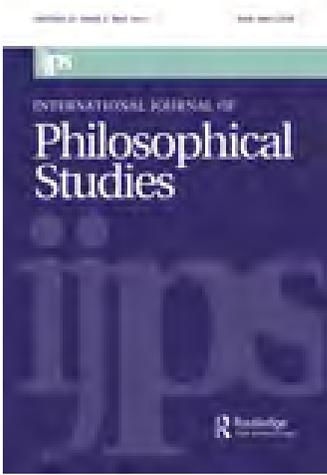


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### The Source and Robustness of Duties of Friendship

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## Introduction

# Robert Papazian Annual Essay Prize on Themes from Ethics and Political Philosophy

The selected theme for the 2013 Robert Papazian Essay Prize competition was friendship and the winning essay is ‘The Source and Robustness of Duties of Friendship’ by Robbie Arrell, Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics of the University of Melbourne.

The essay is published as the lead article of the current issue of the *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* and is also made available online in open-access form. The winner also received a monetary prize of €1500. The essay addresses the important question of how we value friends and friendships across various changes. The referees in particular praised the controlled and balanced engagement with other authors and position and commented on the lucid and elegant style of writing.

On the recommendation of the referees, the runner up entry ‘Friendship as a shaping of our selves’ by Anne-Laure Crépel of Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV) is also being published in this issue. The referees recommended this essay for publication because of the original way in which the dual ideas of friends sharing a common identity and having a role in shaping each other’s identity were developed.

### **About the Robert Papazian Prize**

The prize is established in memory of a young man executed for his ideas and political ideals. The winning entry receives a cash prize of €1500, publication in the journal, and promotion on the journal’s Taylor & Francis website.

The topic for the 2014 prize is **Authority**

Scholarly essays from all philosophical approaches – analytic, continental, and historical – dealing with the topic of authority, understood broadly, including in its moral, political, epistemic and social forms and contexts, are now invited. Please submit your paper by email directly to Professor Maria Baghramian at [Maria.Baghramian@ucd.ie](mailto:Maria.Baghramian@ucd.ie).

### Terms and conditions

Submissions should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere and should not be submitted to any other journal until the outcome of the competition is known.

All submitted papers will be evaluated, in the first instance, by the journal's editorial board. The top 5 papers will be nominated for the Prize and will be judged by a jury consisting of three members of the journal's advisory board. The jury will evaluate the papers on the originality of the paper, its engagement with the announced topic, the contribution it makes to scholarship in the field, and the quality of the argumentation and conceptual clarity.

The decision of the jury will be final. There is only one prize per year and the jury reserves the right to award no prize at all if submitted material is not of an appropriate standard.

Runner-up papers will be considered for publication in *IJPS*.

Word limit: 6000-9000 words, including notes and references.

Closing date for submissions: September 1, 2014.

Please indicate clearly in the subject line that you wish to have the paper considered for the Essay Prize. Make sure that the essay is modified for double blind review, and that it has an abstract.

The winner of the prize will be announced in January 2015 via the IJPS website at [www.tandfonline.com/riph](http://www.tandfonline.com/riph) as well as at other appropriate venues. The winning entry will be published as the lead article in Volume 23, Issue 2 of the *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*.

### On Robert Papazian

Robert Papazian was born in an Armenian family in Tehran, Iran in 1954. He studied Politics and International Relations at École des relations internationales in Paris. Like many other Iranian political activists abroad, Robert returned to Iran in the summer of 1978, during the last months of the uprising against the Shah, to join the revolution. Subsequent to the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he continued his activities in Kurdistan as a political and theoretical instructor to a left wing opposition group. He was arrested in Tehran in February 1982.

In prison, Robert did not have access to a lawyer and was denied visits by friends and family members. Throughout interrogations in Evin prison, he remained steadfast in his ideals and refused to co-operate with the authorities. It is known through surviving prisoners that he also helped others to be strong and defiant.

Robert Papazian was executed along with a large number of other political prisoners in July 1982. He was buried anonymously in the mass graves of the Khavaran cemetery in the outskirts of Tehran. His parting words to fellow-

## INTRODUCTION

prisoners were: 'It's not the number of years that counts but the effect of one's life and death on others... Life in a broader sense continues...'

The annual prize of €1500 is sponsored by the Papazian family.

For more information about the prize please contact Professor Maria Baghramian at [Maria.Baghramian@ucd.ie](mailto:Maria.Baghramian@ucd.ie)

# The Source and Robustness of Duties of Friendship

*Robbie Arrell*

## Abstract

Certain relationships generate associative duties that exhibit robustness across change. It seems insufficient for friendship, for example, if I am only disposed to fulfil duties of friendship towards you as things stand here and now. However, robustness is not required across *all* variations. Were you to become monstrously cruel towards me, we might expect that my duties of friendship towards you would not be robust across *that* kind of change. The question then is this: is there any principled way of distinguishing those variations across which robustness of the disposition to fulfil duties of friendship is required from those across which it isn't? In this paper I propose a way of answering this question that invokes distinctions concerning how we value friends and friendships, and how persons and friendships possess value – distinctions that are central to the project of specifying not only the limits of robustness, but also the source of duties of friendship and associative duties more generally.

**Keywords:** friendship; associative duties; partiality; value; Keller; Pettit

One man in a thousand, Solomon says,  
Will stick more close than a brother.  
And it's worth while seeking him half your days  
If you find him before the other.  
Nine hundred and ninety-nine depend  
On what the world sees in you,  
But the Thousandth Man will stand your friend  
With the whole round world agin you.

'Tis neither promise nor prayer nor show  
Will settle the finding for 'ee.  
Nine hundred and ninety-nine of 'em go  
By your looks or your acts or your glory.  
But if he finds you and you find him,  
The rest of the world don't matter;  
For the Thousandth Man will sink or swim

With you in any water.

...

(*The Thousandth Man* by Rudyard Kipling)

## 1. Introduction

The Beatles once asked: ‘What would you do if I sang out of tune? Would you stand up and walk out on me?’ Of course, singing ability has little to do with the real message of their song *A Little Help from My Friends*, for what I really want, nay require, is to know that you wouldn’t stand up and walk out on me, not only in the event that my singing ability were to desert me, but also, if I were to change in any number of ways. Would your friendship towards me not remain steadfast, as Kipling intimated it should, even as my looks, my acts of greatness, and my glories fade? It is of course no accident that our literary and musical culture is laced with examples of precisely this question – after all, there are few things people value more than their close friendships, these being among our most fundamental and enduring sources of human flourishing and reasons for action. In this paper, I explore the ways in which we value our friendships, and the reasons and (associative) duties of partiality that are generated as a result through the prism of what Joseph Raz (2001, p. 5) terms ‘the value-reason nexus’.

Duties of friendship are associative duties, and to describe what associative duties are, it is perhaps easiest to locate them in the broader scheme of moral duties. General duties, it is said, are owed to all humankind simply by virtue of shared humanity, whereas special duties are owed to some delimited category of individuals by virtue of some discrete interaction or relationship and can be justified in a number of ways; for example, on the basis of gratitude, contracts, promises, debt, reciprocity, reparation, etc. Associative duties then, constitute a distinct subcategory of special duties: they too apply only to a delimited category of persons – most commonly friends, lovers, family, and perhaps colleagues and compatriots – but unlike other special duties, they are usually not explicitly agreed upon or consented to by the parties bound by them.

My inclination here is to say that what further distinguishes associative duties from other special duties is that they pertain to only those relationships we value *intrinsically*. However, since this claim is a critical site of contestation in this paper, it would be remiss of me to smuggle my conclusion into the introduction. Simon Keller for one disagrees with me. In his book *Partiality*, Keller (2013) argues that it is not intrinsically valuable relationships that ground our reasons and duties of partiality, but rather something about the particular independent value of the people we love. Thus, this paper may be read as a critical notice of Keller’s book in which I will respond to his rejection of what he calls the Relationships View of the ethics of partiality that seeks to

explain reasons and duties of partiality via reference to the intrinsic value of special relationships.

So three core objectives motivate this paper: first, to propose a principled way of distinguishing those changes in friends across which robustness of the disposition to fulfil duties of friendship is required from those across which it isn't;<sup>1</sup> second, to defend the Relationships View of the ethics of partiality from what I call the 'misanthropy objection' to it; and third, to demonstrate that the Relationships View can better account for the reasons and duties we have to be partial towards friends than its major rival the Individuals View can. Taken together, these objectives meld into the claim that, of the predominant views in the ethics of partiality, the Relationships View offers the best answer to the question of how to determine the robustness of duties of friendship.

The first section offers an overview of the two approaches to the ethics of partiality discussed here,<sup>2</sup> before unpacking the crucial distinction between how we value things, and how things have value, upon which my defence of the Relationships View turns. I go on then in the second section to address the question of when robustness of the disposition to fulfil duties of friendship across change is and isn't required, and within that the misanthropy objection to the Relationships View. Having shown that objection to be empty, I suggest in the final section that the Individuals View's inability to overcome what I call the fungibility objection must lead us to conclude that the Relationships View offers not only the most plausible account of the source and robustness of duties of partiality towards friends in particular, but the best account of the ethics of partiality in general.

## 2. The Relationships View, the Individuals View, and Distinctions in Value/Valuing

Simply put, the Relationships View of partiality says the source of our reasons and duties of partiality are the special relationships we share, whereas the Individuals View says the source is not our relationships, but the persons we love. Samuel Scheffler (2010, pp. 103–104), a key proponent of the Relationships View, states the basic claim of that paradigm thus:

To value one's relationship with another person non-instrumentally is, in part, to see that person's needs, interests and desires as providing one, in contexts that may vary depending on the nature of the relationship, with reasons for action, reasons that one would not have had in the absence of the relationship.

To intrinsically value<sup>3</sup> one's friendships then is to see them as reason-giving, and to grant the interests, desires and needs of those with whom you share them a certain 'deliberative significance' (Scheffler, 2010, p. 104) withheld

from strangers. The exact nature and content of such reasons for partiality will, it is true, vary depending on the context and degree of fullness of the friendship, which in turn tends to render those reasons more or less defeasible. However, though in principle defeasible by competing reasons, if one were *never* disposed to see oneself as having decisive reasons for partiality towards one's friend under any circumstances, it would be unclear in what sense the relationship could qualify as friendship at all (Scheffler, 2004, p. 248). The germane point for the Relationships View then, as another defender Niko Kolodny (2003, p. 136) puts it, is that '(t)he reason one has for loving Jane, in any given case, is that she is one's daughter, sister, mother, friend, or wife'.

However, an objection to the Relationships View emerges almost immediately which can be said to animate the Individuals View: we do not love *relationships*, we love *people*. The claim that it is our friendship, and not 'Jane' that generates my reason to love her, seems, that is, to give love the wrong object (Kolodny, 2003, p. 136). On the Individuals View, by contrast, it is not our friendship but rather the unique intrinsic value Jane possesses in her own right that generates my reasons and duties of friendship towards her (Keller, 2013; Velleman, 1999). Moreover, as Keller (2013, p. 79) suggests, my reason to give special treatment to Jane arises from the value she possesses and indeed would possess irrespective of my sharing a friendship with her. But then straight away the Individuals View encounters an immediate objection too: whilst a focus on the self-standing value of my friend Jane may render the attitudes that I have towards her intelligible, it struggles to explain why I should regard her *differently* than all individuals that possess the same qualities in equal measure. It fails, one might say, to adequately explain why I should have a *special* concern for her (Keller, 2013, p. 79).

The intricacies of these views will come out in the discussion, but before proceeding there's one more preliminary I want to flag. Throughout this paper I introduce various claims about what *valuing* friends and friendships involves, about how persons and friendships can *possess* value, and about the relation and direction of entailment between how they possess value and how we value them. In order to establish those claims coherently, we'll require a taxonomy of the relevant distinctions and definitions. The following is an adaptation of one developed by Rae Langton (2007, p. 164), which is in turn a revision of that developed by Christine Korsgaard (1983, p. 170) in her classic paper 'Two Distinctions in Goodness':

- (1) The ways in which X can possess value:
  - (a) Intrinsic value: the value X has solely in virtue of the intrinsic properties of X.
  - (b) Extrinsic value: the value X has because of some distinct Y:
    - (i) Instrumental extrinsic value: the value X has as a means to Y.
    - (ii) Non-instrumental extrinsic value: the value X has because of Y (though not as a means to Y).

- (3) The ways in which we value things:<sup>4</sup>
- (a) Intrinsically: to value X, and to take X to be the source of one's reasons for valuing X.
  - (b) Extrinsically: to value X, and to take some distinct Y to be the source of one's reasons for valuing X:
    - (i) To extrinsically value X instrumentally: to value X as a means to some Y, and to take Y to be the source of one's reasons for valuing X.
    - (ii) To extrinsically value X non-instrumentally: to value X because of Y (though not as a means to Y), and to take Y to be the source of one's reasons for valuing X.

If the relevance of these distinctions seems somewhat opaque, hopefully the question of when robustness of duties of friendship is required to which I now turn will shed some light on the internal mechanism of my argument.

### 3. What Would You Do if I Sang Out of Tune?

The requirement that love be steadfast across change has long been a recurring motif in literary and popular culture at least as far back as Shakespeare, who famously wrote: 'Love is not love/Which alters when it alteration finds'. And despite the tendency to associate *Sonnet 116* with romantic love, the intuition carries just as much force in our understanding of what makes for genuine and loving friendship. Indeed most of us, I think, grasp what is required of friendship in just the sense implied. If my losing my looks, or my 'glory', or my singing out of tune is sufficient to cause your friendship towards me to lapse, then on almost any account we are inclined to think you never deserved the title of 'friend' to begin with. In other words, it doesn't seem enough for me that you are my friend, or are disposed to fulfil duties of friendship towards me, merely as I am here and now. For me to believe you to be a real, true friend, I need to believe that you *wouldn't* stand up and walk out on me – that you would remain my friend, even were I in some sense quite altered from how you find me now (Pettit, 2011).

However, though we would seem to require robustness of your disposition across a range of possible variations in me, we do not require robustness across *all* possible changes. For example, if I were to suddenly and inexplicably become monstrously cruel towards you, one might expect that your duties of friendship towards me would not be robust across *that* kind of change. Indeed, it would seem positively perverse to require your dutiful devotion to remain steadfast then. The question then is this: is there any principled way of distinguishing those variations across which robustness of the disposition to fulfil associative duties is required from those across which it isn't?

The suggestion I want to make is, I think, trivially uncontroversial. The answer, I propose, is that whether robustness of your reasons and duties of friendship towards me is required in the face of some change in me, will depend on whether our friendship remains extrinsically valuable or not.

#### 4. The Misanthropy Objection

Yet, despite the ostensible simplicity of this standard for robustness, it seems that of the two theses considered here as conventionally conceived, only the Individuals View can plausibly lay claim to it. According to Keller, the Relationships View cannot, as to do so would be inconsistent with its central premise that associative duties are generated by the relationships one values *intrinsically*. Proponents of that view, he avers, would be forced, that is, to concede that even a friendship that were to so atrophy as to become thoroughly devoid of extrinsic value, or even detrimental to the well-being of participants might *still* be valuable – valuable *intrinsically* that is – and could in principle therefore still require robustness of reasons and duties of partiality (Keller, 2013, p. 57). So it seems, even were I to become monstrously cruel to you, the question of your continuing to be duty-bound to me would remain an open one on the Relationships View, when really we would want to say it is not (Keller, 2013, p. 57). This then is what fuels what I term the misanthropy objection, and it leads Keller to reject the Relationship View's claim that reasons and duties of partiality are generated by the intrinsically valuable relationships people share; indeed to reject the claim that relationships can be intrinsically valuable at all. His real antipathy to the Relationships View then, is that in ascribing special significance to relationships such as friendship on the basis that they are fundamentally or intrinsically valuable (for their own sakes, or in their own rights), it attempts to explain the importance of friendships by dissociating them from what *actually* matters – the actual contributions they make to the welfare, flourishing and interests of the friends themselves – hence the charge of misanthropy (Keller, 2013, p. 77).

By contrast, the Individuals View is fundamentally oriented by how individuals *actually* fare in relationships: whether reasons and duties of friendship are required to be robust or not hinges entirely on whether or not the friendship continues to serve the interests and well-being of the friends who form it, and not some esoteric account of its intrinsic value. This seems right, at least in part. Thus, I grant Keller's (2013, p. 56) claim that 'relationships possess only extrinsic value, insofar as their value is relevant to the generation of reasons of partiality',<sup>5</sup> and share his conviction that a plausible ethics of partiality should not attempt to 'explain the importance of human relationships by dissociating them from the contributions they make to human needs and interests' (2013, p. 77). However, *contra* the misanthropy objection, I contend that the Relationships View can, and indeed must, answer to the values of human welfare and

flourishing, every bit as attentively as the Individuals View does, and that doing so is perfectly consistent with taking the relationships we value intrinsically to be the source of our reasons and duties of partiality. More specifically I argue that whilst to intrinsically value a friendship is to see it as a source of reasons and duties of partiality, one could never have such reasons and duties in, or indeed reason to preserve, a wholly destructive friendship, since I believe intrinsically valuing a relationship to be in fact *conditional* on its actually possessing extrinsic value.

Keller (2013, p. 58) acknowledges that a response along these lines might circumvent the objection, but rejects it on the grounds that ‘it leaves the suggestion that special relationships have intrinsic value looking unmotivated’, drawing on the following analogy to support that objection:

[Suppose] I claim that winter coats are intrinsically valuable, meaning that they have value additional to the good they do in keeping people warm. You say that it seems implausible to think that a winter coat could be valuable even when it does nothing to keep anyone warm. I reply that it wouldn’t be; I say that the intrinsic value of a winter coat is conditional upon the coat’s also having the value of keeping someone warm ... You would be within your rights to think that I am just trying to make trouble. Given my concessions, what more could I possibly need to see that the value of a winter coat is purely extrinsic? (Keller, 2013, p. 58)

Keller’s objection here would carry if my claim were that friendship is intrinsically valuable because it is extrinsically valuable – that a friendship’s *possession* of intrinsic value is conditional on its *possession* of extrinsic value. But that is not my claim. What I am saying is that intrinsically *valuing* a friendship is conditional on its possessing extrinsic value, which amounts to something quite different. Indeed, like Keller, I find it implausible that the value a winter coat possesses could be anything other than purely extrinsic, but nothing obvious follows from this about the way in which one might value it. One can perfectly well value intrinsically a merely<sup>6</sup> extrinsically valuable X, for whilst X possessing intrinsic value entails reason to value it intrinsically, entailment in the opposite direction can be rejected: having reason to intrinsically value X does not entail that X possesses intrinsic value.

The literature yields various purported examples of this, such as mink coats (Korsgaard, 1983, p. 185), the pen Abraham Lincoln used to sign the Emancipation Proclamation (Kagan, 1998, p. 285), Princess Diana’s dress and Napoleon’s hat (Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2000, p. 41). Similarly, we might imagine that my winter coat has some special significance for me that gives me reason to value it beyond the protection from the elements it provides (perhaps it was the first winter coat my parents bought me as a child). In each of these instances, the thought is that we intrinsically value them as ends,

though not in virtue of their intrinsic properties, but because of their association with something or someone else of special significance.

However, Keller might respond that, by my own lights, one would still not *intrinsically* value the coat, the pen, the dress or the hat, for on my definition that requires that the X that is valued is itself the source of reasons for valuing it, and none of these objects are themselves the source of reasons for valuing them. Instead, we *extrinsically* value these things *non-instrumentally*: we don't value them as ends, but nor do we value them simply for the sake of their effects; rather we value them for the sake of something else – something other than their effects (Langton, 2007, pp. 162–3). Thus, one values Princess Diana's dress not as an end or for its own sake, nor for the sake of its effects, but for the sake of something else, i.e., because it was Diana's. Perhaps then Keller (2013, p. 58) could relax his claim that 'it seems implausible to think that a winter coat could be valuable even when it does nothing to keep anyone warm' and allow that I *can* value the first ever winter coat my parents gave me despite the fact that it no longer fits me, never mind keeps me warm, whilst still rejecting that I value it *intrinsically*. And indeed, that looks right. I don't value my childhood winter coat for its own sake, and nor do I value it for the sake of its warmth-preserving properties; rather, I extrinsically value it non-instrumentally for the association it has with my parents and my childhood.

Nevertheless, even if these sorts of examples can be rejected, the general claim that having reason to value a thing intrinsically does not entail that it is intrinsically valuable, I think, cannot. Consider my relationship to my supervisor. The value that relationship possesses is extrinsic: it is only valuable because something else it is thought to realise is deemed valuable. This may sound rather mercenary, but it isn't. That the relationship possesses merely extrinsic value does not imply that I value it merely extrinsically; indeed I do not. I intrinsically value my relationship with my supervisor, which is to say I regard that relationship to be itself a source of distinct reasons – distinct in that they are not derived from the extrinsic goods our relationship is thought to realise, but from the relationship itself. For example, I have *special* reason to want to see my PhD through with the same supervisor who got me to where I am with it, even if other equally well-qualified supervisors could easily take their place, and the source of that reason I take to be the relationship we share.

Of course, the thought that one can value something intrinsically *and* extrinsically is perfectly uncontroversial. What I am saying, however, is somewhat different: that intrinsically valuing a relationship is *conditional* on its actually being extrinsically valuable. If my relationship to my supervisor were shorn of its extrinsic value – if it failed to be extrinsically valuable in any way (either instrumentally or non-instrumentally), or even positively bad – it is difficult to imagine on what basis I could possibly regard our relationship itself to be a source of reasons at all. And to be clear, the choice of the supervisor-student relationship as an expository example – a relationship that builds from a

foundation of extrinsic valuation but commonly evolves to become intrinsically valued, often as a friendship – is purely strategic. *All* relationships, I suggest (like Keller), are merely extrinsically valuable in just this way.

If this is right, then we can jettison what I take to be the claim propping up the misanthropy objection and predominantly fuelling Keller's antipathy to the Relationships View – the notion that special relationships can *possess* value independent of their being extrinsically valuable to participants – whilst retaining the claim that associative duties are grounded in *the way we value* our special relationships intrinsically.

### 5. The Robustness of Duties of Friendship across Change

So the Relationships View, or at least my instantiation of it, shares with Keller's Individuals View a commitment to the claim that a friendship must be extrinsically valuable in order for the friends who form it to have reasons and duties of partiality towards each other at all, therefore circumventing the charge of being 'misanthropic'.<sup>7</sup> What we want to know now, is what *kind* of changes in participants would be capable of voiding friendships of the extrinsic value they possess entirely, such that robustness of the disposition to fulfil duties of friendship would no longer be required. Perhaps the best way to address this question is to ask a different, but related one: how do friendships come to possess extrinsic value in the first place?

The answer, I want to suggest, is that friendships inherit much of their extrinsic value from the participants' possession of what Philip Pettit (2011) calls modally demanding virtues. To illustrate what it is for something to be modally demanding, Pettit (2013) discusses the value of freedom as non-interference as Isaiah Berlin famously conceived of it. To enjoy such freedom, it does not seem sufficient that one enjoys non-interference in the *actual* choice one makes; it must also be the case that your choice would not have been interfered with had you chosen differently. Pettit (2011) proposes that this exemplifies a structure that can be found in a range of values, not just freedom, but also love, honesty, fidelity, loyalty, trustworthiness and candour, to name but a few. In each instance, the thought is that it will not be enough for me to enjoy your embodiment of the trait as things stand in the here and now; rather I need to be assured of robustness even were things quite different. On the virtue of honesty for example, Pettit (2012, p. 9) writes: 'I enjoy your honesty insofar as I enjoy your truth-telling, not just in the actual world where it is more or less convenient for you to tell the truth, but also in various possible worlds where it becomes inconvenient.'

A number of interesting normative implications follow from Pettit's observations about these robustly demanding virtues, but it is the thought that they are value-constitutive in a particular way that is of special relevance here. As Pettit (2012, p. 10) writes:

Standard views of virtues ... suggest that they may ... make people more likely to do good and they may enable people to recognise the good that they may do ... But on the line emerging here, virtues ... may ... serve a distinct function, which is ontological rather than practical or epistemological. They may enable the creation of goods – robustly demanding goods – that are otherwise unavailable. It is only in the presence of virtue that you can enjoy the friendship or honesty or justice of others.

What we might say then, is that the good of for example loyalty that friends enjoy is constituted not by their *actually* being loyal to one another, but rather by their being *disposed* to be loyal to one another; in other words, the *good* of loyalty they enjoy is constituted by the *virtue* of loyalty they possess. Thus, my being disposed to be loyal to my friend Molly, not just as things are, but across a range of possible worlds, constitutes the good of loyalty which she enjoys, a good which in turn, I suggest, is a constituent of the extrinsic value our friendship possesses.

Suppose Molly and I are the geeks of our school and that I have always been loyal to Molly in the actual world where being so has been easy – say none of the other pupils want to be seen to be friends with me, but I admit that were the cool group ever to come knocking, I would turn my back on her without a second's hesitation. I doubt we would want to say I am a loyal friend at all, irrespective of the fact that I've never *actually* been disloyal to Molly; at the very least, we wouldn't say I possess the virtue of loyalty, for to do so is surely to be disposed to remain loyal to Molly even, and perhaps especially, in the face of considerable incentives to behave otherwise. Indeed, no more am I loyal than the chooser who opts for the only choice open to them is free. And insofar as I don't possess the virtue of loyalty, Molly cannot enjoy the good of loyalty, again, despite the fact that I've never actually been disloyal. The good enjoyed then is solely the product of virtue, and utterly un-realizable by any other means.

Of course some of the extrinsic value our friendship possesses is no doubt of the *instrumental* type; that is, a good portion of the extrinsic value our relationship possesses lies in it being a means to further goods, such as companionship, security, support, etc. But now we see that much of the remaining value our relationship possesses is of the second, non-instrumental extrinsic variety. That is to say, whilst much of the extrinsic value our friendship inherits comes from the value-constitutive virtues we possess, such as fidelity, loyalty, even love itself, it would not seem that our being so disposed *causes* our friendship to be extrinsically valuable, but rather that our being virtuous *constitutes* the good of our friendship – the non-instrumental extrinsic value it possesses. To make the point differently, my modally robust disposition to be loyal to Molly does not *cause* our friendship to be valuable any more than a corner causes a square. And, just as there can be no square without corners,

there can be no friendship without modally robust virtues. To that end, I suggest that the non-instrumental extrinsic value that our friendship inherits from our modally robust dispositions to be loyal, faithful and loving towards each other is a necessary and sufficient constituent of the good of our friendship.

What we have been looking for then, and what I think this story about value-constitutive virtues gives us, is that constituent element or portion of the extrinsic value a friendship possesses without which there could be no friendship at all; indeed, the good in the friendship that makes the friendship itself a source of reasons – that makes it something to be valued intrinsically. Earlier I said that I see my relationship with my supervisor as being itself a source of *distinctive* special reasons (which on my definition is equivalent to saying I value it intrinsically) but gave no real argument why. Now I think we can say that our relationship – our friendship – is itself a source of reasons on account of the fact that it possesses non-instrumental extrinsic value composed of the distinct and modally demanding goods of fidelity, loyalty and friendship we now enjoy – goods constituted by our being disposed to be loyal and faithful to each other, and unrealisable via any other means.

## 6. The Individuals View and the Fungibility Objection: Why We Should Prefer the Relationships View

Interestingly, I think this account of how relationships come to possess extrinsic value might also go some way to fending off the main objection to the Individuals View – the fungibility objection. To see how, let's run that objection and assess the moves the Individuals View might make to escape it.

To begin with, it is questionable on what basis the Individuals View can distinguish the changes friends might undergo that should matter for robustness from those that should not. As Kolodny (2003, p. 140) writes: 'If Jane's (non-relational) qualities are what justify my loving her, then that justification lapses as soon as she loses those qualities.' But if what we mean by qualities is 'non-relational qualities' such as looks, hair colour, wit, or self-confidence, as Kolodny (2003, p. 140) does, then most of us do not tend to think that love or special concern should be responsive to such changes generally speaking. Indeed, it is across precisely these kinds of changes that we tend to think the disposition to fulfil duties of friendship really ought to be robust.

But of course, a proponent of the Individuals View will respond that non-relational qualities are not the right sorts of qualities and say rather, it is not just because Jane is beautiful, sharp, and self-confident that you have reasons and duties of friendship towards her, but also because she possesses certain relational qualities such as being kind, loving, sympathetic, etc.<sup>8</sup> Even then however, the Individuals View finds itself faced with a further problem the Relationships View is not, which is the substance of the fungibility objection: relational qualities of this type are still repeatable, and so it remains mysterious

how they could be a source of reasons for *partiality*. My friend Molly may be just as kind, faithful and loyal, and indeed as beautiful, sharp and self-confident as Jane, but whilst I see myself as having reasons and duties of friendship towards Molly and not Jane, it is difficult to see how that could be justified on the Individuals View. By contrast, it seems all the Relationships View has to do is point to the existence of the friendship Molly and I share and the absence of one between Jane and me.

I see three moves a proponent of the Individuals View might make to try and overcome this fungibility objection. First, they might argue that an individual's independent self-standing value is more than merely the sum of their relational and non-relational qualities. That it is in the unique constellation of Molly's qualities, and all the manifold little details, perfections and imperfections she comprises – her sheer Kantian personhood perhaps as J. David Velleman (1999, p. 366) might say – that her true value resides, and it is this that is the source of my reasons and duties of friendship towards her.

Even so, it remains difficult to see what it could be about even Molly's unique self-standing value such that could give me reasons of partiality towards her. It will not do to say my partiality towards her is justified 'because she's Molly!' where what is implied is her great and irreducible intrinsic value, for Jane may just as well say 'but what about me? I'm Jane!' Molly is, after all, no more valuable than Jane or anyone else.

The second move, and one Keller (2013, p. 135) thinks plausible, is to say we can allow that the friendship I share with Molly 'enables' Molly's self-standing value to generate my reasons for partiality towards her, whilst still denying that the friendship is the source of my reasons. So whilst the friendship may be 'relevant' to understanding why I respond to her as I do, it is nevertheless Molly that is the source of my reasons of partiality, not the friendship itself. There are different stories the Individuals View might tell as to how this claim might unpack, but as Keller (2013, p. 151) concedes, there are none that are not ultimately 'primitivist' at bottom. That is, at some point, even the most sophisticated of Individuals View will have to assert that it is simply a primitive fact that, in valuing certain individuals (with whom we share special relationships), we *just do* see reason to treat them differently from other, equally valuable individuals.<sup>9</sup>

However, I want to suggest something more than that in valuing Molly I *just do* see reason to treat her differently from others; rather, what is crucial is that I actually value her *differently* from the way I value other persons. What distinguishes Molly is that I *extrinsically* value her. And whilst talk of extrinsic valuation of loved ones may seem grating, it is perfectly coherent. The claim is simply that, *in addition* to (intrinsically) valuing Molly as an unconditionally valuable individual in her own right (just as I value all persons), I also value her *extrinsically*, which, recalling the earlier taxonomy, is to say I value her, but see something extrinsic to her as being the source of my reasons for valuing her so.

Moreover, to say I extrinsically value Molly is therefore to say I value her *more* than I value all persons generally (i.e., persons that I value merely intrinsically). This of course is not to say that Molly is more valuable than anyone else. Consider an analogous claim in the less controversial parlance of special concern (which is structurally speaking a form of extrinsic valuing on this account). To say that I have a special concern for (extrinsically value) Molly is to say that I have a greater concern for her than I have for all people generally (that I value her more than I value all people generally). And I take it the claim that one can have a special concern for one's friends without committing oneself to the thought that they are in any sense *more valuable* than anyone else is relatively uncontroversial.<sup>10</sup>

Note the shift here – we are no longer talking about how I value my *friendship* with Molly, but how I value *her*. Note also, to claim that what distinguishes persons to whom I am partial is that I extrinsically value them, is not yet to say anything much about the sources of my reasons to value them so – they may in principle be anything except, that is (and this is the crucial point), the persons themselves. Thus, if you are convinced by the claim that what distinguishes those persons to whom we have reason to be partial is that we *extrinsically* value them (in addition to intrinsically valuing them), I think you have to reject Keller's Individuals View.

By contrast, the Relationships View faces no such problem. It is perfectly coherent to say that I extrinsically value Molly (in addition to intrinsically valuing her), and that I take the source of my reasons for valuing her *specially* to be the friendship we share, not Molly herself. Importantly, this does not mean I value Molly *for the sake of* our friendship. To say as much implies that if the friendship were to dissolve, I would no longer have reason to value Molly; that in the absence of our friendship there would be nothing left to value her for the sake of. But of course there is; after all I would still have reason to value her *for her own sake*. She would still be a person, valuable in her own right, and therefore a source of reasons for me to intrinsically value her as an end. I might not, it is true, have reason to value her *specially* (or as we might now say *extrinsically*) in the sense required for reasons and duties of friendship, but then that is exactly what we should expect in the absence of any friendship between us.

The third and final move then, is to develop a variant of the Individuals View, which I'll call the Virtues View, and can be described thus: the source of my reasons and duties of friendship towards Molly is her modally demanding virtues (such as loyalty or fidelity) and the distinctive good or value they create, conditioned by the fact that we share a special relationship (which enables me access to the distinctive goods produced by her loyalty and fidelity – goods I could not access in the absence of the friendship). This mirrors Keller's view insofar as the source of my reasons and duties of friendship – Molly's virtues, are virtues she would still have even if she and I were not friends, but extends it to say that the distinctive value her virtues produce is

only made accessible to me through the enabling relationship we share. This then would fend off the fungibility objection about some other equally virtuous Jane; I don't have reasons of partiality towards her because the absence of a friendship between us means I can't access the distinctive value or good produced by her virtues. The crucial point though, is that the relationship is only the enabler of my access to the value produced by Molly's virtues; it is Molly herself that is the source.

The virtues variant of the Individuals View then can perhaps escape incoherence, since the good of loyalty I enjoy is extrinsic to Molly, even though it is constituted by the virtue of loyalty Molly possesses in her own right. However, even if it can, I think it still faces a significant problem that renders the Relationships View ultimately preferable.

The problem is this: if we grant that Molly's value-constitutive virtues are the source of my reasons for partiality towards her, it would seem that were Molly to lose all those virtues then we would have to say I no longer have reasons or duties of friendship towards her. And indeed that it would yield this conclusion is precisely what underwrites the appeal of the Individuals View. But suppose towards the ends of our lives happily shared, my huckleberry friend Molly becomes ravaged by Alzheimer's. And suppose far from being disposed to be faithful, loyal or loving towards me, she no longer even recognises me. Indeed suppose, if you will, that in the foul grip of that terrible disease, Molly becomes monstrously cruel to me. On Keller's Individuals View certainly, and even on the Virtues View variant of it, I have no more reason, never mind duty, to be partial towards my friend – the source simply no longer exists. But surely I do still have duties of friendship towards Molly, this friend with whom I grew up with and who has my whole life stood by me through thick and thin. And that is because even now, I still value her specially, and the source of my reasons for doing so is not her (for the Molly I loved is no more), nor is it her virtues (for they are no more), but rather the source of my reasons to be partial to Molly, even now, is the beautiful friendship we have shared since childhood.

## 7. Conclusion

We've gone from saying at the start that robustness of the disposition to fulfil duties of friendship wouldn't be required if one's friend were to become monstrously cruel to the suggestion now of a situation in which it possibly would be. So how did we get here? I began with the seemingly innocuous claim that whether or not robustness of the disposition to fulfil duties of friendship is required depends on whether or not the friendship retains extrinsic value. Despite the simplicity of that claim, the impetus of the 'misanthropy objection' seemed to suggest that the Relationships View could not lay claim to it, since to do so would be inconsistent with its central premise that associative duties

are generated by the relationships one values *intrinsically*. On that view, Keller (2013, p. 57) averred, the question of my remaining duty-bound to a friend who was monstrously cruel to me would remain an open one, when really we would want to say that it is not.

However, that question *does* remain an open one, for whilst taking a friendship one values intrinsically to be itself a source of distinctive reasons is indeed conditional on its actually possessing extrinsic value, to say a friendship is devoid of *instrumental* extrinsic value of the type implied by Keller's account, is not yet to say that it is *entirely* devoid of extrinsic value. Indeed, Keller's account of the extrinsic value of friendship seems to miss something significant, hinted at by the Alzheimer's case. What that is, I argue, is that *non-instrumental* extrinsic value is a necessary and sufficient constituent of friendship. It is *necessary* in that there can be no friendship in the absence of this aspect of its extrinsic value which is constituted by its participants' possession of robustly demanding virtues; and it is *sufficient*, in that even in the complete absence of instrumental extrinsic value, the good of friendship, and the robustness of the disposition to fulfil reasons and duties of partiality it requires, can remain.

Thus, what distinguishes the inexplicable cruelty served up by the malicious friend from the Alzheimer's-induced cruelty of Molly, is not the instrumental extrinsic value of these relationships, for there is a very real sense in which neither of these friendships would any longer causally contribute to my well-being at all; I would arguably be better off without either of them. What *does* distinguish them, and what distinguishes all changes in friends across which robustness of the disposition to fulfil reasons and duties of friendship is required from those across which it isn't, is that my modally robust virtues towards Molly are still active in constituting the non-instrumental good of our friendship (even if hers are not) in spite of her involuntary cruelty towards me, whereas in the case of the friend whose cruelty towards me is not involuntary, they are not. Moreover, the fact that I withdraw my loyalty and fidelity from this malicious friend, thereby voiding the friendship entirely of whatever good might remain of it, is, we would tend to think, normatively appropriate. In this, Keller is undoubtedly right; there is never reason to remain partial to, and to preserve, a friendship in which one is subject to the inexcusable mindless cruelty of another, and there is nothing in my argument to suggest that we should.

What my argument does suggest though, is an explanation for why, intuitively, we would tend to reject the thought that Molly's developing a terrible debilitating disease such as Alzheimer's would similarly release me from my reasons and duties of friendship towards her in the event that the disease made her monstrously cruel towards me. It is perhaps true that Molly herself might no longer even have normative expectations of me that my partiality towards her should remain robust, nor indeed enjoy the good of our friendship that obtains as constituted by my stubborn loyalty, fidelity and love for her. And perhaps even third parties, seeing how the strain of our friendship weighs on

me, might be prepared to forgive me were I to pull back from the friendship somewhat. Yet, I still find value in the friendship, even if it is mostly, or solely, there by my doing – the sort of value that is, that makes our friendship itself a source of special reasons for me. And anyway, regardless of the relaxed normative expectations of third-person spectators in the face of Molly’s cruelty, or indeed the total absence of them on the part of Molly herself, in the final analysis first-person normative expectations remain. What kind of friend, indeed person, would it make me, if, after all our years of friendship, I stood up and walked out on Molly now.

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### Notes

- 1 Given its unwieldiness, I may on occasion truncate the phrase ‘the robustness of the disposition to fulfil duties of friendship’ to simply ‘the robustness of duties of friendship’, but the former is always implied.
- 2 Although I believe them to have the most force, these are by no means the only two accounts of the ethics of partiality. In particular, some argue that it is our personal projects and the role our loved ones play in them that generate our reasons and duties of partiality, not relationships or the individuals party to them at all. I discuss the Projects View elsewhere, so sideline it here primarily for considerations of space, but also because I suspect the types of reasons that projects tend to generate to be ‘normatively individualistic’ in a way that renders them singularly unsuited to an account of *duties* of partiality. For more on the non-deontic nature of project-dependent reasons and the problem this presents *vis-à-vis* grounding associative duties in projects, see Scheffler (2010, pp. 108–12).
- 3 Whilst Scheffler talks of non-instrumental valuing, I prefer to speak of intrinsic valuing so as to avoid confusion. This is because whilst to non-instrumentally value

- X as an end (i.e., *intrinsically*) is perfectly coherent, it is also perfectly coherent to non-instrumentally value X *extrinsically* (Langton, 2007, p. 163).
- 4 Intrinsic/extrinsic valuing here is derived from, and structurally analogous to, Kolodny's (2003, p. 150) account of final/non-final valuing.
  - 5 Indeed, the thought that relationships could be intrinsically valuable seems metaphysically vexed, at least on the basis of something like G. E. Moore's (2005, p. 190) isolation test, which posits that, 'In order to arrive at a correct decision on ... this question [about what things have intrinsic value], it is necessary to consider what things are such that, if they existed *by themselves*, in absolute isolation, we should yet judge their existence to be good'. It is difficult to fathom how a relationship could stand alone as the sole entity in the universe, although I suspect that to say that, is not to reject outright the notion that a relationship could be valuable solely in virtue of its intrinsic properties, but rather that total abstraction from all possible social settings is simply not the best way to compute value (Dancy, 2004, pp. 166–7). Perhaps some argument for the intrinsic value of relationships could be mounted, perhaps on the basis that only 'facts' or 'states of affairs' can potentially be valuable solely in virtue of their intrinsic properties. For example, it could be argued that even the extrinsic properties of a relationship are nevertheless intrinsic properties of the 'fact' or 'state of affairs' of being in a relationship. I cannot do justice to such claims here, but for further reading see Kagan (1998, pp. 293–4) and Zimmerman (2010, §4).
  - 6 'Merely' as in solely, not paltry.
  - 7 Keller in fact offers a number of variants of the misanthropy objection designed to show that relationships cannot be intrinsically valuable, but I will not detail them individually here, since they are all susceptible to defeat on the same basis. That is, none of the examples prove that the Relationships View is misanthropic if one accepts my claim that intrinsically valuing a relationship is conditional on it possessing extrinsic value.
  - 8 Kolodny (2003, p. 140) rejects this response, arguing that these sorts of 'relational' qualities are not available to proponents of what he calls the 'quality theory'. I suspect however that the Individuals View is perfectly sophisticated enough to incorporate such qualities.
  - 9 Keller insists however, that if you are unsatisfied with this you must also be unsatisfied with the Relationships View as it faces an analogous problem. That is, assuming my relationship with Molly is no more valuable than your relationship with Jane, how can I be justified in favouring my own relationship over yours? Keller's (2013, p. 138) point then, is that Scheffler's response to this objection to the Relationships View – that valuing a relationship in which you participate *just is* different – is no less unsatisfying.
  - 10 It may be questioned whether 'to extrinsically value' someone and 'to have a special concern' for them is coextensive in the way I suggest. Nevertheless, the statement 'to extrinsically value person X is to value X because of some distinct Y (Y being the source of your reasons for valuing X)', seems to me structurally isomorphic with the statement 'to have a special concern for person X is to have a greater concern for X because of some distinct Y (Y being the source of your reasons for special concern for X)'. Of course, not all extrinsic valuing implies special concern, but I think the opposite is true: all special concern is a form of extrinsic valuing.

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