

Personal Relationships: Emotions and Responsibilities

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SUMMARY

No one is ever responsible for any of their emotions. But everyone is responsible for all of their actions, including those concerning their emotions. Any two different duties will oppose and defeat each other, each at its own end of a continuum of logically possible situations. There will always be a logically indeterminate area in the middle, where the duties are incommensurable. There, no theoretical resolution is possible, and we can only make our own best judgment call.

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1. PREFACE

Almost everyone has heart-to-heart talks a few times in their lives. But few people have a general, not to say philosophical, perspective to help them through it. Here, I join together the topics mentioned in the title, partly because I don't have much to say about any one of them (people write whole books about each of them), but also because they fit together well, certainly for the points I wish to make. I'm thinking through these things basically on my own, with only a very brief look at the literature. On passions, including emotions, see Aristotle, Descartes, and Hume. On emotions, see also Sartre.

This paper was inspired by two of Pastor Steve Khang's sermons in Living Grace Ministry (LGM), Korean United Methodist Church (KUMC), Ann Arbor MI, in 2015. One sermon was on right and wrong relationships, and the other on different kinds of love. Thanks to Pastor Steve for inspiring this paper. My views do not reflect Pastor Steve's, nor those of LGM or KUMC. Since I'm an agnostic, my views are very different in some ways.

2. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AS A CATEGORY

Philosophers discuss relations as a highly generic category, including being larger than, being to the left of (relative to a certain observer), and so on. Personal relationships between two human beings would be something like a sub-sub-sub category of relations. I will not be worried much about the general category of relations here, since I discuss mainly personal relationships.

Some people speak of a relationship as simply good or bad. Better, we may say that if a relationship has a sufficient number of sufficiently good parts, then we may count it as good, and if it has a sufficient number of sufficiently bad parts, then we may count it as bad. This approach can allow a gray area in between, where it is not clear if the relationship is good or bad, since the tally of parts is too close to call. Here, we just don't know if it's good or bad. We can't tell. We can also allow for ethically neutral relationships which really *are* neither good nor bad, or if you please, neither good enough to be counted as clearly and definitely good, nor bad enough to be counted as clearly and definitely bad. We can even allow that sometimes the ethical values of the parts of relationships are incommensurable, meaning that the values cannot be measured by a yardstick they have in common, because they are different in kind. Here we are not just refraining from judging a relationship to be either good or bad; we are positively judging that it cannot *be* clearly and definitely good or bad.

In fact, I think that many relationships *are* not simply "good" or simply "bad." That's not the same as whether they are problematic. If you accept your relationship with someone as it is, which is not far from accepting the other person and yourself as you are, then it is not a problem, or at least not between the two of you.

We certainly can speak of a relationship as if it were a thing that has parts. Ordinary language allows this. But a relation is not really or literally a thing that has parts, like a clock that has springs and cogwheels. Rather, it is something that obtains between two or more things, and is not itself a third thing. Of course, relations can stand in (higher level) relations to each other, but that does not make them individual things like clocks or persons. Relations are related into

classes, such as the classes of visible relations, audible relations, emotional relations, and so on. Being visibly darker or visibly brighter are more like each other than they are like being audibly higher in pitch, emotionally happier, or numerically greater in number. Darker and lighter are commensurable. So are brighter and duller. But higher in pitch and happier are not.

I would prefer to speak of a relationship as having different aspects, each of which can be good or bad considered by itself. After weighing them against each other to the extent possible, we can try to weigh the goodness or badness of the relationship as a whole to the extent possible. Perhaps there is not much difference between a part and an aspect. But I find talk of aspects easier and more helpful. For the parts of a clock can only be smaller individual things, while aspects can be understood far more generally. A relation can really and literally have aspects, but it cannot really and literally have parts.

Talk of part and whole is most literally talk of physical parts in a physical whole, such as cogwheels in a clock. Personal relationships are not much like that. Even physical relationships between two people are not much like that. Talk of aspects of relationships is far more natural and correct especially when the key sub-relationships are not physical at all, but emotional and ethical. Yes, a personal relationship obtains between individual people. But the relationship itself is not an individual thing like a clock that has smaller individual things, people, as its parts. For a relationship consists of emotional, ethical, physical, and perhaps indefinitely many other kinds of sub-relationships. It is not a thing but a relational structure with indefinitely many relational aspects. It is said that two people cleave together and become one, but this is literally nonsense. There is no third person who is identical with the two. There is not one person now who is also, or who was, two separate people.

Concerning purely spiritual relationships between purely spiritual beings, I have the same problem with the Trinity, and find Judaism and Islam far less confusing than Christianity. I do like St. Patrick's analogy of the Trinity to a shamrock with three leaves. Clearly, a shamrock is actual, therefore possible. It's a fairly common green plant. But it is not clear that three god-persons can also be just one single god-person. Therefore it is not clear that arguing analogically from the actuality of shamrocks to the possibility of a Trinity is or can be successful. We cannot show an analogy where there isn't one. The analogical argument would be more successful if we demoted the three god-persons to divine aspects of a single god.

A clock is no more than the sum of its parts, taken as standing in certain relations. It is unlike a soup, where the ingredients are transformed by their chemical relationships, and then the transformed ingredients are further transformed in turn, and so on, in the cooking process. And a human relationship is more than just the other person plus you, taken as simply standing in the relationship. If we must speak of human relationships as things, they are far more like soups than like clocks. They are not mechanical. Do we not say that love is a matter of chemistry? We never say it is a matter of physics. And really, it is a matter of biology, including neuroscience. Most deeply, it is a matter of the soul, whatever a soul may be, or of interacting souls.

We call a relation an emergent relation if it has properties (features, aspects) that none of the things standing in the relation, taken individually, has. And the properties are called emergent properties. A relation is emergent if and only if it has at least one emergent property. If I build an iron boat out of iron parts, the iron material of the boat is not an emergent property, since all the parts are iron too. But the shape of the boat may well not be the shape of any of the parts. And

clocks have emergent properties. No spring or cogwheel, taken by itself, can tell the time. Of course, the point about emergent relations applies just as well to relationships with sub-relations as well as it does to individual things with individual parts.

Surely all human relationships are emergent relations, but not all emergent relations are human, chemical, biological, or spiritual. For some are merely physical, as with boats or clocks.

Relationships are emergent wholes, certainly as opposed to aggregates or heaps. Of course, two people cannot make a heap anyway, since they are too few. Think of heaps of sand or pebble as the comparisons. But even a heap of sand has properties which no individual grain has. A human relationship emerges from the indefinitely many sub-relations between the people, and these in turn ultimately emerge from the people.

In what follows, I'll be talking primarily about human relationships between two people who think of themselves as being together as a pair emotionally. But my discussion of emotions and of responsibilities will often be on a far more general level, as it should be in philosophy; and then I'll be applying or instantiating the general discussion to this particular sort of relationship.

3. PHILOSOPHY OF EMOTIONS

Let's start with emotions. Many emotions are relational. I love someone. I hate someone. I fear someone. I'm angry at someone. But many emotions are not relational, at least not in any obvious way. I can be happy in general, though not about anything in particular. Psychologists admit a type of anxiety called general anxiety, which is not about anything specific.

The main emotion we'll be interested in is love, but philosophy of emotion concerns all emotions. I won't be concerned to define what an emotion is, or to list what things are emotions. For our purposes here, we can just follow ordinary thought. Well, I will have a few words to say on the nature of love. At least, I plan to discuss different kinds or categories of love. But I'll be starting with a general discussion of passions. All emotions are passions, but not all passions are emotions. That is, emotions are a sub-category of passions.

4. ACTIONS AND PASSIONS

The most famous discussions of action and passion are in Aristotle. Descartes and Hume have the most famous discussions of passions in modern philosophy.

For Aristotle, in purely physical nature, an action is a cause (physical agent) and a passion is an effect (physical patient). In what follows, I will present things in my own way.

An event in a causal series is both an action and a passion. Likewise in causal systems of interacting variables. But in the human realm, actions are what people choose to do, and passions are what people receive into consciousness as effects which they cannot help but receive.

Purely physical passions are not and cannot be emotions. When one billiard ball strikes another and the other ball moves, that motion is a (physical) passion, but is not and cannot be a (personal) emotion.

There are not just physical actions and physical passions. There are also personal actions and personal passions. Personal actions are by personal agents. Personal agents choose their actions and thus can bear moral responsibility for them. Personal passions are effects which a person experiences. Some main sub-categories of personal passions are pleasures, pains, and emotions.

Personal passions (from here on, just: passions) can be caused by physical actions or by personal actions. A rock falling off a cliff can cause pain. So can a person who stabs me.

If I stub my toe, the caused pain, as such, is a passion, but it is not an emotion. The pain may further cause me to be angry. My anger is not the pain, but rather caused by it. Also, I might sometimes be quite emotionless about such pains.

Passions include emotions. But as I understand it, passions also include pleasures and pains that are not properly speaking emotions. No one would say that a toothache, a headache, or a pain in my toe are emotions. But then by parity of reason, the pleasure of a hot bath or a good meal are not properly emotions either, though they may certainly cause the emotion of happiness. Also, sexual pleasure is not an emotion. Surely we have all heard of emotionless, “mechanical,” or “soul-less” sexual pleasure. By parity of reason, sexual desire is not properly an emotion. Nor is any desire, though of course desires can cause emotions.

All these sorts of passion are involuntary. We do not and cannot choose them. We cannot cause them to exist or cease to exist by our choice, meaning by a simple, direct act of will. I can just sit there and choose to raise my arm. I cannot just sit there and choose to feel a pain in my toe, or to feel pleasure from a certain meal, or to be happy about something I was unhappy about a moment ago, or even to feel sexual arousal, by a simple, direct act of my will. Central to my later discussion, we do not and cannot choose the people we love, or hate, or fear, or are angry with, where those terms refer to emotions pure and simple, as opposed to choosing to treat people in a loving, or hateful, or angry manner, or choosing to express our emotions. Of course, we sometimes cannot help but do these things, but I am talking about when we can help it and do choose to do these things. And even when we cannot help but do these things somehow or in some manner, we can often choose the manner. We can often mute, or otherwise direct, including sublimate, these things. I take all of this to be common sense, ordinary experience.

More decisively, not all passions are emotions because all our sense-perceptions, such as our visual perception of a tree, are passions, and no sense-perception is an emotion. Perception is part of our personal experience. Yet perception is quite involuntary in the sense that in ordinary circumstances, if I look in a certain direction in a certain place at a certain time, I cannot help but see a certain tree. I can choose to close my eyes, but if my eyes are open, I cannot choose to see what I see by a simple, direct act of willing not to see the tree.

Mental sensations are passions as well. If I look at the sun and then close my eyes and see a mental round after-image (phenomenal spot) in my visual field, I have no choice about seeing the after-image. I cannot simply will it away. And obviously, after-images are not emotions.

Memories are passions as well. I have no choice about certain things’ reminding me of certain things. Thinking of the death of a friend after seeing his photo is a passion. But memories are not emotions. Thinking of his death may cause me to feel sad, but my memory as such is not the passion it causes in me. Even memories of emotions are not emotions. I may remember how much I loved the first person I loved without feeling anything. It is even paradoxical to say I could choose to remember something. How can I choose what to remember unless I am already

thinking of it? I can only choose to hunt for a memory I already have some partial memory of.

Last year I watched a movie in which one of the characters said, “We don’t choose the people we love.” How true, I thought. But then I said to myself, “But that’s true of all the emotions. We don’t and can’t choose the people we hate, or the people we’re afraid of, and so on. Nor can we choose when the love, hate or fear starts or stops, nor their strength, nor their quality. We can only choose how to act about them.” And then I realized that this is all just a modern expression of Aristotle’s theory of actions and passions, instantiated to the category of emotions.

For the last few centuries, we’ve called only strong emotions passions. But for Aristotle, weak and strong emotions alike are passions. For Aristotle, all emotions are passions because we are their passive recipient. We have no choice about experiencing them exactly as we do. All emotions, however strong or weak, are passions in this sense. I’ll explain the theory further in my own way.

The theory is that emotions are *categorically* passions. I mean that they are not the *kind* of entity whose existence, strength, or quality we *could* choose. They happen to us as they will, not as we will. At most, we can choose to act on them indirectly, and hope that this succeeds. Or we can sometimes choose to suppress them (not feel them as much), or at least mute (tone down) their expression, or otherwise direct them (throw darts at a photo of the person), or sublimate them (write beautiful and uplifting music of mourning the dead, such as the *Kol Nidre*, to work out our sorrow).

When we choose to act on emotions indirectly, we often do so by controlling their “triggers” or minor incidental causes. For example, where seeing a photo of a person we love or hate can trigger the presence of the emotion, we can put the photo where we will often see it, or remove the photo from our sight. Perhaps neuroscience may one day be so advanced that we can trigger or terminate emotions by stimulating the brain, or create a happiness pill or an anger pill. But while we may be able to act by stimulating the brain or swallowing a pill, such stimulations and pills are not themselves emotions. They are physical, and emotions are mental.

A child working itself into a temper tantrum is acting indirectly to trigger anger. The child is able to choose to recall certain memories or bring up certain images that trigger the anger. But the child cannot choose to become angry simply by an act of will, any more than King Canute could sit on his throne on the beach and successfully will that the ocean cease to move or roar.

In ordinary circumstances, if I choose to raise my hand or to say something, I just do it by a simple and direct act. Never mind the complexity of the bodily processes involved, of which I am unaware. The mind is not identical with the body, nor with any physical aspect thereof; and likewise for the act. That my hand rises is physical. My act of raising it is not. In total contrast, I cannot banish an emotion, or cause an emotion to exist in my mind, by any such simple, direct act of willing. Nor is it a matter of practice, nor of not trying hard enough. Emotions are simply not the sort of thing that we can cause by such simple and direct acts of choice.

Granted, if the mind-brain identity thesis is true, then it follows that emotions are physical aspects of the brain. But the theory is false on its face. No part or aspect of my brain is literally or really a feeling of anger, any more than any part of my brain is literally or really round and green if I perceive a green apple, or see a green spot in a dream. If we dissect the brain, no round and green spot will be found, no matter how powerful the microscope we use.

We can now argue by analogy. The mind-brain identity thesis commits us to saying that if we see a round green spot, then this green spot is part of our brain. But if we dissect my brain, we will not find any round green spots. The relationship between the physical brain and the visual green spot is causal, not identitative. Therefore the mind-brain identity thesis is false. Now, and this is the analogical argument, likewise with love, anger, and fear. If we dissect our brain, we will find no love, anger, or fear either, no matter how powerful the microscope we use. At most we can identify some brain region or process that causes love, anger, or fear.

I just described an analogy between sense-perceptions and emotions. I argued that neither can be physical. Neither can be found by physical means in the physical world. It doesn't even make sense to think that they can, due to their very nature as mental events. But there is also a clear disanalogy between sense-perceptions and emotions in this regard. If I dissect a brain, I know what it would be *like* to see a (physical) green spot on some physical surface. It only doesn't make sense to think that I would or could find a *phenomenal* spot on a physical surface. I could even hear a sound, at least if I smacked the brain with a frying pan or dropped it on the floor. I could even feel warmth, or sliminess, or roughness, inside a brain crease. But I do not even know what it would be *like* to find a patch of anger or fear in a brain, or to feel love inside a brain crease. Therefore emotions are far further from being physical than are sense-perceptions or phenomenal spots.

Even if the mind-brain identity theory were correct, and to stimulate the brain in a certain way literally were to stimulate fear, in ordinary life we still could not choose to be afraid by a simple, direct act of will. We would need to have the neuroscientific stimulation apparatus with us, and know how to use it.FN1

Doing scientific studies to prove that our emotions, as such, are beyond our control is like flying a kite to prove the existence of wind. It has been known for at least two thousand years that all emotions are passions. And it was surely common knowledge long before Aristotle. Back then, perhaps the most popular way to express the point was to say that Cupid (Eros) shoots his arrows into whomever he pleases.FN2 That is to say that people who fall in love often do so with people who are wildly inappropriate in other respects. Shakespeare, a child of the Renaissance with all its potions (think of the poisons of the Borgias, and of the thousands of professional poisoners for hire), speaks of love potions in his romantic comedies. He makes base fellows fall in love with highborn ladies, and vice versa. I think his comedies are so popular because so many people can identify with love mismatches in their own experience, not only in their own lives, but also in humanity in general. Shakespeare was a humanist and a "people person." His romantic comedies have great appeal even today, and probably will have as long as there are humans. Shakespeare knew people. He knew that this sort of thing happens all the time.

Today, we express the thesis that we do not choose when or whom or how much we love by saying more scientifically, "Love is a matter of chemistry," or more precisely, biochemistry, or still more precisely, neuroscience. Or as in the movie I saw, we can say, as description of the fact without explanation, "We do not choose the people we love." Again, this applies to all emotions across the board. It is that love is the most important emotion to us that makes us single out love as the most important example.

My theory of relationships as relational structures with indefinitely many sub-relations as aspects can provide a theoretical basis for the view, so popular in America today, that if our love is true, then all the many sorts of merely external differences, such as age, wealth, education, or

social circumstance, which are traditionally and are still often thought to be insuperable obstacles to love, or even to make some love relationships into bad ones, are merely aspects to be weighed and balanced against the love itself.

The modern sequels to Shakespeare are all those stories and movies where people who are very different from each other, or are from different backgrounds, can nonetheless triumph in love. The modern view is that we should try to follow our dream and pursue the one we love, regardless of the consequences. But it doesn't always work that way in real life. The differences often make more difference in the long run than the two people think at first. "Marry in haste, repent at leisure." "Marry by all means. If it works out, you'll be happy. If it doesn't, you'll become a philosopher." The best counsel I have heard about marriage is this. Marriage is hard enough as it is. If there are any doubts as to differences, even external differences, we ought to take them seriously. That said, every marriage is very individual, and it is often surprising how two people can work things out, even though it may seem very unusual to others. There the key factors include motivation, patience, and acceptance.

5. CAN WE DEFINE EMOTION AS PASSION?

I think the reader may already see my answer. The definition would be too wide in scope. For all emotions are passions, but not all passions are emotions.

Where our definition of emotion is by genus and difference, passion is the genus of emotion. We might not be able to specify a difference, any more than we can for red, where the genus is color. What is the difference? —Red itself? Likewise, what is the difference? —Love itself?

Allow me to restate these points in another way.

Is what defines an emotion simply its being passively received? Are all and only emotions passions, or are other things passions? Think about looking at a cat on a mat. I can turn my head away and refuse to look, but in ordinary circumstances, if I look at the mat, then I cannot help but see that the cat is on it, and I cannot help but believe that the cat is on it. Beliefs are passive in this sense. Are sense-perceptions and beliefs then emotions? Of course not. Even if perceptions and beliefs are pleasant or painful, they are not themselves pleasures or pains. At best, they can cause pleasures or pains. Still less are they emotions caused by our pleasures or pains. Nor are pleasures and pains emotions as such, even if emotions are pleasant or painful. At best, pleasures and pains can cause emotions.

Beliefs are passions. We do not and cannot choose what we believe. I cannot choose to change my belief that the Eiffel Tower is made of iron by a simple, direct act of willing. At best, we can change our beliefs indirectly by choosing to examine the evidence again, or by looking for new evidence. But although all beliefs are passions, it should be clear that no beliefs, as such, are emotions, even though we are often very emotional about our beliefs. At best, beliefs can cause emotions. And at best, our beliefs can cause us to feel pleasure or pain.

It follows that in some religions, the term "belief" must be used in a very odd sense. For we simply cannot choose to believe anything about anything at all, if the word "belief" is used in the ordinary sense. Beliefs are passions, not actions. The best we can do is make judgment calls, which is not the same thing. Judgment calls are actions, beliefs are not. Judgment calls are

choices to guess, or choices to act according to a certain guess. All choices are actions, and all actions are choices. But we cannot choose to believe, nor what to believe, not even out of faith. I am not even sure what “choosing to believe as an act of faith” can mean. I do not know what such a choice would even be like. It sounds like a category confusion to me. Granted, it is not a category confusion to, say, accept Jesus. That is a hybrid event consisting of an already existing belief that Jesus exists as described, plus a choice to follow him. That is not a choice to believe, but a choice to act in accordance with a belief, or at least in accordance with a guess, or if you please, in accordance with a leap of faith. A leap of faith is just a species of guess.

Just what is the special meaning of “belief” in religion? Is it what Karl Popper calls “acting as if” God exists? I’m sure there is such a thing as acting on faith. We see that in ordinary business contracts and ordinary friendships all the time. But acting on faith is not belief as such. It is not even the same thing as faith. Nor is acting on belief the same thing as belief.

Of course, arguing that we cannot change emotions because emotions are passions would be just as circular and as question-begging as to argue, as the doctor in Molière’s play does, that opium tends to put people to sleep because it has a dormative property / virtue / *virtus dormativa* (Molière 1673). The core insight is instead that emotions move us, we don’t move them. More generally, emotions change us, we don’t change them, at least not by direct acts of will. (Change is more general than motion. All motions are changes, but not all changes are motions.) Much like external perceptions, inner events like emotions simply come into being, and there is not much, if anything, we can do about it.

I want to say we would not *count* an event as an emotion if we can will it into being or out of being. But that sounds too much like the Molière problem of circular definition. Also, we already know what our main emotions are, such as anger or love. And it is logically possible that someday in the future, we can will our anger or love into or out of existence, just as easily as we can ordinarily will to raise our hand in the air or lower our hand today.

According to some, the main or only real test of necessity is that we try and fail, and the only real test of possibility is that when we try, we succeed. In the realm of logical necessity, this means whenever we try, we always fail to conceive a situation in which, say, a certain apple is both clearly and wholly red and clearly and wholly not red. In the realm of categorical necessity, whenever we try, we always fail to find anything that is clearly and wholly an emotion, but just as clearly and wholly not a passion. However, I would fall back on that test only as a last resort. I think that there is a clear distinction between “It is impossible for me to see that P” and “I see that it is impossible that P,” even though that distinction may not be easy to make in every case. I do think that we clearly see that red is a color, and that it is impossible for something to be red but not have a color. I think we also clearly see, though possibly less clearly, that the emotions of love and anger are passions, and that it is impossible for such emotions not to be passions. That is the best argument, and perhaps the only possible argument, that the category of emotions belongs within the category of passions with categorial (metaphysical) necessity. I say “the only possible argument” because the necessity can only be intuitively apprehended; it is not a matter of definition or analysis. We cannot say that love is passion plus something else, any more than we can say that red is color plus something else. There simply is no something else other than the love itself, or the red itself.

Psychologists distinguish suppression from repression. Suppression is defined as a conscious setting aside of an emotion. Repression is defined as an unconscious, automatic

prevention of awareness of material, in general because the unconscious mind decides that the conscious mind is emotionally or cognitively unable to deal with the material. Suppression is a direct act of will, but in general it is either only temporarily successful, or successful only on very weak emotions. This would seem to be the one exception to the general rule that emotions are passions, and a rather minor one at that, though we use it all the time. However, it is not really an exception at all. When we suppress an emotion, we are not causing it to cease to exist, and we are not changing it in the least. We are merely setting it aside, usually so we can go about our daily business not actually affected by it. We are changing (suppressing) only its effect on us.

Again, we can often control our emotions indirectly. Here too there is another spectrum of logically possible situations. At one end, it is our morally required duty is to control a certain emotion to the extent possible by indirect means. At the other end are the logically possible situations where we morally ought to let the emotion have free rein. Most ordinary situations will be somewhere in between. It often requires our best wisdom and judgment to decide what to do. Perhaps such questions about emotions come under the more general heading of the old prayer, "God grant us the power to change (for the better) what we can, the patience to accept what we cannot, and the wisdom to know the difference."

6. NO MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMOTIONS AS SUCH

Since moral duty is a modality, I shall begin with a brief introduction to the general topic of modality. Traditionally there are four modalities: necessity, possibility, impossibility, and contingency. Any one of them can be used to define the other three. For example, take possibility as the undefined term. Then P is necessary just in case not-P is not possible; P is impossible if P is not possible; and P is contingent if both P and not-P are possible. It then remains to interpret the modalities appropriately across topics. Since they are interdefinable, we only need to interpret just one. It will be convenient to interpret necessity. We speak of logical necessity in logic and in any other logically necessary sciences, such as arithmetic and geometry. There can be causal necessity (cause) in physics, epistemic necessity (knowledge) in epistemology, aesthetic necessity (beauty) in aesthetics, political necessity in political science, and social necessity in the social sciences. In ethics, moral necessity is moral duty, or moral responsibility. Moral possibility is moral permissibility, and so on.

We cannot choose our emotions—neither what they are, nor how strong they are, nor when they come into being or pass way from being, nor when or how they change in quality, nor whether or toward whom they are directed. Therefore we cannot be morally responsible for them. They are not part of what actively goes out of us by our choice, but are part of what comes into our inner experience without our choice. They are part of what we passively receive into our consciousness. No doubt they are caused by physical factors.

This is as opposed to our choice to express them, and our other actions concerning them. For such actions, as for all our actions in general, we are responsible. In fact, the ethics of actions concerning emotions in particular is but an instance or application of general ethics for actions in general. Our responsibility for our actions concerning emotions is a species of the genus of moral responsibility. There is nothing special about the ethics of emotion, certainly not at the generic level. What is special is only the emotions themselves as a category of entities. And they are very

special indeed. An emotionless world would be very different from our world. I take all this to be more or less self-evident.

Jesus says that we are not responsible for what goes into us, but only for what comes out of us. As far as emotions are concerned, this is consistent with Aristotle's theory of passions, at least on my view that all emotions are passions, and that therefore we are not responsible for our emotions. For they are part of what comes into us. We are responsible only for our actions with respect to our emotions, which is what comes out of us.

But Jesus also says that when married people lust after others only in their hearts, they are committing the sin of adultery. This contradicts Aristotle, as well as Jesus himself. For lust is a passion, not an action. Lust, or desire, is part of what comes into us, not what comes out of us. Just like emotions, we have no control over our lusts, and therefore have no responsibility for their existence at all. This applies even to perverse desires, since it applies to all desires across the board. To give an ancient example, some man in ancient times had a great desire to cook and eat children. In my view, and I think in the ancient view, he was unable to control the desire itself, and was therefore not responsible for merely having it. But he would certainly have been responsible if he actually cooked and ate any children. Merely having the desire would be no excuse at all, since the lives of the children would overwhelmingly outweigh the satisfaction of his personal desire. On this point, I agree with Aristotle against Jesus, insofar as they disagree on whether we are responsible for our inner lusts or desires. And I scarcely see how anything for which we are not responsible could be called a sin of ours. There can be no sin or wrongdoing without our choosing to perform a wrong act, or our wrongly choosing to omit an act.FN3

Arguably, we are responsible for encouraging or triggering our emotions through acting to increase or decrease the available triggers. Here I argue by analogy to Aristotle's view that we are responsible for the habits we develop, even if the habits are too strong to break. Aristotle admits that a habit can become too strong to break; but he points out that the habit was not always so. We had a choice, and therefore a responsibility, when we first started to develop the habit. To update Aristotle, I think the same point can be made about when we first started to engage in an addictive behavior, or first started to encourage or discourage the presence of an emotion in us. I don't think the analogies among these three things (habits, addictions, and emotions) are perfect, but I do think that emotions can be encouraged to the point of no return. I think a child working itself into a temper tantrum is a good example. At some point, the child cannot help but lose its temper. This does not detract from my view that emotions come and go when they will. Even the child cannot make itself angry by a simple, direct act of will.

I agree with the view of contemporary psychology that the best, and indeed the only wise and good thing we can do with emotions, is accept them as they are. It is not just that there is nothing we can do with them anyway. That is, it is not just that they are passions. It is also that they are part of us. They are our emotions. And they are a very important part of us indeed. By definition, without them, we would be without any feelings. And some of them are very strong parts of us, constituting a very large part indeed of who we are. Therefore rejecting emotions is rejecting a basic part of yourself, and often a very large part of who you are, even if it is a part you have no choice about having and no control over. That is, emotions need to be accepted as what they are, but they also need to be accepted as being part of what you are. You are an emotional being. You have emotions. I do not know if all this is also Aristotle's view, but by the very nature of his theory of passions, I think it is consistent with his theory, if not implied by it.

If you love someone, don't blame yourself. You had no choice in it, any more than the other person did. If anything, the other person had even less choice than you did. (All the other person can do is try to get you to see that they love you, since people tend to fall in love with people who love them; or to place some triggers in your life, such as a Valentine's Day card, or an especially sweet and encouraging smile. Such triggers do not always work, but sometimes they help.) When we say a love relationship is wrong, the love itself is not wrong. Passions are never right or wrong. It is merely a misfortune that the external circumstances are bad.

Conversely, if someone loves you, don't blame them. It's not their fault. They had no choice. Likewise for anger, fear, hatred, and so on. But again, we're all very much responsible for our actions concerning emotions. Here in particular, we should not use triggers to encourage false or wrong relationships. By false relationship, I mean one where you pretend you like or love the other person, but you really don't.

Telling the other person you love them is supposed to be usually, though not always, the best thing to do. That is partly because it is not good to keep strong emotions bottled up inside you. But it is mainly because the other person might, as far as you know, love you back, or might come to love you back. (Again, people tend to come to love those who love them.) That is very important because it goes so much to the human and perhaps lifetime happiness of at least one of you, meaning yourself, and perhaps both of you. It is our dream to love and perhaps be loved.

Again, telling the other person is not always the right things to do. In my view, this is just a typical defeasibility situation, where we must weigh and balance the factors as best we can, with "clearly the right thing to do" at one end of the spectrum of logically possible situations, and "clearly the wrong thing to do" at the other end. I shall discuss defeasibility later.

If you're too afraid to tell the other person, that's another story. But even that might be a factor to weigh and balance with the others, when we come to judge which duty defeats which. There may be some truth to "faint heart never won fair lady (or gentleman). But fear can be a very useful and reasonable emotion. We are right to fear a great many things. And there could be all kinds of good reasons to fear telling the other person you love them, such as being too young, or being in too different a life situation, meaning in very different external circumstances. Perhaps you are already committed to someone else!

The weighing and balancing may be so hard to do that in the end, you may just have to make what we call in the Navy a "command decision." Here, the main opposed controlling factors are that once you tell the other person, you can never retrieve the information; but if you don't, you may lose your best chance at your dream of happiness, possibly even for both of you. You just won't know how the other person feels until they tell you. Just do your best to do what you believe is the right thing. You may look like a fool. But you won't *be* a fool, if you are doing your best to do the right thing. Indeed, you would be a fool *not* to do that. If you do your best to do the right thing and it blows up in your face, that's just how it goes sometimes. This is the case with situations needing command decisions in general. Having things blow up in my face has happened to me many times/ But I find that no reason not to continue to do my best to do what I believe is the right thing. However, it does diminish my courage, and we all have only so much courage. Some say we each have our own finite lifetime quantity of courage. But that is another story.

Even if it were categorically (metaphysically) possible to make our emotions come and go as we pleased, it would still be an epistemic impossibility for us to do this, at least to make our

emotions come. For love, and by parity or reason all the emotions, are, so to speak, decided for us by our unconscious mind, below the threshold of our conscious perception. By the time we know about it, it's too late. Even love at first sight takes a moment or two. But the main point is that even love at first sight is a (very quick) recognition, not a decision. (Love at first sight often turns out to be mere infatuation, but that is beside the point. Infatuations are emotions too, and we don't choose our infatuations either. We may compare love to gold, and infatuation to fool's good, or iron pyrite. Both are equally minerals.)

We cannot choose to prevent something we're unaware of, certainly not a specific emotion toward a specific person. Yes, we can decide to actualize the song title, "I'll never fall in love again." But no act of will can prevent it if we discover that we have fallen in love after the fact. It's always a recognition, and that's why it can never be a decision. Recognitions are of what is or was, while decisions are made as to what will be. Thus it's not just an epistemic impossibility. It's also a temporal impossibility. And once the emotion is there, good luck on trying to get rid of it

7. FOUR PROBLEMS WE HAVE IN DEALING WITH OUR EMOTIONS

Emotions inside ourselves are often very hard to deal with. There are at least four reasons why. I shall not discuss dealing with emotions inside others, but I think much the same reasons would apply, since the reasons concern the nature of emotions in general.

First, emotions can be very powerful, even overwhelmingly strong. Sometimes you just cannot suppress them, and the best you can do is only blunt or deflect their impact. But we can often blunt or deflect them greatly, thereby rendering their expression to and impact on others largely or even entirely harmless, much like diverting a flood that was going to strike a town.

Other emotions are so brief and weak we can easily suppress them until they go away. Of course, some emotions we want very much to express to others, and others we do not, and our desire to express them may not always correlate with their strength. This is so even though as a general rule, the stronger the emotion, the less easy it is to keep it bottled up inside ourselves. For that is only one consideration among possibly many, including how expressing them may help or harm others. Therefore, in some case, we may very much want to express a weak emotion, or to keep a strong emotion to ourselves.

Second, emotions can often be hard to identify. They can be mixed or blended with each other, or with other things, such as their expression through our actions. They can be vague and unclear. They can be so weak that an initially developing, eventually strong love can be mistaken for a brief infatuation, and vice versa. Fear and anger can be hard to identify too.

On this point, I agree with Hume against Descartes. Descartes held that our mental ideas, broadly understood as anything in our mind of which we are aware, including emotions, are what seems to be the case. Descartes also held that we have clear and distinct knowledge of what seems to be the case. This implies that for Descartes, we always have clear and distinct knowledge of all of our ideas, including emotions. In fact, Descartes held that our ideas are almost all that we *can* know, besides our own existence as minds having ideas. In contrast, Hume held that our ideas, again including our emotions, are often vague, and often even obscure and confused.

I agree with Hume that our emotions and other ideas are often not as they appear to be, and that they can be more confused than they seem to be, once we start to work them out. On this point, I think Descartes is simply wrong.

My higher-level resolution of the Descartes-Hume conflict is that we can have clear and distinct knowledge *that* our emotions are obscure and confused. Thus I hold that we do not always have clear and distinct knowledge of our emotions, except for our higher-level clear and distinct knowledge *that* this is so.

Emotions also be hard to identify because they can change even as we study them, and even as a result of our studying them, or according as we find them good or repugnant, or simply by themselves. For example, we may become upset by our own anger once we realize how strong it really is. Of course, emotions logically need not change as our understanding of them changes, and often do not change. This is much like ordinary perceptual situations. Sometimes perceptions change upon further study, as when we first look at a distant mountain in a morning haze, and then start to make out its details. Also much like our inner perceptions, even when our outer perceptions are hard to identify, we can have a higher-level clear and distinct awareness *that* they are unclear and indistinct.

If you still doubt that percepts and images cannot be other than they appear, consider Henri Poincaré's problem of three very similar shades of color. Perceptual indistinguishability ought to be transitive. That is, if A is perceptually indistinguishable from B, and B from C, then A ought to be perceptually indistinguishable from C. Yet it is an empirical fact that in some cases A is perceptually distinguishable from C. We can only infer that there are differences between A and B, and also between B and C, which are imperceptible to us. But if A, B, and C are merely phenomenal red spots, then even in merely phenomenal spots there can be more than appears.

Third, emotions can not only be both powerful and hard to identify (vague, obscure), but they can also be hard to admit to ourselves, and often for emotional reasons. Sometimes we cannot admit them at all. Such an automatic, involuntary, and unconscious repression, as opposed to a chosen and conscious suppression, means that we do not have any awareness that we even have the emotion. Repression of emotions or of memories is one of the things that are called ego defense mechanisms in the psychological literature. That in some sense there exists something that can be called your unconscious mind is one of Freud's greatest contributions. It is also common to admit a border area between conscious and unconscious mind, where we are said to have subliminal (or minimal) consciousness of things, so much so that it is easy to miss those things because other things attract our attention more, and we direct our attention to these other things. Thus we can also overlook emotions of which we are only subliminally aware.

Let me return to emotions of which we are unconscious. We often don't want to admit our emotions, and are sometimes unable to admit them, without our even knowing that fact, for perhaps indefinitely many reasons. But there are at least three main and fairly obvious sorts of reasons why. First, sometimes we very much want to think of ourselves as neutral and objective, as making purely rational decisions. And often, to admit our emotions is to admit that we are emotionally subjective and biased. Here, it's usually thought the best course to be honest and admit that we have the emotion, and try to proceed as neutrally and objectively as we can despite it. Since we are unconscious of the emotion, we can only actively look for any signs we can find of any emotions inside ourselves of which we are currently unaware. Second, our emotions might be perverse, or if within normal bounds considered in themselves, at least directed toward

someone who is inappropriate due to the external circumstances. Third, we might be too young or inexperienced to handle our emotions. They can be too powerful and unclear for young people even to admit consciously, and often even for much older and more experienced people. It is logically possible for any human being to be too overwhelmed by an emotion even to admit consciously that it exists. It can happen to the best of us, and often does.

There is a paradox here. How can we refuse to admit the existence of anything without our already knowing and thereby admitting what it is? “It’s raining, but I don’t admit it” is a stock example of what we call a pragmatic, egocentric, or conversational inconsistency. The statement is not formally self-contradictory. It’s logically possible that it’s raining and I don’t admit it. But when I *assert* that it’s raining, then in ordinary conversational circumstances, I’m *implying* to my audience that I admit it. This is not much different from “I am asleep.” There’s no formal contradiction in that statement either. It’s logically possible that I utter that statement in my sleep. But in ordinary circumstances, if I assert it, then I imply to my audience that I’m awake while I’m saying it. Likewise for “I am angry, but I don’t (or can’t admit it). And that’s my point. If I assert that I’m angry, then in ordinary circumstances I imply that I’m aware of my anger.

My reply is this. I agree with all that. But the fact that such conversational situations are pragmatically inconsistent is irrelevant to the point. When we are unable to admit our emotions even to ourselves, and are to that extent unaware of their existence, then practically by definition, we cannot seriously or sincerely assert them either. If I cannot admit my love or anger even to myself, then I cannot sincerely assert “I’m angry,” much less “I’m angry, but I can’t admit it.” I cannot sincerely assert the latter in any case precisely because it *is* conversationally inconsistent. I agree with Sigmund Freud that we can be totally unconscious of our emotions, and as a very different point, can be aware of them, but so *subliminally* aware of them that we honestly do not notice them in the ongoing “buzzing, blooming confusion” of life (William James’s term), not to mention the buzzing, blooming confusion of our inner mental life. In fact, these two points are arguably Freud’s greatest (some say only) two contributions to psychology.

I shall not tarry over the philosophical question, How can it be possible for anything to be in the mind, or mental, yet for us to be unconscious of it? This is a very different problem from the conversational inconsistency problem, since this second problem has nothing to do with language. It is metaphysical or categorial, not linguistic. I think there is a clear, valid place for talk of an unconscious mind, regardless of its ultimate metaphysical explanation. For emotions are mental, and as a matter of empirical fact, we are often unaware of them. (Think of all the angry people you’ve met who angrily shout, “I am *not* angry!” The ego defense mechanism is aptly called denial.) And the actuality implies the possibility, even if we do not yet have a theory that adequately explains it. Indeed, the deeper and stronger the emotion, the more we may need to repress it unconsciously. We may be so deeply and strongly conflicted that, so to speak, our unconscious mind automatically decides that we cannot afford to be aware of it. It decides that we cannot be aware of it and keep functioning in life. In psychology, this is a prime example of an ego defense mechanism indeed.FN4

The fourth and last thing I can think of easily, as a main reason why emotions are often hard to deal with, is that we might not accept certain inner entities *as* emotions, because some mental phenomena are hard to *classify* as emotions. We are not sure if they are emotions or not. We are not sure what they are. Is suffering an emotion? Is desire? Are sexual feelings? Is hope? Or are at least some of these things merely such that emotions are their necessary condition?

Perhaps some of these things are not themselves emotions, but they cannot exist *apart from* emotions. Perhaps some of them cannot even be *defined* except partly in terms of some emotion. Can there be suffering without pain or unhappiness? Is not desire always desire for a pleasure, either directly or as an indirect result of something else? If I desire a bicycle, the bicycle is not literally a pleasure in my mind, and neither is the desire. I won't have the pleasure until I acquire the bicycle. The bicycle is an external physical object that is not even inside my body. I merely expect to be pleased to have the bicycle if and when I do acquire it. Certainly we may say, "This bicycle is a pleasure (to have)," but that is casual ordinary talk. Bicycles are physical, emotions are mental.

8. DIFFERENT KINDS OF LOVE

Aristotle's way of defining a species in terms of its genus and difference is basic to the classificatory sciences, such as biology and botany. Depending on the classificatory system, a feature of things can be a genus in one system and a difference in another. In comparison with other animals, humans are genus animal, difference rational for Aristotle. But in comparison with other rational souls, such as God and angels, humans would be genus rational, difference animal. Here we are interested in classifying the kinds of love.

Some people hold that there are only two kinds of love: *eros* (erotic or sexual), and *agape* or disinterested love. This is already a bad opposition because on the face of it, the two kinds are not logical contradictories, but (at best) logical contraries.

By definition, the logical contradictory of any property P is property not-P. Where every thing either has or does not have P, properties P and not-P define two mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive categories of everything there is. Every property has exactly one logical contradictory, namely, its negation. No thing can be both P and not-P. And no thing can be neither P nor not-P.

The logical contradictory of sexual love is nonsexual love. The logical contradictory of disinterested love is interested love, which is also called selfish love. Logically speaking, this gives us not two kinds of love which are mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive categories of love, but a four part matrix of four kinds of love: sexual disinterested, sexual interested, nonsexual disinterested, and nonsexual interested. One might object that the first of these four kinds surely must be an empty category. But I think not so. If I sexually give myself to another not to gratify myself, but only to make the other person happy, or for some other disinterested reason, or even for no reason, then that is sexual disinterested love.

Logical contraries are very different from logical contradictories. A logical contrary of a property is never its denial. And a property can have indefinitely many logical contraries. By definition, two properties F and G are logical contraries if no thing can have both, but a thing can have neither. It's as clear as black and white. Black and white are logical contraries because no thing can be both (completely black and completely white at the same time), but a thing can be neither. For example, a thing can be red or green. Black, white, red, and green are all logical contraries of each other. In contrast, sweet and sour are not logical contraries, because there is such a thing as sweet and sour sauce.

We may call white and black psychological opposites, since so many people *think* they primarily oppose each other. We may call sweet and sour psychological opposites as well, and

for the same reason. Neither pair is a pair of logical contradictories. And while black and white are clearly logical contraries, sweet and sour are just as clearly not logical contraries. If I may indulge in some logical moralizing, this is what happens when you mix up logic and psychology. Are eros and agape even logical contraries? If I'm right that there is a four-part matrix including disinterested sexual love, they are not even logical contraries. Just what, then, is the classificatory relationship between eros and agape. I think the answer is pretty clear: they are merely psychological opposites, since so many people *think* they primarily oppose each other.

If eros and agape are not logical contradictories, and are at best logical contraries, the next question to ask would be if there are any other categories of love. This is like asking if there are any other colors besides black and white, except that we know that black and white are logical contraries, and eros and agape do not appear to be even logical contraries. What about romantic love? Is it a subcategory of eros, broadly understood as eroticism? Is it a kind of interested love? Could it be nonsexual? How could it be disinterested?

Some people say that romantic love is a form of eros. No doubt they think that it is a kind of interested love, and cannot be ultimately unconnected from sexuality. But I think that much like the term "passion," the term "romantic love" has greatly changed in meaning in the last few centuries, and that this is why people today are so inclined to think that romantic love can only be a form of eros. For they think that eros is part of the very meaning or conception of the term. I shall argue that romantic love can be both nonsexual and disinterested, because the original historical conception of it as an ideal was precisely as nonsexual, disinterested love of another person, who was conceived or understood as an inspirational, ideal figure. If the other person was not a perfect, shining exemplar of an ideal, at least the Beloved more or less clearly exemplified the ideal, or at least showed the way. I think that Petrarch's love poems for Laura show this quite clearly. Petrarch's poems are a study of morality as much as of love. We may say they are a study of moral love. Some say that Petrarch's rediscovery of the ancient moral philosopher Cicero, as well as his own humanist and spiritual work, initiated the Renaissance. Because of this, I actually find it odd to include romance within eros. I find the inclusion to be a corruption, both of the term and of romantic love itself. However, I can understand why people today fall into this corruption. Because the corruption is so widespread, we may as well distinguish two kinds of romantic love, traditional and contemporary.

Historically, romance started with the troubadours (French) or minnesingers (German), who sang of a new social phenomenon of idealized love for people with whom you cannot have a sexual relation, nor even sexual feelings, because they are regarded as too pure and high for that, and because sexual feelings, or any form of selfishness, would corrupt or even destroy the love. Traditionally, romantic love is understood to be purely emotional, and to involve nothing of the sexual. More importantly for us, traditional romantic love is understood to be unselfish and self-sacrificing. For good ideals are always disinterested.

Traditional romantic love often involved a knight and a highborn lady, who could not be in a relationship with each other due to the feudal hierarchy of nobility. The noble lady might even be married to a lord. The love would and could be expressed only in poetry, song, or other gestures, and was often tolerated even by the husband lords. Today we would reject both knights and the highborn as inequalitarian feudalism. At least we do in my own country. Our constitution abolishes all social ranks and titles of nobility. There may be some modern counterparts, such as economic classes. But the conceptual point remains: traditional romance does not belong to eros.

In fact, as types of love, they are logically incompatible. This is very unlike contemporary romantic love, where most (if not all) of the relationships we call romantic relationships are very selfish and sexual. But that only means that two different types of love are involved, and the label has changed.

My view is quite different. Traditional romantic love is a form of disinterested and even self-sacrificing love. It is distinguished from agape not at all by being erotic, but by being directed to a single person, traditionally of the opposite sex, whereas agape is universally directed to all humans. That it is directed to a single person does not imply that it is selfish, but only that it is limited and, indeed, particularized to a single individual. The reason for that need not be selfish at all. It could well be a matter of awareness of only this one person as wonderful, and not of all people as worthy of love. That is, the limitation could be, and I suspect often was, merely a limitation of awareness. But I wholly grant that not every traditional romance was unselfish, any more than every knight was chivalrous. Far from it. But I'm discussing the proper classification of a concept which is an ideal.

Our somewhat humorous result, meaning humorous in light of people's nonreflectively *thinking* of eros and agape as the primary opposites in the genus of love, is that not only are eros and agape not logical contradictories, but they are not even logical contraries. And even worse, both are logical contraries of traditional romantic love. For traditional romantic love cannot be sexual. Nor can it be agape, insofar as traditional romantic love is by definition directed toward a single other person, and agape by definition is directed toward everyone. Of course, traditional romantic love and eros cannot be logical contradictories, since some instances of love, namely instances of agape, are neither. And traditional romantic love and agape cannot be logical contradictories, since erotic love is neither.

One might object that romantic love *developed from* eros as its origin, therefore it is still really just eros in a disguised form. Even if the premiss is quite true, the argument commits C. D. Broad's genetic fallacy (Broad 1968: 11–14). A heathen converted to Christianity is no longer a heathen, despite her pagan origins. A retired bank robber is no longer a bank robber, despite his criminal past. More to the point for us, if "a taste for music is due to suppressed sexual desire" (Broad 1968: 13), this does not make a taste for music a sexual desire, suppressed or not. People often distinguish many kinds of love such, as love of friends, love of family, love of sports, love of music, and so on. All that is fine. Yes, all these are different. But many of them are not even logical contraries. "You are not only my father but also my friend. And we both love sports and music."

We are not done yet with main kinds of love. A whole kind of love is still missing from the simple eros-agape distinction. And it is not romantic love in either the traditional sense or the contemporary sense. Indeed, perhaps next to agape, it is the most important kind of love. This major kind of love is often called companionate love. Within marriage, it is called conjugal love. We may define conjugal love simply as companionate love between people who are married. It should be apparent immediately that companionate love is a genus with several species. Companionate love applies, or can apply, between people in a personal relationship, between family members such as children and parents, and between friends, especially if they have known each other many years, or who have served together in some difficult service, such as wartime service. Indeed, the Macedonian shock cavalry of Alexander the Great were simply called The Companions.

Companionate love is not romantic. I think it's pretty clearly deeper than romantic, even in the traditional sense of romance. It's not some lofty distant ideal, but a realistic acceptance of each other as you are. As opposed to contemporary romantic love, it's what you'll be very lucky to find yourself having many years later, after the romance has worn off. Please remember that all these forms of love are passions, not actions. That's why I'm using the language "find yourself having." As to actions based on or concerning passions, please see the section on hybrids.

Companionate love is even more clearly not erotic, even though some bands of ancient warriors were homoerotic. There is nothing in the concept of loving each other as you are that logically implies anything sexual. To the contrary, it implies that you would still accept each other even if you were incapable of sex. For being incapable of sex might be part of who or what you are. Of course, it also implies that if you are sexual, then this is to be accepted as part of who or what you are. But it implies only that this sexuality is to be accepted as a fact about you. Companionate love is not agape, insofar as companionate love is directed to one or to a few others, while agape is directed to everyone. However, companionate love and agape are more like each other than either is like any other kind of love. This is because they are not only kinds of love, but kinds of friendship.

Some monks, priests, or other religious types are often especially close in spiritual friendship. This is so much so that it often needs to be discouraged in favor of agape. In agape, you are not supposed to be especially close to any one person or group of people. There are often admonitions about this in traditional religious literature, as well as in mystical literature. This is also why some churches like to move their pastors around every few years. It would seem from this not only that spiritual agape is deeper and more important than spiritual companionate love, but that the latter can impede and obstruct the former.

Of course, neither agape, nor companionate love, nor friendship as a genus need be religious at all. Certainly atheists and agnostics can be in relationships of companionate love,, and can accept agape as a purely ethical sort of love. This is so even though Christians seem to think otherwise. This might be part of their psychological opposition of agape to eros.

Aristotelian friendship is a good analysis of companionate love. He says, "My best friend is the one who in wishing me well wishes it for my sake."

The nonreligious, purely ethical golden rule states agape quite nicely as egalitarian love. Jesus' second commandment is merely a religious version of the golden rule. In fact, the way he states it is purely ethical and not religious. It is only the biblical context and the fact that Jesus says it is the second commandment that make it religious.

At this point, we have at least five different main kinds of love: eros, agape, traditional romantic, contemporary romantic, and companionate. I am not sure that any of these is a sub-category of any of the others. The only subsumption that is plausible would be of contemporary romantic love under eros. And I am not sure even that would be correct. For while much of contemporary romantic love is clearly sexual, much of it is just as clearly not. Much of it is emotional as opposed to sexual. If this were not so, then contemporary romantic love would be just another term for sex. Think here of Valentines, candle light dinners, moonlit walks. These can be very romantic with nothing sexual happening at all. Even holding hands or kissing good-night can be simply affectionate. Therefore all five of our categories of love are ultimate. I mean that none of them logically can be subsumed as a sub-category under any of the others.

My classification includes three different kinds of disinterested love. (1) Agape is universal disinterested love and can be religious, agnostic, or atheistic. (2) Traditional romantic love is disinterested and self-sacrificing too, but is normally directed to a single other person. (3) Companionate love is disinterested and self-sacrificing too, and is normally directed to one other person, or just a few people. The difference between traditional romantic love and companionate love is that the former is idealistic, meaning that it idealizes the beloved, or sees some wonderful ideal clearly realized in this particular beloved, while the latter is realistic, meaning that it accepts the beloved as s/he is, with all his or her faults and limitations. I find this threefold classification intuitively very satisfactory. The actual terms we use for these classifications do not really matter. The classifications themselves are logically clear and distinct, though of course there can be vague or borderline cases in practice.

I have no doubt that atheists or agnostics can experience any of these three kinds of disinterested love. They can even have it out of thankfulness for some sort of saving or rescuing from spiritual distress through some atheistic philosophy or religion, such as atheistic Stoicism or Buddhism.

There is an ultimate categorial level of two kinds of love: interested and disinterested. These are logical contradictories on the face of it. On the face of it, every kind of love must be either one or the other, and cannot be both. On the face of it, eros is interested love, and agape, traditional romantic love, and companionate love are disinterested love. But what about contemporary romantic love? On the face of it, contemporary romantic love is partly interested, partly disinterested. What is a classificatory psychologist (psyche = the soul) to do?

One answer is that contemporary romantic love is simply a mixture. If everything is either sand or pebbles, and if, per impossible, everything must be either sand or pebbles, and cannot be both, we can still have mixed heaps of sand and pebbles. But I shall offer a better answer shortly. As a minor note, interested or selfish love is not vanity. Selfish love is love of another person for selfish reasons. Vanity is love of oneself for selfish reasons. In contrast, one logically can love oneself equally with all others for disinterested or unselfish reasons.

9. HYBRID ENTITIES THAT ARE NOT EMOTIONS, BUT INCLUDE THEM

In general, the hybrid entities I have in mind here are relations that include an emotional relation plus a non-emotional relation. But there can be indefinitely many other sorts of hybrid entities as well. For example, I may experience a non-directed, non-relational emotion of general happiness or of general anxiety, and act in a certain way because of the general emotion I feel. This is not a hybrid of two relations because the emotion is non-relational. Indeed, if I act happily in general because of my general feeling of happiness, my acting is not relational either, at least in the sense that it is not directed toward anyone or anything in particular. For example, I might be just dancing around and waving my arms about happily, without intending to do anything in particular, other than express my happiness in a general way.

Agape is often said to be not just the emotion of universal nonselfish love toward everyone, but to be essentially our acting in a loving way toward everyone out of (because of, due to) that love. I have no problem with such hybrid relations. Obviously they are possible, and I think they are sometimes actual. I only wish to note that this is nothing special in the case of

agape. All emotions can be blended with actions in this way. I can fear and act out of my fear. I can be angry and act out of my anger. Even concerning other types of love, I can act erotically out of erotic love, act romantically out of romantic love, and so on. There is nothing special about agape here.

I return now to the question whether contemporary romantic love is interested love or disinterested love. I already described one plausible answer: it is a mixture of both, much like a mixed heap of sand and pebbles. But I think the better answer is that it is a hybrid of at least potentially interacting interested and disinterested elements. Without an element of disinterested love, it would be nothing but selfish sex, or selfish preludes to possible selfish sex. Yet it is also basic to the contemporary concept of romance that it be at least possible for the love to be sexual and / or selfish, at least in part.

Further work could be done on the categories of love. We could find additional categories or at least advance the analysis of the five we have found. But this is good enough for us here. My main point was to show that dividing all love into either eros or agape is simplistic and false.

10. THE ONTOLOGICAL LOCUS OF EMOTIONS IS IN THE MIND

No emotions are homeless. That is, emotions always belong to sentient beings who have them. And this is just like all mental ideas across the board. No mental ideas are homeless. Mental ideas always belong to conscious beings, even if the ideas themselves are unconscious (repressed) or subliminal. Emotions always exist in minds. Mental ideas always exist in minds. How could it be otherwise?

Even on a neutral monist theory of mind as consisting of a bundle of mental ideas, no mental idea would or could be outside a mind, that is, outside a bundle of ideas.

The ontological locus of hybrid or mixed entities is likewise hybrid or mixed.

11. EMOTIONS ARE A NECESSARY CONDITION OF ALL VALUES AND DUTIES

I think we all would agree that if there were no minds at all, or if you please, no conscious beings at all, then there could be no emotions *or* values *or* duties. Without minds, there could there be no conscious emotions, no subliminal emotions, and no unconscious emotions. Even an unconscious emotion would still have to be in (an unconscious part of) some mind. So to speak, it can't just be floating around somewhere on its own. And while the ontological locus of values and duties might not be in the mind, still there could be none if there were no minds. Therefore minds are a logically necessary condition of emotions, values, and duties. They are not a formally necessary condition, but an intuitively necessary condition. Not all logical necessity is formal.

Even more clearly, if minds or persons were logically impossible, then emotions, values, and duties would be logically impossible as well. This too is a logically necessary relationship. But are there any logically necessary relations among emotions, values, and duties themselves? There can be no ethical values in a world without emotions or feelings of any kind. For if we are indifferent to everything, then nothing can matter. Thus emotions are a logically necessary condition of values. If we are indifferent, then nothing can have value to us. It is said that Thales,

the first philosopher, held that there is no difference between life and death. Someone suggested to him that if that was what he believed, then he should kill himself. Thales replied no, because it would make no difference. Indifference, or absence of difference, is identity, insofar as identicals are indiscernible and indiscernibles are identical. And if everything is identical, then nothing is preferable. Even if two things were not identical but merely indiscernible, then there would be no discernible reason to prefer either over the other. Thus we need not reach the famous question whether if P and Q are indiscernible (cannot be told apart on the basis of any differences), then P and Q are identical. Either way, there would be no reason to prefer any one thing over any other thing, and no reason to value anything to which we are indifferent.

In turn, there can be no moral duties (responsibilities) in a world without ethical values of any kind. For if nothing has any value, then there is nothing we ought to do. Thus values are a logically necessary condition of duties.

The previous two paragraphs are in effect the premisses of an argument whose conclusion is that there can be no duties in a world without emotions or feelings of any kind. The argument is: no values without emotions, no duties without values, therefore no duties without emotions. I accept this argument as trivially sound. All the premisses are fairly widely accepted as true. I could not make the subtitle of this paper “Emotions Versus Responsibilities,” even though that is the main topic, because at bottom, as you can now see, duties or responsibilities are based upon, that is, essentially dependent upon, emotions. Of course, the converse is false.

We can broaden the argument and make it stronger and deeper by speaking of pleasures and pains instead of emotions. Pleasures and pains are more basic than emotions. There can be emotionless pleasures and pains, but there cannot be emotions without pleasure or pain. Thus we may argue further that there can be no duties in a world with no pleasures or pains of any kind. Thus the full chain of argument is: no emotions without pleasures or pains, no values without emotions, no duties without values, therefore no duties without emotions. I accept this argument as trivially sound as well. Here too, all the premisses are fairly widely accepted as true. This argument supports but does not imply utilitarianism. I am not *defining* duties in terms of values, nor values in terms of emotions, nor emotions in terms of pleasures and pains. I am holding only that pleasures and pains are a necessary condition of emotions, that emotions are a necessary condition of values, and that values are a necessary condition of duties. I have shown only that pleasure and / or pain are a necessary condition of moral duty, not a sufficient condition. For a definition of moral duty in terms of pleasure and pain to be possible, pleasure and pain would also have to be a *sufficient* condition of moral duty. That is, for P to define Q, P must be both the logically necessary condition and the logically sufficient condition of Q.

The main value of the full argument is simply that it shows the complete picture going from duty to value to emotion to pleasure and pain.

We may say that those pleasures and pains which give rise to emotions are a species of pleasure and pain, that those emotions which have ethical value are a species of emotion, and that those values which give rise to moral duties are a species of values.

Of course, as far as merely showing *that we have* a duty, we need not go through the full series of four stages. justifiability goes. For example, some pleasures and pains are great that they directly entail duties. For example, we have a duty not to torture anyone simply because it causes too much pain. That relation is simple and direct. Or if a certain act provides the greatest pleasure for the greatest number of people, then it is our duty to perform that act. And that is true even by

definition, if we are utilitarians.

I see a paradox here. How can not just emotions, but anything over which we can have no control, be so meaningful and important to our lives? Should not philosophy counsel indifference to the things we cannot control? Perhaps we can start to see the answer if we look at many other things over which we have no control. How can floods, illness, death, and so on, be so important to our lives if we have no control over them? The answer is that it's not our ability to choose them but their impact on our lives that gives them their importance. Likewise for emotions. They can make a huge difference to our lives. Life would not be worth living without them, at least not without the positive emotions,

Perhaps philosophy should counsel indifference to emotion and to natural disasters. Perhaps we should be indifferent to our inner and outer fate. But fatalism is a very theoretical, ideal, and humanly empty counsel. In practice, "Never was there philosopher who could bear the toothache patiently." As Hume says, we are human beings first, and philosophers second (if that). There is a second problem with the paradox. We do not have control over our emotions in the sense that we can simply and directly will them to exist, or cease to exist, or be as they are. But we often can have a great deal of indirect control over them by controlling their triggers or other factors that tend to increase them, decrease them, and so on. This too is much like floods and illnesses; and we can often do much to make death come earlier or later, or in a better way or a worse way.

Third, we have no simple, direct control over pleasures and pains either. And Stoicism may be right that we should learn indifference to pleasure and pain to the extent possible. But if we were totally indifferent, then life would not be worth living, at least not without any pleasure. There would be no reason to prefer life to death. Also, we can do a great deal to control pleasure and pain indirectly. Not that happiness should come out of a bottle.

We often endure lives of great suffering and pain for a higher goal. But the higher goal itself gives us a higher pleasure. It is the satisfaction of having tried to reach a higher goal.

Perhaps the greatest objection to my view in this section might be that values, and thereby duties, are directly based on pleasure and pain alone. If so, then there is no need or reason to bring emotions into the account as an intermediary category between values and pleasures-and-pains. We may call this the utilitarian objection. However, we need not be utilitarians in order to make the objection. For the objection concerns only pleasure and pain as a logically necessary condition of values and thereby of duties, not as the logically necessary and sufficient condition.

My reply is that there is such a thing as being emotionally indifferent to pleasure and pain. The pleasure and pain are felt just as much, but we simply don't care whether we feel them. I'm not concerned here with the actuality or frequency of such a situation, but only with the logical possibility. That's because I'm concerned here only to show what is a logically necessary condition of what, not what is a causally or other sort of necessary condition of what. Perhaps only a Shaolin priest (as in the imaginary *Kung Fu* movies and TV series) is or can be indifferent to pleasure or pain. And as I logically intuit things, pleasure and pain are not a logically necessary condition of value directly, because we logically can be evaluatively indifferent to them. However, emotions logically cannot exist without some minimal pleasure or pain, and values logically cannot exist without some minimal emotion. Therefore I see my logical series, going from duties through values through emotions to pleasure and pain, as logically correct, at least as far as it goes. If duties and values mutually imply each other, that is fine with me. If there is some

additional stage or set of stages that I have overlooked, that is fine with me too.

But perhaps the chief objection to my view is a Kantian one. Surely a totally emotionless person, or even a person who *cannot* ever experience emotion, can, does, and must still have intrinsic value as an end in herself. My reply is to distinguish such a Kantian postulation of intrinsic value (and it is hard to see how it is anything but mere postulation) from any actual value such a person could ever find in anything, including (or perhaps especially) in herself. In order to avoid further objections concerning values or duties that *other* persons could find in or concerning an emotionless person, we may suppose that *no* person can ever experience emotion, and ask if there is any real meaning to talk of the value of people as ends in themselves, in such a logically possible situation.

12. IS *AGAPE* EGALITARIAN? IS IT BETTER THAN EGALITARIAN?

One question is whether agape, or the disinterested love of others, is the best sort of love, or even a right sort of love, if it is unequalitarian. It is unequalitarian insofar as we put others before ourselves. And it is often interpreted that way. But it can also be understood as loving others as much as ourselves, which of course would be egalitarian. This section is about agape in the first sense, because otherwise there would be no interesting conflict to discuss.

At least according to one text in Christianity, we are supposed to love the other person *more* than we love ourselves, to treat them *better* than we treat ourselves. But is it not best to be equally fair to everyone, including ourselves? Or would things be equal enough if each of us were equally to treat everyone else better than ourselves? That might be considered a higher-level sort of equality. Would that be that fair?

There appears to be a logical conflict between two competing and incommensurable values, which we may call magnanimity (generosity to others at one's own expense) and egalitarianism (treating everyone equally). We logically cannot follow both duties at once. Even if we were all equally *more* generous to everyone than we were to ourselves, there still would be a conflict. In fact, the conflict would be pervasive to the point of universality. For *no one* would be treating themselves as equal to *anyone* else.

But this conflict is not a special problem at all. In fact, it is a typical case of two values, or value-based duties, that can conflict. In general, we can describe a spectrum or series of logically possible situations. At one end, only one value is present. At the other, only the other value is present. In between, both values are present and conflict with each other. Depending on which end we start from, one value gradually increases in strength of importance while the other decreases. Somewhere toward the middle, the values are either equal in importance or we simply cannot measure which is stronger than which, meaning that they are incommensurable. I call this a defeasibility spectrum or continuum. Value V1 is said to defease value V2 in logically possible situation S just in case V1 and V2 conflict in S, and V1 trumps or outranks V2 in S. Likewise for duties D1 and D2. Duty D1 is said to defease duty D2 in logically possible situation S just in case D1 and D2 conflict in S, and D1 trumps or outranks D2 in S.

In some extreme cases, one value clearly defeases (trumps, outweighs) the other. In other extreme cases, the other defeases the one. In between these two extremes, there is a spectrum. At some indeterminate middle region, it is simply not possible to decide which defeases which,

either because they are equal in weight of importance, or because they are incommensurable. If they are equal, then it is logically arbitrary which one we choose. If they are incommensurable, then we can make an intuitive judgment at best, and our intuitions can differ. I will discuss defeasibility in more detail shortly.

Others-first agape and egalitarianism are logically conflicting. We logically cannot treat another person better than ourselves and equally well as ourselves in the same way at the same time. Even in arithmetic, being greater than and being equal to logically cannot obtain between the same two numbers. Two numbers can never be both equal and unequal. More generally, this is the logic of quantity. Two quantities can never be both equal and unequal. That quantities are often logically indeterminate (cannot be exactly measured) or logically incommensurable (cannot be measures against each other) does not detract from this point. When two quantities *can* be measured, they can never be both equal and unequal. Also, we can often clearly tell that one indeterminate quantity is far greater than another; and if so, they just as clearly cannot be equal.

Clearly, an others-oriented agapist would want to treat others clearly better than herself, and an egalitarian would not want even the appearance of unequal treatment. Thus the ethical conflict is a logical conflict. Of course, this was practically a matter of definition to begin with. Loving others more than yourself obviously can and probably does involve a value or values other than that of egalitarianism, not to mention in logical conflict with it. Arguably, that value is humility, or at least a lessening of pride, or perhaps a heightened conception of service to others, perhaps as involving, or as being capable of involving, self-sacrifice. The argument would be both conceptual and, for some religions, historical / revelatory.

Perhaps the idea is that spiritual poverty, or self-negation or self-sacrifice, is a higher or better value than equal treatment. Perhaps that is why Jesus is indifferent to human slavery. At least, he never says it is wrong, and thinking that he considered it is wrong is an extrapolation from other texts. Being a slave to righteousness is actually a step in the right direction for him. But that seems to be a metaphorical use of "slave." The key difference is that being a slave to righteousness is voluntary, while being a slave in the ordinary literal sense never or almost never is. Granted, indentured servitude is voluntary in a sense, but one's life circumstances which might lead one to contract for five years of servitude for, say, free passage on a ship to America, are often not. But indentured servitude is not literal slavery either. Regardless of how a literal slavery starts, for example by losing a voluntary wager, by definition it is involuntary while it lasts.

Assuming that I am right so far, agape, on its interpretation as others-oriented, and egalitarianism are in logical conflict. The question then arises, Which value is better, agape or egalitarianism? Or is agape better in some contexts, such as charity work, and egalitarianism better in other contexts, such as voting in elections?

Looking holistically at society as a whole, would agape tend to promote a better society than egalitarianism? That could be very hard to assess. The question might even be logically indeterminate.

If lessening pride is the key difference, pride is often considered the key sin. But pride is still just one sin among others, and different persons and different societies could be in different spiritual circumstances concerning the various kinds of sin. As Ramakrishna says, the goddess Kali does not give everyone the same spiritual medicine from her closet. A pompous person may need a lessening of pride. Another person may need the opposite medicine for a negative self-

image, or for overdoing help to others at her own expense, and should put her own needs first at least once in a while. There is an excess and a deficiency to magnanimity, and a golden mean, and also to egalitarianism, which is not always best in every possible circumstance. At any rate, that is the paradox with agape, if agape is understood in this inegalitarian, others-oriented way.

The best theoretical solution has already been provided. Neither value is better than the other as such. Instead, there is a continuum or spectrum of logically possible situations. At one end, agape is clearly better. At the other end, egalitarianism just as clearly is. In the middle, there are logically possible situations where the values are so close in weight that either they are equal, or perhaps more feasibly, it is logically indeterminate which value is greater and ought to defeat the other. The question then devolves to which individual situations and which societies are at which points along the spectrum. I would like to suggest that due to vagueness and complication, perhaps most actual cases are logically indeterminate. That is not because the two values are so unclear themselves. In fact, their statement seems quite clear. Instead, it seems to be because their consequences are so hard to evaluate. Perhaps their evaluation will beg the question. For agape's consequences will tend to be agapist, while egalitarianism's consequences will tend to be egalitarianism. Of course, you can always argue, agape is likelier to get you eternal bliss than egalitarianism is, but that begs the question on the truth of a certain religious framework, and is more in the nature of an assumption taken on faith than a serious intellectual pursuit of ethical truth in the open marketplace of philosophical ideas.

If I am right, then we have seen that others-oriented agape has a serious problem in that it logically conflicts with another great value, egalitarianism; and we have seen that theoretically, the resolution is on a case by case basis at best.

Are there any problems with egalitarianism? We can immediately say yes. It has the exact mirror inversion problem of logically conflicting with others-oriented agape. But it also faces logical paradoxes, considering egalitarianism entirely by itself.

The stock paradox is easily stated with respect to the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you." What if I would have others do *bad* things to me? (*Why* I might want that is not logically relevant to the *existence* of the paradox.) Should I then do bad things to others? Should we restrict the rule to being only about doing only good and / or neutral things? But it would then lose its universality of scope of application. Aren't ethical principles supposed to be universal?

Another paradox emerges in the old story that an angel offers to give someone anything he wants, so long as his enemy receives exactly the same thing. The man then asks the angel to put out one of his eyes, because his enemy only has one eye. The paradox is based on the fact that equality is always in a certain respect (or in all respects), and here there are two very different respects. There is equal treatment in respect of blinding one eye. But there is unequal treatment in respect of one person remaining able to see and the other becoming totally blind. So to speak, that is a difference in scope of impact. This paradox can be removed, in a verbal sense, simply by specifying the respects. But where the respects actually conflict in value, then we have an actual value conflict within the theory of egalitarianism. The theoretical resolution would be that there is a spectrum or continuum where equal treatment in respect R1 is clearly better at one end of the spectrum, and equal treatment in respect R2 is clearly better at the other. Perhaps most actual situations are somewhere in the middle of the spectrum. Perhaps the angel story is at one end of

the spectrum, so as to highlight the value conflict with a clear hypothetical example. Or perhaps not. Perhaps the enemy really is a bad guy, and it would be better for him to be blind. We may call that an angelic sub-spectrum.

We could introduce a subtler constraint on the egalitarian principle (the golden rule), so as to exclude self-referential treatment. But that is intrinsically doomed to failure, because self-reference is essential to the golden rule by definition: Treat others as *I* would have them treat me. I suggest a mixed approach to resolving the first paradox of egalitarianism. The approach would be to treat the golden rule as consisting of three logically disjunctive parts.

(1) Concerning good treatment, there is no problem. *Of course* we should return good for good. “Even the pagans love those who love them.” (My paraphrase). There is no paradox here.

(2) Concerning ethically neutral treatment, we can treat the rule as indifferent to ethically neutral treatment. That is, we can find it morally permissible, if not obligatory, to return neutral treatment for neutral treatment. If the treatment is ethically neutral, then from the ethical point of view, it hardly seems to matter whether we return the treatment or not, so long as any treatment we do return is ethically neutral. This is a zero sum value game.

(3) Concerning bad treatment, we can return to our first suggestion of a constraint against applying the rule to bad treatment. That will remove the first paradox of egalitarianism. But then how can we understand the rule as universal? What *are* we to do in cases of bad treatment? The rule must say something about cases of bad treatment, as well as about cases of good treatment and neutral treatment.

Concerning bad treatment, we can apply the very different rule of magnanimity, or others-oriented agape. Namely, we can advocate returning good for evil. Christianity and Buddhism do not want us to return evil for evil anyway. We are supposed to return good for evil. And perhaps that would be an interesting general theoretical solution to the problem which is the better value, egalitarianism or others-oriented agape. We can advocate egalitarianism for doing good things, neutrality for doing neutral things (this is actually a form of egalitarianism), and magnanimity concerning evils done to us. Thus each value has its own general logical sphere or spheres, with the rule of magnanimity being a logical part of the golden rule. Of course, then the golden rule would no longer be strictly egalitarian. But as they say, when you confront a real philosophical problem, you always have to pay a price in your solution. This price is arguably worth paying. I’m sure that advocates of magnanimity would want not only to return good for evil, but also good for neutral, and greater good for lesser good. My reply is that it would be very simple-minded to say that either value is, as such, intrinsically or even always in fact, superior to the other. It would simply beg the question to assume that others-first is a better value than everyone-equally, or vice versa.

In fact, for the very same reason, I’m afraid I’ll have to shoot down my own suggestion that our most basic moral rule ought to consist of the three logical parts I just described. For it would be just as simple-minded to restrict egalitarianism to positive values, or magnanimity to negative values. The only satisfying theory is the defeasement theory of a continuum of logically possible situations, with egalitarianism clearly correct in certain cases at one end of the spectrum, and magnanimity clearly correct in other cases at the other end, and with many if not most actual cases falling somewhere in between.

This is the only satisfying picture for different values and different duties alike. For if we take any two different values or duties, we can always describe logically possible situations so as

to describe such a continuum.

13. LEVELS OF MORAL DUTY IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

First, let us look at what may be called the logically quantitative sorts of duties. By “logically quantitative,” I mean that you (or I or we) owe the duty to (1) exactly one (usually other) person, or to (2) more than one person but not to all, or to (3) all persons. That is:

(1) We can have “individual duties” to specific individual people. These can arise from our individual contracts or agreements or relationships with others, or from other sources. For example, special familial duties can be based on our unique relation to our father, our mother, our only sibling, our younger sibling, or our spouse. This category also includes duties I owe only to myself as a specific individual. Some have said there are no such self-duties. I disagree. There are many things that only I can do, and that only I can do for myself. There is a list of about twenty such things that has been going around for years. Only I can choose for myself to be a good person, to tell the truth, or to be “trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.” (That’s the Boy Scout list.)

(2) We can have group duties to specific sets or groups of people that arise from social contracts or agreements, or from other sources, where the sets are proper subsets, meaning that they include some but not all people. These can include our nation, business, church, or military unit. A mayor, chief company officer, pastor, or ship captain has many group duties in this sense.

(3) We can have “universal duties” that we owe to everyone equally, including ourselves. It is possible to owe such duties not just to humanity, but to all rational beings, or to sentient life in general. Duties owed to all and only human beings may be called anthropocentrist. Duties owed to all living beings may be called Schweitzerian, in honor of Albert Schweitzer’s moral principle of reverence for life. Egalitarianism would be a universal duty. Magnanimity is strictly not, because it is owed to the proper subset of everyone except myself. However, understood as the duty that everyone is to be equally magnanimous to others, even magnanimity would be a universal duty.

Can we have other, miscellaneous duties that do not fall under any of the first three categories? Can there be duties we owe neither to a specific individual, nor to a specific group (proper subset of people), nor to everyone equally? I think not. There are no other quantities, and there are no duties that are owed to no one. Duties can only be owed to someone. Thus there is no fourth option.

Strictly speaking, the first category is a sub-category of the second, since a set whose sole member is a single person is a proper subset of the set of proper subsets of all people, at least if there exist at least three people. But it will be practically helpful to retain the distinction between the first two categories.

All three logically quantitative levels of duty can apply within a single relationship between two people, if the two people have an individual agreement, and also belong to the same group or groups, and also have some universal duties.

So much for the logical scope of persons to whom duties can be owed.

Let’s now look at what may be called “qualitative” or kinds of duties, organized roughly in accordance with the logically quantitative levels. It will be a loose hierarchy of ethical levels.

Since there are indefinitely many duties, I shall limit the list to a few of the most important ones that are of interest in personal relationships.

A. *Qualitative kinds of individual duties*

We'll start with marriage duties, so that marriage relationships will be included. Every marriage is a contract of agreement to some set of (usually mutual) duties. Of course, marriage need not be the pinnacle of personal relationships. Even if in religious circles, marriage is a sacrament and living together unmarried is living in sin, that's just religion. There logically can be, and there actually are, nonmarital relationships that are far better and more valuable to the two people in it than most marriages. Just look around. In fact, some liberal Protestant theologians have held that a serious, loving, monogamous nonmarital relationship can be enough like marriage not to be a truly horrible sin, or even not to be very sinful, if at all. Realistically, it may be the best option two people have, say, for economic or maturity reasons. It may be the most responsible choice under the circumstances, since divorce can be a disaster. The two people may even be hoping to marry when that would be more feasible. Also, as a point concerning kinds of duties, two people logically need not be married in order to make certain specific promises to each other.

(1) We have the marriage promise to be faithful, the promise to stick it out to the extent humanly possible, "for better or for worse, till death do us part," and the promise to nurture the marriage. Jesus allows an exception for adultery as making divorce morally permissible.

(2) We can have a couple who may or may not be married, but who love each other so much that either would become despondent upon a breakup. This is arguably a universal duty to prevent any overwhelming emotional devastation in anyone. But arguably, the individuals who know they love each other, and have encouraged love in each other through use of triggers, also have a special individual duty not to hurt each other. This is so even though the emotion of love, considered in itself, is a passion, meaning that no one can control its existence or nature. Here we are considering not the mere existence of the love, but our knowledge or awareness of it. In fact, people are sometimes the last to know that they love someone, and many romantic comedies are largely based on that fact. Sometimes that is because the love is slowly developing below the threshold of perception. In any case, once we do know that we love someone, we have choices to make. We can choose to tell or not to tell the person that we love them. We can also choose whether to use triggers to stimulate the love by indirect means, such as love letters, or to remove triggers so as to reduce the stimulation, perhaps in the hope that the love will abate and die.

(3) We can have a couple who are neither married nor in love, but who trust each other, and who would become despondent if that trust were violated. We may view trust as a sort of implicit promise to be faithful, if not also to try to preserve and develop the relationship. This sort of trust arguably includes an implicit promise to tell the truth, or at least not to lie, if cheating does occur. Telling the truth and not lying are two different things. If you are silent, you do not tell the truth, but at least you are not lying. A silent person neither lies nor tells the truth. It may be hard to weigh which of these two options is better in a particular situation. (Positively) telling the truth and (negatively) not lying are, in fact, conflicting values with their own defeasibility spectrum. Sometimes it is clearly best to tell the truth. Sometimes it is clearly best not to tell the truth, but not lie. And sometimes, or so I shall argue, it is best to lie. Would it be better not to lie and have twenty people die, or to lie and save twenty lives, where these are the only two available options? This too is a defeasibility spectrum. Even for religious types, there is

an Old Testament example of a prostitute who lies to save the lives of some Israelites. It's really the same example. I shall return to the topic of the mutual defeasibility of honesty and lying later.

B. *Qualitative kinds of social or group duties*

These are typically enshrined in a set or group of laws or rules, such as the laws of a state, or a code of military conduct. For local readers, the most relevant examples would be the marriage laws and the sexual conduct laws of the state of Michigan. Even if Plato is right that the law is but the shadow of justice, and that our real duties lie on the side of justice, still we have a duty to obey the law, per Socrates. However, even our duty to obey the law can be defeated in extreme circumstances. Look at the American Revolution. If I'm not mistaken, I think that ancient Athens had a very nice law that if you were 65 or older, and you thought a certain law would be unfair to apply in a particular legal case, you could ask to speak to the judge privately about it. In effect, the oldest and presumably most experienced and wisest citizens could request a defeasement of the law of Athens. And that was itself a law of Athens, which perhaps could itself be defeated.

C. *Qualitative kinds of universal duties*

It's not going to matter here whether the duties are anthropocentric or Schweitzerian, because in this paper, it doesn't matter if I'm only talking about personal relationships between two humans, or between any two rational, sentient beings. Yes, I think we do owe duties to our individual pets, to different species, to all animals, and so on. I also think that science fiction-type possible aliens would have such duties, if they are sufficiently rational and sentient. Duties are recognized in the light of reason; and recall that there are no duties if there are no emotions in the world. Hence I think we do need both rationality and sentience, at least for the sorts of duties discussed here. We may also owe some very general duties even to merely sentient beings. But that is not our topic.

(4) There is a universal obligation for everyone to treat each other as equals.

(5) There is a universal obligation to treat everyone with respect. This is not the same as equal treatment, because in many ways of life, people are not equals, but still ought to treat each other with respect. Military, religious, or social hierarchies are all examples. In the military, at least when I served, we spoke of equal justice under the justice code, and of equal opportunity for advancement depending on training and ability. But these things are nothing like equality. Under normal circumstances, a yeoman (clerk) has no right to order the course of a ship. This is not to pass judgment on such hierarchical institutions as good or bad, but merely to note their existence, so as to make the point that within them, duties (4) and (5) are not the same. Thus strict and total equality does not apply within some social hierarchies, and we might all agree that it ought not to apply, for example in an army at war, or in medical triage.

There is a widespread tendency for people to think of duties (4) and (5) as the same, or at least as entailing each other. But I have just argued that in fact that is not so, as many institutions are a counterexample. If you wish to say that everyone ought to be equals because we are all human beings, I would simply reply that here we may distinguish between human life considered in itself or as such, and proper sub-ways of human life in which, for good or bad, people simply are not equals. My point that duties (4) and (5) are different is established if there is any situation at all, even a merely logically possible one, in which (5) would apply but (4) would not. If such arguments are not conclusive, we may argue very conclusively in the opposite direction that duties (4) and (5) are different. Namely, if we treat everyone with equal *disrespect*, including

ourselves, we have totally satisfied the duty of equal treatment, but have totally failed the duty of respect, since we (equally) disrespected everyone.

(6) We have a universal obligation to tell the truth and keep our promises. It may be a defeasible duty, but it is a duty nonetheless. In fact, all or almost all duties are defeasible, certainly in extreme situations.

We may say that a personal relationship is morally adequate if it honors all six duties, or at least all the applicable duties, since, for example, not everyone who is together is married, and marital duties apply only within a marriage.

14. DEFEASIBILITY AND THE INCOMMENSURABILITY OF DIFFERENT VALUES

Defeasibility is a main topic in ethics and in deontic (moral) logic. A moral duty is defeated if it is trumped by another, higher-level, moral duty, typically in a certain situation. Both duties are taken as objective and as morally required; but if they conflict, then one is taken as more important than the other, at least in the given situation. We can discuss defeasibility using more complex distinctions, and even formalize the discussion into various deontic logics as appropriate. For a technical discussion of defeasibility, please see my (2015: 127–30). But this is enough description of defeasibility for our purposes here. I formally defined defeasibility in section 12.

Many people, including many people in the college crowd, often see things in simplistic terms of good or bad, white or black, yes or no. Such thinking is often called polarized or binary. This includes not just polarizing the evaluation of relationships as simply right or simply wrong, but polarizing all values simply good or simply bad.

In contrast, when I suggest that there are continuums for all pairs of conflicting values, with the clearly right values only at the polar ends, and much if not most life situations lying in a vast gray middle area in between, I believe I'm suggesting a picture far more reflective of the realities of life. Concerning faithfulness, the so-called "other woman" or "homewrecker" is not always or necessarily the villain. Sometimes the other spouse is the villain, and the other woman is the knight in shining armor coming to the rescue. Certainly that is at least *logically* possible. But I really want to suggest that even in cases of infidelity, there may be no clear hero or clear villain at all.

Every value can be opposed to any other value so that there is a continuum of logically possible situations between the two. At each end, neither value defeats the other, since there is only one value at that end. There is no defeasement because there is no other value there to defeat the one. Then they start to defeat each other as they gradually approach each other. In each direction, one waxes and the other wanes in strength and appropriateness. But there is an indeterminately large region in the middle of the spectrum where they are more or less balanced, or are even found to be incommensurable. They must be incommensurable at some point, since they logically can be co-measurable in all possible circumstances if and only if they were the same value. Here there is no right or best answer, we have to use our best intuitive judgment, and different people could reasonably judge differently. The opposite poles are paradigms of clear duty. At least in theory, in the exact middle of the continuum, the two values are equally balanced, and we might as well flip a coin. This is called the problem of Buridan's ass, where the

ass is equi-positioned between two equally good piles of hay and has (by stipulation) no reason to prefer either over the other. Either the ass makes an arbitrary command decision or it dies of starvation. This is also Hegel's view of the constitutional monarch when the vote in parliament is a tie. At least as far as voting procedure goes, there is nothing wrong with anything the monarch decides to break the tie, because the decision is arbitrary. The parliament might as well flip a "monarch coin." But without exact numerical degrees of commensurable values, there can be only an indeterminate middle region of incommensurable rival values.

Strictly speaking, vagueness and incommensurability are different issues. At least, two things can be perfectly determinate in quantity, yet incommensurable with respect to quality. For at least an initial example to start the discussion, compare going for a walk for half an hour and reading a book for half an hour. The example is due to Joseph Raz.

Why can there never be a perfect sailboat or warship? It is because there are different competing considerations or values that weigh differently in different situations. Why will there never be a greatest American novel? Same answer. How then can there be a single best religion? How can there be a single best ethic? How can there be a single best philosophy?

I would scarcely be a philosopher if I did not ask self-reflectively, How can my own theory of ethical continuums be the single best ethic? Can there never be a situation where some other theory might be better? For example, would it not be best for an ethically simple person to make a simple decision in an ethically simple situation? My reply is that my theory incorporates or subsumes all such ostensible rival theories within itself. There is just another continuum with my theory at one end and the simplistic right-or-wrong theory at the other. All good philosophies subsume their ostensible rivals, or the best aspects of their ostensible rivals, into themselves, while excluding any bad aspects. This is Hegelian progressive dialectical method at its best. FN5 I cannot say the same for religions, not even for Hinduism, the most ecumenical of religions. For precisely because Hinduism is so inclusionary, there is not much of an exclusionary aspect. Still, there is a very deep sense in which Hinduism alone, among actual religions, is on the right track. Ramakrishna may not be the deepest divine, Shankara may not be the deepest philosopher, and the Bhagavad Gita may not be the deepest religious book. But there is no one to compare with them on ecumenicism outside of Hinduism, except perhaps the Unitarians or people like them.

One might object that sometimes "bright line" or simplistic yes-or-now rules are better than my theory of qualitative continuums. For examples, the drinking age, the smoking age, the voting age, the age of sexual consent, the draft age, and so on, are just too simple and convenient not to use. My reply is that this objection is easily subsumed within my theory. There is simply another continuum, a higher-level continuum, at one end of which bright line rules are best, and at the other end of which ordinary, garden-variety continuums are best. And in the middle, it may be very hard to tell whether a bright line rule or a continuum-style evaluative judgment is better.

Of course, in practice, people often agree on a resolution of the incommensurable. This is very clear in law, where for millennia all sorts of wrongs, both criminal and civil, including both physical pain and emotional pain, and even death, have been settled by money payments or gifts, much like a barter system. —Well, to that extent, the law *is* a barter system!

Aristotle evidently holds that no moral duty is strictly universal, because there always is, or at least always can be, some situation in which the circumstances are such that the duty would not apply. My more specific theory that duties can always be defeated by a more important duty implies the correctness of Aristotle's view. My theory of continuums confirms and underwrites

my defeasibility theory, and by implication, confirms and underwrites Aristotle's view as well.

My defeasibility theory is obviously applicable to the human world of human values and human duties, since everything in the world of human things is finite and limited, and there logically can always be something more important and overriding. I need not reach the more difficult question of whether an infinite God having infinite value and infinite responsibility can be defeated by anything greater. (At least for the purposes of his ontological argument that God exists, St. Anselm defines God as that than which no greater can be conceived.) Neither will I reach the question whether, if Jesus was both God and man, there is (or was) one human whose infinite value and infinite responsibility cannot (or could not) be defeated. Of course, in mathematics, some infinities are greater than others. For example, the series of natural numbers contains infinitely more members than the series of just the even natural numbers. In some sense, the first series includes exactly twice as many members as the second, even if we include zero, which only means that we begin the one-one correspondences with {zero, one} instead of {one, two}. But there is no straightforward application of this to God, since God is obviously not an ordered series of numbers. And even if there were infinitely many infinities applicable to the real world, God would presumably equate to the greatest infinity among all the infinities.

My theory of continuums also provides a deeper logical analysis of Aristotle's doctrine of the mean, often called the golden mean, though not by Aristotle himself. His view is that for most, if not for all, virtues, a virtue is what we may call the "ethical middle" of a continuum, at each end of which there is a vice. One vice is the deficiency of the virtue, and the other vice is the excess of the virtue. For example, courage is flanked by cowardice and foolhardiness, where cowardice is the deficiency of courage, and foolhardiness is the excess of courage. My theory analyzes Aristotle's courage continuum as consisting of two logically simpler sub-continuums: the from-cowardice-to-courage continuum, and the from-courage-to-foolhardiness continuum. And the "logical middle" of each of these sub-continuums is a region of either equal balance or of logical indeterminacy. The logical middle of the cowardice-courage sub-continuum consists of all those logically possible situations in which it logically cannot be determined whether a certain act is cowardly or courageous. And the logical middle of the courage-foolhardiness sub-continuum consists of all those logically possible situations in which it logically cannot be determined whether a certain act is courageous or foolhardy.

Courage is not an arithmetical mean halfway between some numerically determinate small quantity of courage which is the exact point where cowardice begins, and a numerically determinate large quantity of courage which is the exact point where foolhardiness begins. It doesn't and cannot work like that, because courage does not admit of numerical measuring. Also, all these things vary from situation to situation, and even from person to person. It may take me great courage to do something which Alexander the Great might have thought it takes no courage at all to do. And I always liked Aristotle's example that my golden mean diet of not too much or too little food might not be much like the golden mean diet of Milo the wrestler.

It is Jonathan Barnes' view, and possibly Aristotle's view, that the doctrine of the mean is uninformative in practice, since it gives no determinate practical guidance on when, say, a certain act is cowardly, courageous, or foolhardy (see Barnes 1977: 23–26). But while I agree with the premiss, I do not think the conclusion follows. For regardless of whether any golden mean can be mathematically determined, by using the doctrine of the mean as an arithmetical mean and assigning some mathematical values to cowardice, courage, and foolhardiness, and I agree that

no ethical mean can be so determined, I still find it of practical value to know that there can always be too little or too much of a good thing, at least in the human world. The mathematical indeterminacy of the golden mean is simply irrelevant to this very important and basic point about values and moral duty.

15. HONESTY, FAITHFULNESS, TRUST, AND PROMISES ARE DEFEASIBLE

Honesty, faithfulness, trust, and keeping promises are among our highest duties. But in sufficiently extreme circumstances, I believe they can all be defeated by more important duties. In fact, all of these duties are merely specific instances of the general theory that of any two values, either can defeat the other in sufficiently extreme circumstances.

I side with Socrates against Kant on the duty to tell the truth. Kant holds that you must tell the truth, and I think by implication holds that you must be faithful, keep a promise, and so on, no matter what. But I think Socrates refuted Kant almost two thousand years before Kant wrote.

Only three people wrote about Socrates who knew him, and whose writings came down to us: Plato, the comic playwright Aristophanes, and the Athenian general Xenophon. Their portraits of Socrates differ, and we have to extrapolate Socrates from them as best we can. Plato idolizes Socrates, and puts his own views in Socrates' mouth so much that it's hard to say where Socrates's views end and Plato's views begin. Aristophanes makes fun of Socrates as impractical and unworldly. Xenophon portrays Socrates as brave, virtuous, and down to earth. The following example is from the Xenophonic Socrates, but I shall present it in my own way. Suppose your friend comes in and is obviously deranged. He says he intends to kill a certain very good man and asks you if you know where he, the friend, put his sword. We may stipulate that you must either tell him the truth or lie, and that the very good man will die if, and only if, you tell your friend the truth. Surely under these circumstances, the life of the very good man is clearly worth far more than your telling your friend the truth. Today, we might up the ante by supposing your deranged friend says he intends to blow up New York City, and asks if you know where he left his suitcase atom bomb. Surely eight million lives are worth more than your telling the truth in this situation. But if you agree with this, then you implicitly admit a continuum of possible situations with the duty to protect human life at one end and the duty to tell the truth at the other, and the question then devolves to particular cases. This reminds me of the story of the philosopher at a party who asks a woman if she would have sex with him for ten million dollars. She said yes. He then asked if she would have sex with him for ten dollars. She indignantly said, "What do you think I am, a prostitute?" He replied, "We've already established that. Now we're trying to determine your price range."

The very same examples can be used to show the defeasibility of the duties of keeping promises, being faithful, and keeping a trust. No personal relationship between two people is worth a mass murder of millions, unless we posit truly exotic counterexamples. And from there, it devolves to case by case assessments.

Don't get me wrong. These are very important duties, and it takes a lot to defeat them.

I expect that the three main areas of difficulty, where "To defeat or not to defeat, that is the question" is very hard to tell, with respect to duties to maintain a relationship, will be where:

(1) a relationship's good aspects and bad aspects are in close balance, (2) a third person comes on the scene who would be far better for one of the two people in the relationship, or (3) both (1) and (2) at the same time. Situation (3) may be called the double whammy, or the perfect storm.

It should be clear that I'm not talking about the case where you're having problems with your significant other, or you're just sick and tired of your significant other, and a younger, prettier, friendlier, more sympathetic face comes along. Such cases are often derided as "trading in for a newer model," "the other person," or even "the homewrecker."

Suppose a case where love your significant other, you're committed to being faithful and to maintaining your relationship for better or for worse, and someone comes along whom you *also* love (so that you love two people), and whom you recognize to be your perfect match, your soul mate, unlike the person you've committed yourself to. What then?

It's very possible that the conflict cannot be resolved. You cannot break your promises, but you cannot deny that you have a far truer love for the other, since love is a passion, and it's not your fault that it happened. There's no moral responsibility for our emotions, since we have no choice about having them. But we do have a deep responsibility for our commitments. And the whole point of the marriage commitment is to remain faithful even if someone better comes along.

My only solution is suffering. In some cases, suffering is the right thing to do. Certainly it can be the least of evils. But then suffering needs to be weighed and balanced too, as against other values. And this too will be in many cases an incommensurable intuitive judgment.

There is emotional infidelity as well as sexual. For either sort, we are never responsible for the emotion or desire itself, but we are always responsible for our actions concerning them.

Thomas C. FitzPatrick says:

Not all infidelity is of a sexual nature. Much harm is created by emotional infidelity. A close relationship with a member of the opposite sex where emotional relationship is greater than, or a substitute for, the connection with a spouse is one type. Confiding private marital details or problems to someone of the opposite sex is another. In general, an interaction with someone of the opposite sex that you know would hurt or anger your spouse can be emotional infidelity. (FitzPatrick 2008 42–43)

For same sex marriages, the term "opposite sex" can be replaced by "same sex." For bisexuals, the term "the opposite" can be replaced by "either."

16. DEFEASING THE FIVE MAIN DUTIES OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

All five duties discussed below are merely specific instances of the general theory that of any two values, either can defease the other in sufficiently extreme circumstances. The discussion will repeat much of the previous section.

The five duties may be defeased as follows. I am only giving examples that come easily and quickly to mind, since I only wish to make the conceptual point that all the duties are easily defeasible in concept. We have already briefly shown that telling the truth and keeping promises

are defeasible. Our main examples here will not be much different.

(1) Faithfulness is a feature of the ordinary marriage agreement. Certainly the promise of it is. Therefore it can be easily defeated by defeating the marriage as a whole, where the whole marriage has its own value, of which the value of faithfulness is but a part. I'm envisioning the situation, which actually happens all too often, where the objects of matrimony have been so destroyed that there is no realistic possibility of their revival. We all know, and in any case I believe, that there are some marriages such that it would be better for all concerned if they were ended instead of continued. Of course, this does not answer the question. Ending the marriage ends the promise to be faithful. To defeat faithfulness, we need a case where it is better to be unfaithful than to be faithful, during the marriage.

We can use a very simple logically possible situation to make the conceptual point clear. If one spouse is so miserable in a marriage that her having sex with another man would be best for everyone, and if divorce is not an option, then infidelity would defeat faithfulness.

The second example is the suitcase bomb. It is purely hypothetical to make the conceptual point. This example is concerned only with faithfulness itself; the marriage may be a good one. My personal faithfulness to one person is simply not worth eight million lives. It's not even close. Here we have a continuum with faithfulness unopposed to any other values at one end, and faithfulness defeated by an overwhelmingly, paradigmatically greater opposing value, and with much room in the middle.

Let us consider two examples that seem more in the middle.

First, one spouse finds another person younger, more attractive, and more fun to be with. I would not call this a paradigm, but, without more, I take it to be a clear case of faithfulness *not* being defeated by the value of the other person. One may say that the whole point of faithfulness is to prevent personal relationships with such other persons, because the value of marriage is far greater on its face.

The second example is the same as the first, except that now we will suppose that the other spouse is an evil shrew incapable of loving the spouse in question, that there is no end to the suffering of the spouse in question, that the other person is the true soul mate of the spouse in question, and that neither could ever be happy without the other. We can keep adding things like that indefinitely. Perhaps the other spouse has already been unfaithful many times, with many other persons, and so on. I think you get the idea. At some point, it will become indeterminate whether the value of the faithfulness (or really better, of the marriage) is greater than the value of the spouse in question's being with the other person. And at some further point, the scale will clearly tip in the other direction.

(2) Similarly for the duty to honor, protect, and cherish the person who you know loves you, so as to prevent him or her from being emotionally hurt, whether you are married to each other or not. Someone can love you but be terribly wrong for you, as well as you be wrong for him or her.

(3) Similarly for the duty to honor a relationship of trust, where the other person is neither married to you nor loves you, but does trust you.

(4) Similarly for a situation where the other person in your personal relationship is neither married to you, nor in love with you, nor has placed trust in you, but is owed respect as an equal to you under the golden rule to treat everyone as you would wish to be treated.

(5) Similarly for a situation where the other person in your personal relationship is neither married to you, nor in love with you, nor has placed trust in you, nor is your equal, but is owed respect merely in virtue of being a human being (with feelings), or more generally, and along Buddhist or even non-anthropocentric lines, is a (human *or* nonhuman) sentient being with feelings you know you would hurt by being in a personal relationship with some other sentient being. Emotionally attached pets, such as dogs or cats who get jealous if you spend too much time with a rival pet, are a step in this direction.

We can always use the suitcase bomb example to defease these duties, or even to defease all five of these duties taken together. But you can see it takes a lot to defease them clearly and beyond question.

It might be objected that the suitcase bomb example is really an example of blackmail; and giving in to blackmail is contrary to Aristotle's widely accepted view that one ought never to give in to blackmail, since it only encourages more blackmail. For years I agreed with Aristotle on this. But now I see that the duty not to give in to blackmail is just one end of another spectrum of logically possible situations, and with suitcase bombs at or closer to the other end. At one end are the logically possible situations where we clearly ought not to give in to the blackmail in question. At the other end are the logically possible situations where we just as clearly ought to give in to the blackmail. I'm sure the reader can invent extreme hypothetical situations to show this just as well as I can.

17. ARE THE SUPREME RELIGIOUS DUTIES DEFEASIBLE?

One might think there are two indefeasibly great duties in religion, namely the two great commandments of Jesus. I will simply assume that these commandments are duties, at least for Christians. I shall describe them in my own words.

The first commandment is to love, honor, and serve God above all else, and to the extent possible. On the face of it, it seems that this duty cannot be defeased by any overriding duty or value, if we take God as having supreme and infinite value, and take everything else as having subordinate and finite value. If that is true, then as a value, God must defease everything else, and nothing else can defease God. And it seems to follow that this first duty is indefeasible too.

The second commandment is to love others as though they were ourselves. One might argue that the second duty is indefeasible as well. On its face, it seems to be a logically ultimate duty. Second, for religious people, it is arguably just as indefeasible as the first commandment, even if we cannot prove that, because Jesus *told* us (revelation) that it is a duty no less great than the duty to love God. Third, we might argue that there is logically or conceptually no way to love God except *through* loving others as ourselves. This too is arguably something we are *told* in scripture, if we remove the qualifying term "logically or conceptually." This gives us a fourth argument. Thus we have two arguments, one based on reason and the other based on faith in scripture, for each of the two commandments.

In my view, the arguments that these two duties are indefeasible sound good as far as they go, but each duty has its problems.

The first commandment logically presupposes that God exists. If God does not exist, then the duty does not exist either. The paper is not the place to discuss the existence of God. The

issue is too huge. FN6 I myself am an agnostic. I find no reliable evidence either for or against God's existence. The philosophical arguments seem problematic to me, and the miracle stories in all religions seem mythological and unscientific to me.

The second commandment does not logically assume that God exists. It is a version of the egalitarian golden rule, and can be accepted as a duty by agnostics and even atheists. On its face, the rule is purely ethical and not religious at all. The duty to treat everyone equally, including ourselves, is paradoxical as explained earlier. In fact, if I may quote from my "Karma" poem in my *The Growth of a Thinker* book (for Ann Arbor readers, all of my published books are in the Ann Arbor District Library), there are at least three different paradoxes with egalitarianism / the second commandment / the golden rule, as italicized just below:

The golden rule is a better practical maxim. The karmic rule is,
 "Do unto others as they do unto you." The golden rule is, "Do unto
 Others as you want them to do unto you." *The golden rule has its
 Problems, if you want to be treated badly or differently, or don't care.*
 "As it is *good* for them to do to you" would make it uninformative:
 "Do what is good." But what *is* good? And is it the same for all?
 Still, it seems a better rule on its face than the law of the talon.
 For what it is worth, every world religion has a version, from
 Judaism to Islam, Hinduism to Buddhism. "Love thy neighbor
 As thyself" is the Christian one. There are several lists online.
 The two rules are compatible. At least, you can consistently
 Hold that we *ought* to be golden, but *do* follow the karmic rule.
 More deeply, there seems something karmic about the golden rule.
 Anticipatory karma is, "Be good so that others will be good to you."
 But the motive for the golden rule can be prudential or altruistic.
 Thus a poem on the golden rule would be a very different poem.
 For the golden rule only says to do *as* you want others to do to you.
 The *so that* they will of anticipatory karma is not strictly implied.
 Only a prudential golden rule would be anticipatory karma.
 The altruistic golden rule merely directs without thought of return.
 But the rule may still be *accepted* for consequentialist reasons. (Dejnoška 2012: 66)

The "treated badly" paradox, or counterexample to the golden rule, is someone else's, and I developed the other two paradoxes from that.

We can defuse the two commandments taken together with our suitcase bomb example, at least in the following sense. My personally loving God the best, and my personally loving my neighbor as myself, even taken together, can scarcely outweigh the value of stopping a terrorist's threat, "I will blow up New York City unless you stop loving God and stop helping others as yourself." But paradoxically, of course, the best way to follow those duties in that situation is precisely to sacrifice my personal honor out of love for my New York City neighbors, and thereby honor God indirectly as well.

18. THE DEFEASIBILITY OF NEGATIVE VALUES (EVILS, VICES, SINS)

We've all heard of choosing the lesser or least of evils. This is just a lesser evil defeating a greater evil. (We may also say that greater goods defeat lesser goods.) The whole point of a defeasibility continuum is to function like a set of balancing scales. Increasing or decreasing either of two goods, or either of two evils, simply tips the scale one way or the other. But physical scales measure one value, weight, and all physical weights are commensurable at least in theory. That is the essential disanalogy. For all conflicting values are different, and any two are incommensurable at midpoint.

All the sins are negative values. Any two are incommensurable. Any two of them can be set up on a continuum such that at each pole, it is clear which sin is worse than the other, but in the middle, there is a gray area such that it is incommensurable which sin is more evil. This situational approach is my answer to the old question in particular which sin is greater, pride or lust, with the Catholic church inclining to say it is lust, and with Protestant churches being inclined to say it is pride. Another way to put it is that weighing and balancing two values is not theoretical but fact-intensive, where individual situations consist of individual facts. All we have on the theoretical level is defeasibility continua. And that is as much as to say that there cannot be any general solutions as to which values are greater than which, or which evils are lesser than which, for theoretical reasons.FN7

Practically by definition, the least of evils is worse than the least of goods. But even here there can be defeasement of a good by an evil, at least depending on the known or probable causal consequences, if not on the good and the evil considered in themselves. This includes the issue of the means versus the end. Can an evil means justify a good end? There is no simple answer. There is a spectrum or continuum of indefinitely many logically possible situations to assess, and in the indeterminate region in the middle, we simply have to take our best shot.

19. THREE CASES FOR DISCUSSION

Here are three true stories. I'm telling them as I remember them, so the details may not be exactly right.

(1) Debby Boone is the Christian singer who had the 1970s hit single, "You Light Up My Life" at the age of 21. Her father, Pat Boone, is also a Christian singer and personality. She married at the age of 23. Someone asked her, "You married so young. It would be so easy for you to run across someone in the next few years such that you come to love each other more, and would be better for each other in every way. What would you do if you did find such a person?" Boone simply replied that marriage is a commitment.FN8

(2) The great American 19th century poet Emily Dickinson was a deeply introverted recluse. Except for going to college, she more or less lived at home until she died. She rarely even left the home to go shopping, though she did have many visitors. After she died, her sister Lavinia discovered over 700 poems she had written but never shown to anyone, and also a packet of love letters. Evidently, she had been secretly in love with a man for many years. All they ever did was correspond. He was not only married to another, but he had children, and he was also a minister. At that time and place, any relationship between a single woman and a married

minister, not to mention one with children, was strictly forbidden. See Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* for Puritan New England's take on that.

Emily Dickinson's letters are well-known today, but there is controversy on the exact extent and nature of her love. For purposes of discussion, we may hypothetically assume that they were deeply in love, that the minister would have been far happier with Dickinson, that they both suffered greatly from being unable to be together, and that no one would have been unhappy if the man got a divorce and married Dickinson.FN9

(3) I read the following story online in 2015. An Episcopalian rector wrote of her church's only gay couple. Their ages were 76 and 26. The 76 year man joined the church first. He made no secret of his sexual orientation, but it was also clear that he had no actual partner. He participated enthusiastically in the life of the church. He was friendly to everyone. He helped with many odd jobs around the church. He was well liked and appreciated by the somewhat conservative congregation. Some time later, a gay man fifty years younger started coming to the church, and the two were soon attracted to each other. The congregation did not like the young man very much, and felt that the old man was being seduced and used. Then it turned out that the young man had a drug addiction. He left the church and entered rehab. The congregation gave a collective sigh of relief and felt they had been right all along. About six months later, the young man returned. He was cured of his addiction. The two men had a heart to heart talk. They found that they loved each other deeply and could only be happy together. The congregation would not accept it, partly because they were conservative, but mainly because they distrusted the young man, and felt protective of the old man. Then the old man died. The rector concluded by saying that she felt sad that her parish was unable to accept the love between the two men, that she was the only one who accepted it, and she hoped they would find the happiness together in Heaven that they were denied in life.

I've been unable to locate the story.FN10 But I did find a similar story with respect to age gap. I would prefer not to rely on celebrity cases, but at least it's not an aging movie star:

When they first met on a beach in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., former [U.S. S]enator Harris Wofford was 75 and his soon-to-be husband, interior designer Matthew Charlton, was just 25.

Now, 15 years later, the Washington couple plans to tie the knot April 30, exactly three weeks after Wofford's 90th birthday and 68 years after his first wedding, to Clare Wofford, to whom the former politician was happily married for 48 years before her death.

If all that math is more than confusing, Wofford recently provided a simple common denominator: "It is based on love," he wrote in the New York Times on Sunday....

"...I had a half-century of marriage with a wonderful woman, and now am lucky for a second time to have found happiness." (Andrews-Dyer 2016)

It seems that age makes no difference to the ability to love. I recently read a story about a 93 year old World War 2 veteran who was finally reunited with the love of his life, a World War 2 nurse. They met and fell in love during the war. Then he returned to his own country. Both expected to reunite later. But due to a misunderstanding in correspondence, they stopped all

contact, and each eventually married someone else. After their spouses died, and some 70 years after they last saw each other, they were fortunately able to find each other again, and their love picked up again right where it left off.FN 11

May-December relationships used to be younger woman with older man. Recently, younger man with older woman relationships have been in the news. Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore are cited as the movie star example, but the literature says there are ordinary examples as well. Tammy Worth says on WebMD.com:

So-called May-December relationships, in which there's a big age gap between the partners, can be rewarding—and also challenging.

The good news is those issues can be handled, just like any other relationship issue—regardless of age....

One of the first barriers you may face is the reaction of your family and friends. For instance, they may say stereotypical things about “cougars,” if the woman is the older partner, or “trophy wives,” if the man is the older partner.

“This certainly is one of many kinds of pairings that may look odd to others, but when you start to know them it makes sense,” says Rebecca Sears, LPC, a couple's counselor at The Imago Center of DC in Washington, D.C. “There is something about every couple that makes sense once you get to know them.” The trick is to help others understand why you “make sense”....

Being in a committed relationship is not always a bed of roses—at any age.

“If you look at problems you are having as being due to the age gap, it can very likely hang you up,” [Gayle] Luster says. “Age is the only thing in a relationship that you can't change.”

Remember, many couples who are close in age are dealing with the same issues. There's often more to it than age....

“When you fall in love with someone, age does not really matter,” [Helen] Fisher says. “I always tell people that it's great to date someone older. Our culture may be somewhat uncomfortable with it, but life in the home won't be uncomfortable at all.” (Worth 2016: 1–3)

Bernie Sanders says very nicely, if ungrammatically, “We have the right to love whoever [sic] we want to” (Sanders 2016). I think he was speaking about gay love and love across many traditional divides, such as race, ethnicity, and perhaps age. However, even this right can be defeated. It constitutes only one end of a spectrum of logically possible situations. At the other end, it may be that even Sanders would draw the line at the physical love of very young children by adults, which most people would consider sexual abuse. And if Sanders was speaking only of emotional love, then we are never responsible for our passions as such anyway. It is not so much a right to love as it is a categorial impossibility to prevent love, or for that matter, any passion. The same point applies to an adult's sexual *desire* to have sex with very young children. For sexual desire is a passion too. The desire cannot be prevented, but the action can, with the possible exception of sexual addiction; and even an addiction could have been initially prevented, by parity of reason with Aristotle's view that we are responsible for our habits. Our

moral responsibility is only to control our sexual actions, not our sexual desires. Recall the story of the man who craved to cannibalize (eat) young children. It may have been all he could do to resist, but he simply had to.

20. META-ETHICAL THEORIES ARE NO HELP

This is the only practical philosophy paper I have ever written. I mean that in Aristotle's technical sense that ethics is a practical science concerned with what we ought to do, how we ought to live. Aristotle's other practical science is politics. Ethics concerns the individual, while politics concerns the state. This is as opposed to the theoretical science, such as metaphysics, mathematics, physics, botany, and so on, which only aim to state or explain what is the case.

Ethics concerns what we ought to do, what our duties are. Meta-ethics concerns what it is to be good, what it is to be a moral duty (see e.g. Frankena 1973: ch. 6). I'm only doing ethics in this paper, not meta-ethics. I'm simply assuming an ordinary understanding of what goodness and moral duty are. Meta-ethics is a theoretical science. All my previous work in ethics has been meta-ethical, that is, theoretical. This mainly includes my paper on Panayot Butchvarov's theory of goodness, and my work on deontic logic (really more logical than ethical) in my Russell book.

A rule-based ethic might find faithfulness the best rule no matter what. A virtue-based ethic might find faithfulness the best virtue no matter what. Only an act-based ethic, where value is determined on an individual or case by case basis, might seem congenial to my view. But all this is so simply and easily turned around. If I am right, then so much the worse for rule-based or virtue-based ethics, or at least for such ethics' making faithfulness an indefeasible rule or an indefeasible virtue. For all of my examples of defeasing opposed values apply in all these sorts of general ethics across the board. The suitcase bomb is a particularly clear example of this. If there is any general ethic which finds my personal faithfulness more important than the lives of eight million people, then there is something very wrong with that ethic.

That said, faithfulness and its allied virtues are, I think, so important that the mere existence of some other person as such to whom we are attracted, or even a somewhat better person, is nowhere near enough to defease a promise to be faithful, or a knowledge of love, or a mutual trust.

If person P loves me, and if I have made it clear to P that I never wished a personal relationship with P, then there should be nothing stopping me from starting a relationship with someone else Q. P may have no choice about loving me, or about being hurt if I see Q. But I may in turn have no choice about loving Q. This is rightly called a conflict among innocents, where someone is going to get hurt, but no one deserves it, and no one intends it. P should not have the right to prevent my happiness with Q in such situations, but will just have to suffer. Our right to pursue happiness cannot be held hostage in such a way. Of course, we should be as nice to P as possible. It's not P's fault either.

This brings me to my final point. Suppose that I love two people, P and Q, that I am already in a personal relationship with P, that I have promised to be faithful to P, but that I love Q more, and would be happier with Q. Where I have an internal conflict between my faithfulness to one person I love, my greater love for another, making me unhappy because I would be far happier with Q, there may be no solution other than suffering and living with the conflict. And of

course I will still be with someone I love, though not with the person I love more. But this is not a defect of my philosophy of personal relationships. Rather, it is a virtue of my philosophy that it faithfully reflects that in morality, this is just the way things are. I am sure that this is that case for millions of people. Without more, I advocate suffering in this way over, say, going to the “unfaithfulness” online dating sites. But this too is just another pair of opposed values, setting up a continuum with a gray area in between the two opposed values as polar ends. In some extreme cases, it may be better to go to the dating site.

The main point of the section title is to say that it is not general ethical theories that tell us what is best to do in particular situations, but our ethical intuitions in particular situations that tell us which general ethical theories are adequate. For if our ethical theory fails to honor and explain our particular ethical intuitions, then there is something wrong with our theory. In this way, ethics may be called a rational theoretical or explanatory science, and not merely a rational classificatory science. But we need not reach that question here. We may simply say that here, we are only doing ethics (casuistry, actual ethical reasoning) here, and not meta-ethics (theory of what ethics is, theory of what it is to be ethical).

21. CONCLUSION

I think this paper will more than suffice for college readers. For present purposes, we need not further classify types of love or types of duty. We need not further investigate emotion, nor right and wrong relationships. Of course, whole books could be and have been written about these topics.

It’s pretty much all I have to say on these topics. I didn’t even discuss what love is, only what some categories of love are. The classic discussion of love is Plato’s *Symposium*. The term used in it is “eros,” but the discussion ends with what are arguably most deeply forms of non-erotic or so-called Platonic love, or, really, companionate love. I would apply my theory of continuums to all these values.

Nor did I discuss what faithfulness is, nor what is closely related, its boundaries. In personal relationships, is only sexual intercourse unfaithfulness? What about kissing or holding hands? What about going out for dinner and talking only? Or going to a movie? Is there such a thing as emotional unfaithfulness? What sort of acts does it consist of? Sharing confidences that are not shared with the other person in your personal relationship? Don’t all these things, such as kissing or sharing confidences, depend on the context? Or do they depend on your conscience? What about holding the hand of a dying friend? All of this concerns actions. Conscience depends on intent. I would apply my theory of continuums to all the values and duties concerned.

How definite or vague are the terms “love” and “faithful”? How definite or vague should they be? How definite or vague can they be? How definite or vague do you want them to be? Is communicating your views on these things to others important here?

I think it’s obvious that there are such things as merely social kissing, hand holding, and going out to eat and talk. And in our country, we have rights to free speech and free association. And there are excellent reasons for all these things being so. And some people may find that an “open marriage” works best for them. But I think those people are few and far between. For most people, I think that except for merely social acts, marital faithfulness should forbid kissing, hand

holding, or dating anyone in the world except your spouse. Would you enter into a marriage in which you expected your spouse would be kissing, holding hands with, or dating anyone else? If not, then how do you think your spouse would feel if you did it? Marriage is hard enough as it is without undermining it like that. Besides immaturity and financial conflicts, the leading cause of divorce is infidelity. I'm sure the statistics are available online. So unless someone threatens you with a suitcase bomb, it's probably best to be faithful in the little things. Emotionally, they are not little things at all. Quite the opposite. But the theory of continuums does apply. It applies to everything under the sun. It applies to betrayal. It's not just a matter of suitcase bombs. Even in real life, betrayal can be a good thing. The officers who attempted to assassinate Adolf Hitler betrayed him, but it was the right thing to do. For he betrayed the best of Germany. He betrayed humanity with his great crimes. It is possible that in personal relationships too, we sometimes find people so cruel and evil that betrayal is not the word, but the best and right thing to do.

It might be thought that the main result of this paper is that any finite value or duty can be defeated, therefore we need not take any value or duty seriously. But while the premiss is true, the conclusion does not follow. Quite the opposite: it takes a great deal to defeat any serious value or duty. For an ordinary person, it may take a suitcase bomb to see that our main values and duties can be defeated at all. And did I mention that all these logically possible situations include the consequences of your act, the probable or reasonably foreseeable consequences of your act, your conscience and the other person's conscience, the consequences to your conscience, the consequences to the other person's conscience, and so on? This is how both utilitarianism (Mill) and conscience-based ethics (Kant) fit into my theory. There is just another continuum with utility (the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people) at one end, and conscience at the other.

Again, this is the only writing I have done in ethics as a practical science in Aristotle's sense, as opposed to meta-ethics as a theoretical science in his sense. Nonetheless, I wish you to be very clear that while I am trying to help you understand things in your life, the practical science of ethics still very much belongs to philosophy. It is philosophy. As far as most people would be concerned, even ethics as a practical science is still very theoretical in the ordinary sense of the word.

Broadly speaking, this paper is an update of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, and an application of its basic views to emotions and responsibilities in personal relationships. This is not Aristotle's topic. Aristotle only discusses friendship—a single form of companionate love. Of course, that is arguably the best type of human love. And he writes about far more than that.

It's a carefree, freewheeling, improvisational update. I read the *Ethics* some ten to twenty years ago, and I'm not looking at it much now. This paper is not primarily scholarship. That's a derivative industry. There would be no scholarship on, or history of, philosophy, if there were no philosophy for there to be scholarship on or a history of. Just put me in a cave or out in a desert with a pen and a stack of blank paper, and I would do just as well, if not eventually better. FN12 I would not even need pen and paper if I were doing this only for myself, though they might help me keep things straight. Such is the nature of philosophy. It's derided as an armchair profession, but it's hard work and few can do it well, though almost anyone can profit from the basics. FN13 The same goes for logic (the vestibule of philosophy) and mathematics, the other a priori fields. These are fields of intellectual revelation. Not from above, but often inspired in their own way.

Politics, the rational study of how we ought to live in a political state, is Aristotle's other main practical science. The theory of continuums applies to all political values and duties, since it applies to all values and duties without exception. I see this as logically going against all partisan politics, since all political partisan values are merely ends of continuums with the opposite values at the opposite end. Political partisans may be defined as those who see or accept only one end of some political continuum or continuums. Likewise for ethical partisans.

The difference between ethics and politics may seem to be merely quantitative, with ethics applying to individuals or small groups, and politics applying to groups large enough to form a state. However, there logically can also be qualitative differences, due to the emergence of emergent properties in such larger groups. Typically, there are many such differences. Perhaps we may find a continuum with ethics at one end and politics at the other.

I think we're at the point where theoretical and practical philosophy converge. Practical philosophy is philosophy after all. And we need theoretical philosophy on how things are to guide us on how we ought to live. Plato's ideal approach and Aristotle's practical approach converge as well. What could be better practice than to be guided by ideals? And what better ideal could there be than to be practically wise? I omit Hume on whether ought follows from is, or whether values follow from facts. It's too far afield, and I've addressed that issue elsewhere.

It's said that if there is no God, then philosophy is the next best source of wisdom. I would suggest that if there is no God, then Stoicism is the next best source of ethics. The Stoics greatly influenced the early church. Paul's home town, Tarsus, had a major Stoic university, and the Stoics preached virtue in the streets. Paul talks with philosophers and makes philosophical references. It has been suggested that Paul even argues in characteristic Stoic ways. Seneca was admired by St. Augustine, St. Jerome, Lactantius, Tertullian, Dante, Chaucer, Petrarch, Erasmus, Montaigne, Descartes, Rousseau, and John Calvin (Campbell 1975: 24–26). Not that I am much of a Stoic, but I'm influenced by it and admire it.

For specific details and concrete situations beyond my few examples, and for specific advice, please see Ann Landers or Abigail Van Buren, or the current advice columnists. I'm a philosopher, not an adviser to the lovelorn. I hope I have helped give perspective by providing a philosophical picture, which a mere advice columnist could never do. That's my service to the community, or is at least intended to be. But even if I haven't succeeded in discovering any final truths, I hope to have increased your understanding, and to have given you a lot to think about.

The main objection to my theory might be that it gives so little actual guidance. My reply is that the main point of my theory is to show that there can be little actual guidance from theory. It's not just my theory that cannot give it. No theory can. Theories can only purport to. This is not ethical skepticism. The values and duties are real. It's just that we have clear guidance only in the clear cases at either end of a spectrum, and in the indeterminate middle region, we're on our own.

Another continuum: The value of this paper, the value of everything I've written, the value of all practical philosophy, the value of everything that has ever been written, and the value of everything that has existed so far in this limited human world, logically can be defeased.

Two more continuums: It's often debated whether the end justifies the means, or whether the journey *is* the end or destination. I think this comes down to cases. Also, if the journey is the destination, or the means is the end, then we are not talking about a journey or means simply or as such, but *also* of it as an end. I think it's pretty obvious that cases where the means clearly justifies the end are at one end of a continuum, and cases where the means clearly do not justify

the end are at the other. Likewise, there is a continuum with cases where the means clearly is (or are) the end at one end, and cases where the means clearly is (or not) the end at the other.

One more continuum: “To thine own self be true” (Shakespeare) is at one end, and not being true to myself, so as to serve some other valued purpose, is at the other.

I’m sure the reader can see continuums easily now. In general, for any value V or duty D, just put “clearly V” or “clearly D” at one end, and “clearly not V” or “clearly not D” at the other. Or oppose any two different values V1 and V2, or any two different duties D1 and D2.

Again, for a technical discussion of defeasibility, please see my (2015: 127–30).

Everything in this paper can be analyzed in my ontology of qualified objects and objects in themselves, simply because everything can. There will be qualified persons, emotions, and duties as well as persons, emotions, and duties in themselves. Apparent duties that are or can be defeated will be an indefinitely large subset of qualified duties. Concerning finite duties, it will be the same set. I won’t give the analysis here. Please see my (2015: 30, 575–76, 590).

NOTES

FN1. A study of genetically identical twins has indicated that different emotions are different percentages of genetic and of cultural origin. I don’t remember the actual details, but we may pretend hypothetically that anger is 60% genetic and 40% cultural, while fear is 50% genetic and 50% cultural. This would not detract from my theory that emotions are passions in the least. My theory is that (1) our emotions are not the kind of thing that can be simply and directly chosen by an act of the will, and that (2) ordinarily they cannot even be indirectly chosen, since they are due to causes that are ordinarily beyond our control. The twins study merely aims to provide guidance on the locus of these causes. And that is all any such study can do, even in principle.

FN2. Socrates says, “Perhaps this is the reason that love is called an archer: because he is beautiful and can wound even from a distance” (Xenophon 1965: 22 / *Recollections* bk. 1 ch. 3).

FN3. There is no “original sin” of Adam and Eve for which anyone else is guilty. I’m not responsible for the sins of people who died before I was born. I didn’t commit their sins. They did. As a purely logical point, only Adam and Eve could have committed Adam and Eve’s sins.

I’m speaking as if Adam and Eve existed, which I doubt. They seem mythological and unscientific (evolution theory) to me. In fact, I’m an agnostic. That means I’m not sure if God exists. That’s due to lack of reliable evidence either way. The philosophical arguments seem problematic to me, and the miracle stories in all religions seem mythological and unscientific to me. This is strictly irrelevant to the present paper. But as long as I’m discussing religious ideas, I thought I should mention it.

FN4. Freud (1993) is Anna Freud’s classic discussion of her father Sigmund Freud’s concept of repression.

FN5. Here I side with Walter Kaufmann (1965) against the otherwise excellent W. T. Stace (1955). The idea of Hegelian dialectical progression through triads is fairly ordinary and simple. I’ll explain it in my own way. We start with our initial belief on some topic. Call that the thesis. We may come across an opposing view that is more or less plausible too. Call that the antithesis. Now, if we study the two contrary views (“contrary” means they cannot both be true), we may eventually be able to combine the good points in each of them into a third, more comprehensive

view which excludes the bad points. Call that the synthesis. Then we treat this synthesis as our new thesis. We may come across an antithesis to it, and be able to build a new synthesis. And so on indefinitely. As they say on The Power Puff Girls television show, “Save the best, ditch the rest” (Power Puff Girls 2016).

FN6. There are thousands of books, and hundreds of arguments and variations, on point. Han’s Küng’s book *Does God Exist?* (1981) alone is over 700 pages long. I think someone once listed over 90 variations of the ontological argument.

FN7. Thanks to Pastor Steve Khang for in effect solving this theoretical problem by pointing out in one of his sermons that it is really a concrete, practical, situational problem best handled on a case by case basis. All the sins are incommensurable, and if so, then there simply is no answer on a theoretical level, other than a theory of continuums of defeasibility.

The plural of “continuum” is “continua,” but I think that “continuums” may be less confusing to readers today.

FN8. I read the Debby Boone story years ago. It may have been online.

FN9. Actually, it might never be settled to whom Dickinson wrote the so-called “Master” letters. It might have been the married minister Charles Wadsworth. Or it might have been the married judge Otis Phillipps Lord, or any of a number of other people, including Dickinson’s sister in law (her brother Austin’s wife), Susan Huntingdon Gilbert Dickinson. See Emily Dickinson Museum (2016).

FN10. I read the story online in 2015.

FN11. I read the story online in early 2016.

FN12. This refers only to my doing philosophy. As Aristotle says, we are basically a social species.

FN13. But this paper was not hard. It was pleasant, easy work. It practically wrote itself over a period of several months.

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See also:

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