

The Moral Psychology of Love

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Book description

The topic of love and morality has received much attention in philosophy (Velleman, 1999; Frankfurt, 1999; Helm, 2010; Abramson & Leite, 2011). This trend, however, often results in normative accounts of love, while little attention is given to the question of the kind of mental phenomenon love is (but see Naar, 2017; Pismenny & Prinz, 2017). Many construct ideal theories of love without having much to say about its actual nature (but see Brogaard, 2015). Thus, some philosophers argue that love is an intrinsically moral phenomenon, and conclude that love that violates moral norms in some relevant ways is not true love (but see Ben Ze'ev & Goussinsky, 2008; Jenkins, 2017). Yet, it seems important to get clear on the kind of mental phenomenon love is before deciding whether and how different normative assessments might be applicable to it. Moreover, conceiving of love as an intrinsically moral phenomenon leaves out numerous everyday cases that are categorized as 'love' by those who participate in and experience them. Should they all be denied the name of love? To answer this question, one needs to get clear about the relationship between love and morality.

For these reasons, we think that the philosophical inquiry into the nature and norms of love will greatly benefit from an interdisciplinary approach. First, examining the ways in which different forms of love are categorized in disciplines such as psychology and neuroscience will help inform the conceptual analysis of love in philosophy. Second, looking at empirical work on love in other disciplines will help delineate moral, nonmoral, and immoral cases of love if they exist. Third, if a case can be made for defining 'true love' as an intrinsically moral phenomenon, empirical work might help draw the boundaries between it and its 'imposter' counterparts.

Many psychologists and neuroscientists investigate the phenomenon of love. For example, there is work in psychology on the benefits and harms of positive bias in intimate relationships (Gagne & Lyden, 2004; Fletcher & Kerr, 2010), on the role of attachment styles in the formation of a child's personality through infant-caregiver interaction (Bowlby, 1972; Ainsworth, 1978; Main & Hesse, 1990; Buunk, 1997), and the impact attachment styles have on abusive relationships (Alexander, 1992; Dutton, 2006). But most of these studies have said very little about the moral dimension of love. They do not directly raise questions about the moral status of such biases, or the connection of attachment styles with character and virtue. Furthermore, in these disciplines much is

said about love's motivational powers (Marazziti et al., 1999; Aron et al., 2005; Hatfield & Rapson, 2009; Cacioppo & Cacioppo, 2016). Yet the discussions of love as a motivating force have been silent on the morality of reasons and actions produced by it.

The proposed volume, *The Moral Psychology of Love*, aims to bridge the gap between the disciplines mentioned. Philosophical inquiries into the moral aspects of love could greatly benefit from the empirical research of psychology and neuroscience into what love is, before tackling the very different question of what it should be. Conversely, studies of love in psychology and neuroscience will be enriched by questions, conceptual definitions, and meta-analyses of their theories and empirical findings provided by philosophers.

To elucidate the relationship between love and morality, the volume investigates the following questions: what kind of phenomenon is love? What sort of valuing does love involve? How does love relate to prudential and moral norms? How do social and cultural norms influence conception, evaluation, and experience of love? How does love relate to exclusivity, monogamy, and polyamory? How might love alter the self and its boundaries? Do we love for reasons? How does love produce reasons and motivation for actions? Are praise and blame ever appropriate in assessing love? How does love relate to wellbeing?

The volume will present the most current work of philosophers, psychologists, and neuroscientists, and potentially scholars from other disciplines with a view to providing an interdisciplinary perspective on love, and supply a solid foundation for further exploration of the many aspects of its moral significance.

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