

RESEARCH STATEMENT

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In future research I plan to address several philosophical issues that have arisen from my dissertation work.

First, I hope to address the question of whether love admits of judgments of rationality. For example, if one apprehended sufficient “reasons” for loving someone, would one be irrational for failing to love him? In part this is a question about whether it makes sense to talk about “reasons” for love at all. On the one hand, it seems contrary to the nature of love to say that one should—on pain of irrationality—love someone as a friend or romantic partner. On the other hand, it can seem puzzling why this is the case. After all, attitudes like admiration or pity seem subject to norms of rationality: if one admires Janet for her resilience in the face of difficulty, it seems one should also admire Beth who exhibits the same quality. If one did not also admire Beth, it seems one would be irrational, or at least inconsistent. The question then becomes, why think love is different from admiration in this respect? I hope to explore this question in future research.

Second, I hope to develop a paper that I presented at the 2013 Eastern Division APA conference for publication. In this paper I defend the quality theory of love’s proper grounds against what is sometimes called the “substitution problem”. The quality theory holds that qualities like beauty or virtue are proper grounds for loving someone—i.e., considerations in response to which love properly arises or is sustained. The substitution problem holds that the quality theory is mistaken since it implies I should be indifferent to the substitution of my beloved for his type-identical doppelganger. After all, if the beloved’s qualities are proper grounds of my love, then I have identical grounds for loving the doppelganger. In reply, I argue that either substitution is unproblematic (e.g., in dating relationships) or the reason I would not be indifferent to substitution has nothing to do with the proper grounds of love. Rather, my commitment to the beloved is the reason I would not be indifferent, which can be viewed as a consideration wholly different from love’s proper grounds.

Third, I hope to investigate the relation between love and moral virtue. Aquinas referred to a certain kind of love—namely, *caritas* or charity—as “the form of the virtues”. One way of taking his point is that the good ends of all virtuous actions are, in the final analysis, the good ends of someone or some thing that we love. But, since love motivates us to further the ends of those we love, love turns out to be the motivation for all virtuous action. For example, suppose that peace and prosperity are among the ends of the community in which we live. If so, then love of one’s community would properly motivate one to seek its peace and prosperity. But, the peace and prosperity of one’s community is also the proper end of courageous action in battle. Thus, love of one’s community would motivate such genuinely courageous action. To take another example, a certain love of oneself might properly motivate one to seek moderate amounts of food and drink, which is the end of temperance. In this way, general benevolence might properly motivate us toward the ends of all virtuous action.

I would particularly like to think about the relation between love and justice. For example, I find the following comment by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* very suggestive: “...when men are friends they have no need of justice” (VIII.1). His comment comes in the midst of a discussion of the political value of friendship between fellow-citizens. Thus the notion of friendship here seems close to the idea of a general mutual love or charity. The comment seems to imply that acts in conformity with justice somehow fall naturally out of such attitudes of charity, and that in relationships characterized by charity, there is, therefore, no need for norms of justice to demand such acts. But, if this is correct, then perhaps the norms of justice are somehow “contained in” the norms of charity, implying that the virtue of charity might somehow be more fundamental than the virtue of justice. Whether this line of thought is correct or not, I would like to clarify the relations between love and virtues such as justice in future research.

Finally, I plan to develop portions of my dissertation for publication. From my second and third chapters I have developed a paper arguing for a Thomist view of love over against a range of contemporary views. That paper is currently under review for publication. From my fourth chapter I plan to develop a paper arguing for a pluralist view of love’s proper grounds over against competing contemporary views. From my first chapter I plan to develop a historical paper on Augustine’s view in *De doctrina christiana* that we should love all people equally. For further details on the content of these papers please refer to my dissertation abstract.