenever that reason applies. Generalizing still further, Socrates then claims that even that is not abstract enough: it is really beautiful *institutions* you should love, and ultimately, at the purest level, just beauty itself:

And if, my dear Socrates, man’s life is ever worth the living, it is when one has attained this vision of the very soul of beauty... once you have seen it, you will never again be seduced by the charm of... comely boys, or lads just ripening to manhood; you will care nothing for the beauties that used to take your breath away and kindle such passionate longing in you.

(*Symposium*: 211)

In short, if we love someone *for* their qualities, and if reasons function in the usual way (in the spirit of the Kantian criterion which mandates that a reason on one occasion should be a reason on any suitably similar occasion), then one is led to Diotima’s conclusion: you should love all the other beautiful boys equally, and ultimately trade them all in for Beauty Itself.

9.3.2 *Love and transference*

Various examples can be found in literature of cases where confusion arises about what is to count either as the *focal properties* or the *target* of love. The very idea that one might be mistaken about the ‘object’ of an intentional state has been controversial.² But there are ways in which one might be confused or mistaken about the target of one’s own love.

² Many years ago, Elizabeth Anscombe told the following story in a lecture on pleasure and its objects. ‘Someone I know very well [in another version ‘Peter Geach’ was named] fell asleep while he was engaged in the act of fucking; and as he slept, he dreamt he was shovelling coal, and taking a great deal of pleasure in this activity. Then he woke up, realized what he was really doing, and exclaimed: “Good heavens! I was mistaken in the object of my pleasure!”’

Goldie discusses ‘Alcmene’s problem’: Zeus, desiring the mortal wife of Amphitryon, comes to her in Amphitryon’s absence as *Amphitryon*. Being Zeus, he is able to assume all of Amphitryon’s properties while he is with Alcmene. Now if the man who makes love to her that night is identical to Amphitryon in every qualitative sense, why should Alcmene mind? She minds, we might answer, because in this case the target of her lust is not in fact identical with the target of her attachment or limerence.

More puzzling is the case of Roxane, in *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Roxane thinks she loves Christian, not just because he is handsome and brave, but because, as she falsely believes, he is the author of the fine poetic words actually spoken or composed for him by Cyrano. Years later, long after Christian has been killed in war, Roxane insists she would love Christian for his poetic wit, even if he were ugly. Ignoring the fact that she might be mistaken about that counterfactual, does that mean she *really* loved Cyrano all along? Whom then does Roxane love?

Here we can glimpse the potential conflict between her own and the observer’s narrative in her life. Narrative is the topic of Goldie’s last book, and I shall return at the end of this chapter to the bearing that his views might have on our understanding of love. In the case of Roxane, Sue Campbell (1997) has argued that history has already decided against the interpretation of her love as directed at Cyrano. In kissing Christian, in marrying Christian, and mourning him for many years, she has fixed the target of her attachment and it is now unalterable. If Campbell is right about this, then perhaps in this case the historicity of love produces the wrong verdict: depending on how the story is told, perhaps the ascription should have gone with the focal properties, not with the target. For without Cyrano’s wit, there never would have been any kind of love triggered in Roxane at all. The narrative of her love wouldn’t even have got started.

A third and perhaps more worrying case for the average person is the question posed by Freud: is my love, or is perhaps *all* love, really ‘transference’? That word designates a phenomenon that Freud noticed in several of his patients: they seemed to ‘fall in love with’ the therapist. Since the Freudian analyst is supposed to maintain a scrupulous blandness, so that the patient can project emotions onto him as on a blank slate, this ‘love’ is not really directed at the therapist, who has none of the focal properties to which the patient’s ‘love’ is referred. And yet the therapist definitely seemed to be the target (Freud 1915).

But, Freud asked, what if our adult attachments are actually rehearsals of infantile attachments? The close resemblance between the brain signature of erotic and maternal love, noted by Bartels and Zeki (2004), suggests that a similar investigation might find support for this hypothesis, if one found that the baby’s attachment, not just the mother’s, also involved similar patterns in the brain. But whatever brain science might have to say about it, Freud is raising once again the question: who is the *real* target of my love? Is it really my father, or mother, or some long-lost love from my early childhood, like the little girl in Humbert Humbert’s childhood whom he tries to recapture with Lolita? Or does it rightly belong with a bundle of properties that I rightly or wrongly attribute to the target?

9.3.3 *Being loved for oneself*

For the point of view of the beloved, the idea that you love me because of my resemblance (real or projected) to someone else is bound to arouse anxiety: it leads me to think it isn't really me you love. If love has its reasons, they must be the right reasons, and my looking like your father, no less than possessing a yacht, or yellow hair—these are all the wrong sorts of reasons. More generally, the right reasons must be ones that are not merely superficial, ephemeral, or, above all, merely projective, unconnected with the essential properties of the beloved. If you love me, love me for myself alone.³ Intuitively, this seems important to the beloved, and it is often used, by the lover's critics, to distinguish love from 'mere infatuation'. But there are two problems about this. One is empirical: when you actually ask people why they love someone, they are unlikely to give answers that fit closely with what their beloved themselves would identify as their essential or most important qualities and aspirations. When you ask people about what they would like to be loved for, the answers are disconcerting, at least for anyone but one of the cynics that Goldie was concerned to rebut. Forty one per cent of American women, it has been alleged, would choose to have large breasts rather than a high IQ. And as for men? The words from a Leonard Cohen speaks to that too: '*You came to me this morning/And you handled me like meat/You'd have to be a man to know/How good that feels, how sweet.* So what is the essential me that you should love me for? Do we all, like Othello, want to be loved for the stories we tell ourselves and others about our own lives?⁴ In his last book, Goldie stresses that telling a story about yourself is not an essential part of your identity. But it *can* still be an important part of our conception of ourselves, our past, and our future. Unlike some 'narrativists', Goldie doesn't think that we are committed to any single story about ourselves. But *which* of the many stories I tell myself do I want to be loved for? Might I not sometimes want to be loved because of my self-deception rather than in spite of it?

There is also a conceptual problem about wanting to be loved for oneself alone. Strictly speaking, that demand is incompatible with being loved for reasons. For if we love an

³ I heard an old religious man
But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
that only God, my dear,
could love you for yourself alone
and not your yellow hair.
(Yeats 1996: 208).

These lines from 'For Anne Gregory', cited by Goldie (and many others) are a classic exhibit in this conversation.

⁴ My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
...
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I loved her that she did pity them.
(*Othello*, I:3)

individual for himself alone, and love ‘alters not when it alteration finds’ then no reason can be either necessary or sufficient (Rorty 1988). If the reason were necessary, one would cease to love when that feature altered. (And, of course, if the reason were sufficient, then one is thrown back to rehearsing at least the first step of Diotima’s paradox.)

Must we conclude that if I love you for yourself alone, I must love you completely without reason? And, for that matter, without cause as well? For the crucial difference between cause and reason is that only the latter is capable of constituting a justification. And clearly the problem of change—the loss of love when its reasons are gone—has nothing to do with whether the ‘reasons’ in play are ordinary causes, or the justifying kind of causes we call ‘reasons’.

There are three possible avenues of escape. All employ the strategy of extending our understanding of the applicable notion of a *property*. One purely technical way of doing this is to posit that there is a property, *ipseity*, which belongs exclusively to any individual. Only Socrates is Socrates; only Peter Goldie was Peter Goldie. But while this device might satisfy the logician, it sounds too much like cheating.

9.3.4 *Love and the Euthyphro problem*

There are more promising ways. One, favoured by Harry Frankfurt, is the view that the crucial properties that constitute the reason for love are somehow bestowed on the beloved by the lover (Frankfurt 2004). The idea of ‘bestowing’ the properties that constitute the ‘reasons’ for love is reminiscent of Stendhal’s ‘crystallization’ (Stendhal 1975). Stendhal’s metaphor is drawn from the experience of putting a twig in the salt mines: soon the twig glistens with lovely crystals. Similarly, love envelops the loved one with virtues that sparkle in the lover’s eye. But are they *really there*? Or are they *arbitrarily bestowed*, as the lover’s friends are sometimes inclined to protest?

Bestowal could mean either of two things. It could mean that I’m attributing to you a quality you don’t really have. But it might also mean that I’m bestowing nothing on you, as the *target*, but bestowing fresh *value* on some of your actual *focal properties*. This interpretation is supported by the passage Goldie quotes: ‘what we love necessarily acquires value for us because we love it’ (Frankfurt, 2004: 38–9). Goldie also cites Solomon’s remark that ‘we bestow charms and virtues on the beloved’ (Goldie 2010: 65).

In any case, Frankfurt’s idea is a way of finessing what might be described as a fourth paradox concerned with love and reason, a descendant of the notorious *Euthyphro* problem. That originally took the form of Socrates’ challenge to a young man who claimed to be acting out of piety, which the latter defined as what the gods love: ‘Do the gods love it because it is pious, or is it pious because the gods love it?’ Generalized to any kind of love, the question becomes: *Are the crucial properties of my love the reason and cause of my love, or is my love the cause of their status as ‘reasons’ for my love?*

We could speculate that the mechanism underlying Frankfurt’s ‘bestowal’ functions on the basis of two well-known psychological facts, and involves a subtle interaction between love’s target and its focal properties. Here is how it might work. The first psychological fact is that familiarity in itself tends to produce liking (Zajonc 1980). Other

things being equal mere familiarity should make the heart grow fonder. (The fact that this often seems not to be the case may be due to all the other things that are not equal.) The second psychological fact is the power of simple, Pavlovian associative learning. Suppose, to pick up on Goldie's example, that James is attracted by Mary because she 'has the evaluative property of being lovable (in virtue of her being elegant, charming, intelligent, and a good cook)' (Goldie 2010: 64). So James takes up keeping company with Mary. If it so happens that Mary has carrot hair, then he will become *familiar* with her carrot hair, which will also, by association, become a Pavlovian trigger for the positive feelings originally occasioned by her elegance, charm, etc. Since James had felt no previous attraction for carrot hair, he then will seem to have gratuitously bestowed on Mary not her carrot hair but a second-order property of having carrot hair, namely *the lovability of carrot hair*. The hair colour is objective; but unlike the dangerousness that justifies fear, there is nothing in general about carrot hair that justifies love. Yet it may now, for James, pass for a 'reason' for love.

9.4 Narrative and Historicity

In the last chapter of *The Mess Inside*, Goldie concedes that the narrative of our own life is always perspectival, but rightly denies that perspective precludes objectivity (Goldie 2012). The attainment of objectivity, however, is complicated by the fact that in order to understand someone's life, we need a double perspective: we need to empathize with the subject's first-person perspective, and we need to assess, from an outside point of view, the appropriateness of that person's judgements. Thus, in the story he cites about the Latvian woman who blamed herself for being irritable after a fifteen-hour shift, one can detect empathy into her ~~own~~ perspective, and also the sense that the author regards her as excessively demanding on herself.

When we think about the point of view of a lover, the issue is even more complicated. As we have just seen, a person can have three views of her own preferred self: the official one (I want to be loved for my intelligence, my compassion, my musical gifts); the unreflective one, which might be altogether inarticulate (I want to be loved *for myself*); or, third, it might involve trivial desires that might officially be disavowed (I want her to love me for the gorgeous pecs I have worked so hard to cultivate). Each of those perspectives might be more or less appropriate, depending on one's ideological perspective. This multiplicity of perspectives in the beloved is mirrored in the lover: I want to love you for the right reasons, but I might think you are deluded about the real source of your lovability: I might think it resides in neither your breasts nor your intelligence, but in the adorable incoherence of your various perspectives. And I too, of course, can be deluded or self-deceived on any of those points. And while there is actually evidence that those couples in which the partners entertain illusions about the other tend to be more lasting (Murray, Holmes, and Griffin 1996), one might, at a

second order of evaluation, actually *want* to see the other as she really is. Indeed, one might be attracted, as were Simone Weil or Iris Murdoch, to the notion that it is of the essence of love to see the beloved with a more intense and detailed clarity (Jollimore 2011).

All these difficulties might lead us to welcome another way of identifying the right focal properties for love. This is to appeal to ‘the historicity’ of love. This might be described as the thick version of that essence of individuality of which ipseity was too thin a variant. Both presuppose that there is such a thing as a particular individual that endures through time. But ipseity is merely a logical property of such a particular, while historicity exploits the fact that every particular has a unique path through space-time. Insofar as the bond of love can be a consequence (which does not preclude its also being a cause) of a uniquely shared intertwining of two long space-time worms, the crucial property that identifies the beloved and only the beloved is both real and unique, not as a matter of mere logic, but rather as a result of empirical necessity. In other words, it is not logically impossible that I should have had in my life a sequence of events shared with A which exactly matched the sequence of events which I shared with B. But the longer the sequence, the more vanishingly improbable that would be. Even if the two sequences were in some sense objectively identical, the impact of the two sequences could not be expected to be the same, since one sequence necessarily had to precede the other.

A number of people have suggested that historicity is the key to the puzzle about Alcmena (Kraut 1986; Rorty 1988; Kolodny 2003). In the case of Cyrano, history seems rather to make the problem worse. But in the general case it is a real solution to the theoretical problem. Goldie’s version of this solution shares with Solomon an original twist, which is that the kind of historicity involved is ‘Aristophanic’. That is, it is inspired by the myth told by Aristophanes in the *Symposium*, according to which humans are really halves of original wholes, in quest of our other half. This is indeed, as Goldie asserts, a very different sort of ‘reason’, presenting, in a particularly ingenious way, a combination of the advantages of the two manoeuvres alluded to at the beginning of the current section for extending the relevant sense of ‘property’. First, it makes the relevant properties historical rather than purely qualitative; and second, it further specifies that the *kind* of historical property it involves dynamic interaction. That radically alters the terms of the problem: for if the ‘property’ that constitutes the motivating focus of love is an inherently interactive process rather than a perceived property of the beloved, it is no longer possible to think of it as a property that needs to be preserved so that love may continue. Instead, it is the very fact of its perpetual dynamic change that will preserve the continuity of love.

This idea seems to solve the theoretical problem. It does not, however, overcome the existential one. For what if the changing dynamic interaction brings the participants pain instead of pleasure? That happens all too often; the poet Wyatt’s lament is often heard, in the same or equivalent words: ‘They flee from me, that sometime did me seek’.

9.5 The Shape of a Love's Narrative

The unpredictability of the outcomes to be expected from the dynamics of love brings me back to the notion of narrative. In this brief concluding section, I want to speculate about the bearing of the question of narrativity on Goldie's conception of the reasons for love. As Goldie concedes, the distinction originally made among persons by Galen Strawson between *episodic* and *diachronic* types is a real distinction of temperament: 'the fundamentals of temporal temperament are genetically determined, and... we have here to do with a deep "individual difference variable"' (Strawson 2004: 431). What else, we might ask, goes with thinking of one's life as a *single* story, as opposed to a series of episodes without closure? Once one has asked these basic questions, one can start applying to one's own life the refinements of literary theory. Every story has episodes; but different genres of novels—picaresque, romance, thriller, or epic—may be characterized by different ways in which individual episodes are related to an overall plot, and by the different ways that chance is involved. Sometimes there will be merely a unity of character: stock characters such as those of the *Commedia dell'Arte* are known for their characteristic behaviour. They get into characteristic pickles from one episode to the other, but these are strung together in otherwise unconnected shorter stories. Some people's love lives are like that: made up of individual episodes, which don't last long, and perhaps suffer from a certain tendency to repetition even in their diversity. In others, there is perhaps a long central narrative of love, in which other episodes can take their place without shifting the sense of the overall narrative.

All narratives are, as Goldie stresses, essentially perspectival; so when one turns to the first-person perspective, what difference does it make, whether we regard our own lives as a series of episodes, or as a continuous and continuing story? Here, two new questions arise. Both can be asked about a life as a whole, but I am thinking here of their application to a person's love life. First, to what extent does one *choose* a *type* of plot for one's own life, or love, as opposed to its being determined by chance (de Sousa 1998). Here chance refers both to the luck of innate temperament and to the randomness of circumstances encountered in the course of a single life. Second, there is a question about the relation between the episodic design of the plot as a whole and character itself?

Perhaps someone in a Literary Theory Department has already suggested that a person's character might be described by analogy with a tune—and a love life defined in terms of its rhythms. Like a melodic line, of which one can often watch a visual analogue on a computer screen, there could be clear differences in the balance offered by the pattern of a life: is it made up of independent and apparently unrelated clusters? Or do the clusters exhibit something like a fractal similarity at different scales and levels of observation?

This last observation is inspired by the fascinating hypothesis offered by Carol Magai and Jeannette Haviland-Jones, concerning three well-known but very different psychotherapists: Carl Rogers, Robert Ellis, and Frederic Perls (Magai and Haviland-

Jones 2002). These authors argue that in each of their three subjects one could detect a distinctive fractal pattern, manifested in a structural similarity of their emotional dispositions at every temporal scale. Magain and Haviland-Jones started from a microanalysis of a video that was made of each therapist in the session with the same patient;⁵ the doctrines propounded in their theoretical work; the shapes of their intimate relationships; their professional lives, and the most comprehensive arc of each of their lives as a whole. Note that one of the most interesting aspects of their discussion of these three very different psychotherapists is that part of what they seem very clearly to detect, as characteristic of each man's emotional signature, is something of which the therapists themselves were quite unaware, and sometimes explicitly denied. Specifically, each one repudiated the Freudian idea that one's adult life is importantly related to early childhood experiences. And yet, when looking at their biographies objectively, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that each one was in fact very much influenced by their childhood. Or, perhaps, since causality would be all the more difficult to detect if they are right about the constancy of the fractal patterns in the lives in question, it is just that the patterns in question become apparent already in early childhood and play themselves out at the different levels and scales concerned.

However that may be, it illustrates the distance between the first- and third-person perspectives in narratives of life and love: but from either perspective, those narratives might be in part defined in terms of this sort of fractal emotional signature.

J. S. Mill described happiness as depending on a judicious combination of excitement and tranquillity; what counts as judicious is highly variable, and depends both on individual temperament and on the ideology that dictates how the forms of love are expected to be lived in a specific social context. To illustrate some of the consequences of this individual variation, there is an Edna St Vincent Millay sonnet in which the speaker revels in her own inconstancy; but she finds so much of the same inconstancy in her lover, that she can be true to her inconstant self without ever trading her lover in for another:

OH, THINK not I am faithful to a vow!
Faithless am I save to love's self alone...
So wanton, light and false, my love, are you,
I am most faithless when I most am true.

In sum, if historicity yields the best account of the reasons, or perhaps the illusion of reasons, that we are drawn to positing for our loves, it is one that accounts for the fact that love sometimes endures as long as it does, but we can expect from it no warrant of its continuation.

⁵ The film, *Three Approaches to Psychotherapy* is widely available. Clips are available at YouTube, beginning at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?index=0&feature=Playlist&v=ZBkUqcqRChg&list=PLC42DF-C43D13933B7>, accessed 18 May 2016.

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A few years ago I spent some of the happiest days of my life in Manchester, thanks to Peter's extraordinary friendship. I remember remarking, some time later, on how rare it is to form a truly close friend in one's seventh decade. But there were so many reasons to love Peter, reasons both of the sort that are easy to list—his generosity, his openness, his laughter, his lucid and elegant ways of working through a thought, his brilliant, economic, and always illuminating talks—and of the sort that can't be articulated because they lie too deep in the secret core of two personalities. So it happened to me: I acquired a new friend of the kind one finds only a few times in a lifetime. With characteristic generosity, he invited me to share his flat during my stay in Manchester, and we developed the easy and studious closeness of university student roommates. I venture to guess that many colleagues, former students, and friends have found many of the same reasons to love Peter. This chapter, however, is the record of a failure to understand what such reasons for love might be. I deeply regret not being able to hear what he would reply.

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