

# Robert Solomon's Rejection of Aristotelian Virtue: Is the Passion of Erotic Love a Virtue that is Independent of Rationality?

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## Abstract

A recurring theme within Robert Solomon's writings concerns the central importance of the passions. His high regard for the passions even motivates him to challenge the traditional understanding of virtue. Solomon rejects the Aristotelian view that virtues are dispositions of character developed according to rational principles rather than passions. He offers the counter-example of erotic love as a passion that is not based upon rationality, which he argues ought to be viewed as a virtue. This paper argues that while Solomon's account of love can accommodate the traditional Aristotelian motivations for rejecting passions as virtues, there are compelling reasons for preferring the Aristotelian account of virtue. Ultimately, Solomon's argument relies upon an implausible view of the passions and offers inferior resources for examining love in terms of virtue.

## Introduction

A recurring theme within Robert Solomon's writings concerns the central importance of the passions. His high regard for the passions even motivates him to challenge the traditional understanding of virtue. Solomon rejects the Aristotelian view that virtues are dispositions of character rather than passions. He explains, "This is the claim I want to pursue here, that passions *as such* can be virtues . . . . I do not deny that virtues are typically states of character (or for that matter, that passions can be states of character), but it seems to me that passions (such as love) can also be virtues."<sup>1</sup> Against the Aristotelian view he argues that the passions should play a larger role in ethical theory and that passions can even be virtues. In doing so, Solomon detaches both the concept of virtue in general and the virtue of love in particular from the role that rationality plays in traditional Aristotelian virtue theories.

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Since Aristotle's views inform many contemporary accounts of virtue ethics Solomon's position also conflicts with contemporary Neo-Aristotelian views that portray moral virtues as dispositions of an agent's moral character that are shaped by rationality.<sup>2</sup> While Aristotelian portrayals of virtue offer a role for passions, since virtue includes a disposition towards experiencing passions in excellent ways, they reject Solomon's view that passions can constitute virtue. He argues that such accounts of virtue attribute inadequate importance to the passions.<sup>3</sup>

I argue that while Solomon's account of love anticipates and has some resources for responding to the traditional Aristotelian motivations for rejecting passions as virtues, there are additional compelling reasons for preferring an Aristotelian account of virtue over Solomon's. I will demonstrate that Solomon's argument relies upon an unorthodox view of the passions and that he offers inferior resources for examining love in terms of virtue. Furthermore, Solomon's position has the undesirable implication that there can be no objective 'reasons for love' beyond the radically subjective choices of one's own will.

Section I discusses the relationship between Solomon's account of love and the broader debate concerning the connection between love and rationality. Section II presents Solomon's portrayal of the passion of *eros* as a virtue. Section III presents the traditional Aristotelian arguments for viewing dispositions developed in accordance with reason, rather than passions, as virtues. Section IV demonstrates that Solomon's view addresses the traditional Aristotelian critique, but has other weaknesses. Section V concludes that Solomon's account of passions as virtues is ultimately less attractive than an Aristotelian account.

## I. The Reasons for Love

Solomon's account of love has implications for several debates in contemporary ethics. The most obvious implication is its potential to undermine the traditional Aristotelian account of virtue, which claims virtue is constituted by dispositions shaped by the dictates of rationality. However, Solomon's account also implies that there is no rationale for guiding love apart from the subjective volitional choices of the lover. Therefore, there can be no objective rational assessment of one's loves. This implication is more obvious once one compares various accounts of love based on the reasons they give for love.

Four broad views of the connection between reasons and love can be identified in contemporary theories. First, some theories argue that a rational basis for love is located in a generic trait held by all humans such as rational capacities, personhood, or being created in the image of God. The most intricate example of such a theory is J. David Velleman's account, which is a Neo-Kantian presentation of love as a moral emotion

based upon the lover's ability to perceive the beloved's personhood.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the reason for love is the beloved's enduring personhood and rational capacities. One implication of Velleman's theory is that all humans are appropriate subjects for love and that; therefore, love should not result in immoral favoritism. However, the most serious challenge facing theories of this type of theory is the need to explain why the lover does not care for all people in precisely the same way as one another since they all share the trait that provides the rational basis for love.

A second group of theories identify a rational basis for love in the specific non-relational attributes of the beloved such as the beloved's character, intelligence, sense of humor, or physical attractiveness. If one interprets Aristotle's account of the various kinds of friendship as a theory of love, the rationality of love would be based on the beloved's useful, pleasant, or virtuous traits with virtue being the ideal reason for love.<sup>5</sup> Several contemporary theories of love offer similar accounts such as Hugh LaFollette's account of love in *Personal Relationships*.<sup>6</sup> While many people find this account of love intuitive, the most serious challenge facing these theories is their difficulty explaining the tenacity of love. If such traits are the basis for love, then isn't it rational for the beloved to 'trade-in' the beloved for another individual whom possess similar traits in greater degrees? Similarly, why does love often continue even after attractive features of the beloved fade?

A third group of theories claim that love is rationally justified by the relationship the beloved has with the lover. The most influential contemporary version of this theory has been advanced by Niko Kolodny. He claims, "Love is not only rendered *normatively appropriate* by the presence of a relationship. Love moreover partly *consists* in the belief that some relationship renders it appropriate....Special concern for a person is not love at all when there is no belief that a relationship renders it appropriate."<sup>7</sup> This view grounds love in the relational attributes possessed by the beloved. Such theories of love avoid many problems associated with accounts that find a reason for love in specific non-relational attributes, since there is no chance that anyone will possess the traits that rationally justify love in greater degrees than the beloved. No one will possess the trait of 'being my oldest child' or 'being my spouse' more than my oldest child or spouse. Yet, while this theory offers a very plausible account for why love is justified once such a relationship is established, it offers little insight concerning why we initiate loving relationships where no significant relationship already exists.

Finally, there are theories that claim that there is no standard rational structure that grounds love. One influential example of such a theory is offered by Harry Frankfurt who argues that love serves as a rational reason for valuing the beloved, but that no existing value within the beloved serves as a rational reason for love.<sup>8</sup> As we will see, Solomon's account of love is best understood as a 'no reasons' theory of love, since the basis of love is passion rather than reason.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, part of what he lauds about the

passions is their independence from reason.<sup>10</sup> However, since he will ultimately portray passions as a type of volitional judgment which is not necessitated by reason, love will ultimately be based upon the lover's radically subjective choice.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, if Solomon's theory is correct then love is based upon no rational structure beyond the subjective choices of the individual lover expressed through the passions.<sup>12</sup>

## II. Solomon's Passion Based Virtue of Erotic Love

Solomon presents *eros* as a paradigm example of a passion that is a virtue. He claims that ethical systems ought to account for the passion of love in terms of virtue. He argues:

A passion as a virtue not only need not be a disposition of character; it may even be "out of character" and quite contrary to anything that one might usually expect of this person. "Falling in love" and stress-induced acts of heroism often exemplify such "lapses." Indeed, such examples are more than convincing reasons to seriously consider passions, even rather than dispositions of character, as virtues.<sup>13</sup>

Solomon's insight is that some virtuous human experiences are rare and are therefore difficult to portray as any kind of disposition. Therefore, he concludes that even an action or passion that is 'out of character' for an agent could be a virtue. In order to acknowledge the excellence of these actions, emotions, and passions Solomon claims that they should be reclassified as virtues.

Solomon attempts to address the traditional motivations for rejecting passions as virtues. One of Aristotle's objections to viewing passions as virtues is that he portrays passions as involuntary and irrational. Solomon explains,

It is sometimes said that emotions in general, and love in particular, are irrational, and therefore cannot be virtues because they are capricious. They simply come and go. They are all contingency without rational necessity and the constancy of reason.<sup>14</sup>

Solomon claims the traditional reluctance against viewing love in ethical terms is based in its seemingly capricious and involuntary nature. However, he argues that love is not as capricious as is often thought<sup>15</sup> and that love's failure to respond to reason is part of its strength.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, he rejects the view that passions are short-term and short-lived. He attributes this view to Aristotle saying, "Aristotle assumes that passions are fleeting, a common assumption."<sup>17</sup> Instead, he claims that passions can express long-term devotion. He describes such passions,

. . . love tends to build on itself, to amplify with time; one tends to find—through love—ever more reasons to love. This is not, I would argue, an argument against the emotions, but rather an aspect of their virtue. It is passing fancy that we criticize, not unmovable devotion. It is sudden anger that we call irrational, not long-motivated and well-reasoned animosity. . . . It is true that the emotions are stubborn and intractable, but this—as opposed ultimately less dependable action in accordance with principle—is what makes them so essential to ethics.<sup>18</sup>

Solomon accepts that immature passions are not virtues, but insists that these vices are no reason to reject all passions as virtues. Concerning love, he admits that someone who “falls in love” with a different person each week has immature passions. This agent is vicious precisely because her passions are inconsistent ‘passing fancies’ rather than long-term devotion. For Solomon, love is not responsive to reason, but instead the rationales the lover provides for love are ad-hoc justifications rooted in passion. Love itself is not based upon any reason at all, but rather based upon passions through which one chooses to invest one’s self into another person.

The closest Solomon comes to defining love is by describing it in terms of self-definition. He explains, “Passions define the self, they are the heavy ‘investments’ of the self in a way that most emotions do not and are not. Love, notably, might be defined (in part) as *defining yourself in and through another person*.”<sup>19</sup> He portrays love as a foundational aspect of the self, which is neither derivative nor secondary. However, he simultaneously acknowledges that love can be vicious and claims, “There is misplaced love, foolish love, overly possessive love (which may be better characterized as jealousy), and these are not virtues or virtuous, although even a foolish love may display more virtue than no love at all.”<sup>20</sup> Yet, while Solomon suggests there are standards for distinguishing virtuous love from vicious love, he offers rather limited guidance for distinguishing one from the other. As we shall see, this difficulty is a logical implication of detaching love from rationality. Once Solomon embraces the view that there are no objective reasons for love, it becomes difficult to find a basis for distinguishing between virtuous and vicious love.

Finally, it is important to recognize that Solomon’s argument that passions can be virtues relies upon an unusual view of psychology that construes passions as voluntary choices. He frequently uses the terms emotions and passions interchangeably and portrays them both as voluntary expressions of a person’s judgment. He offers this account of emotion:<sup>21</sup>

An emotion is a judgment (or a set of judgments), something we do. An emotion is a (set of) judgment(s) which constitute our world, our surreality, and its “intentional objects.” An emotion is a basic judgment

about our Selves and our place in our world, the projection of the values and ideals, structures and mythologies, according to which we live and through which we experience our lives.<sup>22</sup>

He construes emotions as judgments and minimizes the differences between them. For Solomon, emotions are the very judgments that shape the way we view the most important aspects of life such as the self and the world. These judgments are not demanded by reason, but stem from the agent's volition. In contrast, he rejects the 'traditional position,' which denies the agent's role in shaping the passions. Accordingly, he claims that passions are the deep judgments of the self that reveal the individual's true character. These judgments are foundational character traits, since they are ultimately voluntary expressions of the will.

Solomon's argument against the traditional account of virtue is based on the attractiveness of love as a counter-example of a passion that constitutes character excellence. Love displays excellence through its intense commitment to another person and entails a valuing of another that few other experiences can match. Solomon suggests that this experience ought to be viewed as an excellence and virtue despite its independence from rationality.

### III. The Aristotelian Rejection of Passion as a Virtue

Aristotle's account of virtue and its contemporary descendents define virtues as excellent character dispositions developed according to the dictates of rationality, but explicitly reject the idea that passions are virtues. Aristotle argues that each moral virtue can only be developed as irrational aspects of the psyche are shaped according to the guidance of rationality. For example, the virtue of courage is an ongoing disposition to fear only that which is truly dangerous in proportion to the threat it actually presents.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, temperance is the ongoing disposition of one's appetite to desire only that which is truly desirable in terms of health and long-term compatibility with happiness.<sup>24</sup> In each case, irrational emotions, passions, and appetites need to be shaped by the wise and objective dictates of reason if they are to become virtuous.<sup>25</sup>

However, Aristotle explains that practical rationality is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the development of virtue. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* he writes:

This is why some say that all the virtues are forms of practical wisdom, and why Socrates in one respect was on the right track while in another he went astray; in thinking that all the virtues were forms of practical wisdom he was wrong, but in saying they implied practical wisdom he was right.<sup>26</sup>

Contrary to the Socratic doctrine that made virtue equivalent to rational understanding, the Aristotelian view portrays practical wisdom as a foundation for virtue while acknowledging that other contributors are also necessary. Most notably, the agent needs an adequately strong will to carry out the dictates of practical wisdom and develop a fully virtuous disposition long-term.<sup>27</sup>

Aristotle portrays the passions as an aspect of the self that ultimately need to be trained in accordance with practical rationality long-term. He explains,

Now neither virtues nor the vices are passions, because we are not called good or bad on the ground of our passions, but are so called on the ground of our virtues and our vices, and because we are neither praised nor blamed for our passions (for the man who feels fear or anger is not praised, nor is the man who simply feels anger blamed, but the man who feels it in a certain way), but for our virtues and our vices we are praised or blamed.

Again, we feel anger and fear without choice, but the virtues are modes of choice or involve choice.<sup>28</sup>

Aristotle offers two explicit arguments against accepting passions as virtues. First, he argues that passions *simpliciter* are neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy, but that the situational context surrounding emotions determines their value. Passions like anger, love, or fear reveal little about one's character independent of the situational context of those passions. Sometimes it is virtuous to experience anger, love, or fear and sometimes it is vicious. Experiencing fear in proportion to the actual danger in a situation is virtuous while fear in the absence of genuine danger is vicious. Both agents experience fear, but one situation rationally warrants fear while the other simply does not. Therefore, the passion of fear constitutes neither virtue nor vice, but the deeper tendency to experience fear in appropriate or inappropriate situations constitutes virtue or vice.

Aristotle's second argument against viewing passions as virtues is that he views them as involuntary and therefore not morally relevant apart from the deeper context of a person's character. An agent's disposition towards experiencing passions properly or improperly is central to moral character. Yet, while passions themselves are largely involuntary, the moral agent's underlying disposition inclining her towards experiencing passion in such situations is voluntarily developed over a lifetime. The ideal person has trained her dispositions to respond in line with rationality while the vicious person has not.

In addition to Aristotle's two overt arguments against viewing emotions as virtues, a third motivation for rejecting emotions as virtues is implicit in his endorsement of

dispositions as virtues. Emotions are viewed as derivative from more foundational character dispositions. Therefore, dispositions are portrayed as having primary ethical relevance while emotions are viewed as only secondarily relevant. Accordingly, passions examined apart from the context of an agent's dispositions reveal little about the agent since any particular passion might represent a departure from her usual character.

#### IV. Critiquing Solomon

Is Solomon's account of love and other non-rational virtues, more compelling than Aristotle's account? At first glance, it may seem that Solomon has an advantage in this debate for he seems to have addressed Aristotle's concerns. Aristotle's first argument against viewing passions as virtues is that a person is not virtuous for simply experiencing certain emotions, but for experiencing emotions in appropriate ways during appropriate circumstances. Yet, Solomon acknowledges that love is only virtuous when it represents a long-term commitment to another through self-definition. Love is also not virtuous when it is misplaced, foolish, or overly possessive.<sup>29</sup> Since Solomon accommodates the intuition that not just any instance of erotic love is a virtue, his account is well positioned to avoid the full force of this objection.

Solomon also addresses Aristotle's other concerns. As we have seen, Solomon argues that passions are not involuntary experiences that derive from more foundational character qualities. Instead, he claims passions are voluntary judgments from the self. He rejects Aristotle's portrayal of the passions as short-term, involuntary, and derivative from more foundational dispositions. Since Solomon rejects these claims about the passions upon which the Aristotelian objections against viewing passions as virtues are founded, it is unsurprising that he comes to a different conclusion concerning their status as virtues. While Solomon addresses the three traditional Aristotelian objections against viewing passions as virtues by offering a competing account of the passions, we are left with the question of whether Aristotle or Solomon's account is more plausible.

One difficulty for Solomon's view is supporting his claim that passions are essentially voluntary judgments. While there is little doubt that passions reflect, express, or include a judgment of some sort it is difficult to see why anyone would view the essence of passion as *voluntary judgment*. There are plenty of instances when despite our best efforts towards personal wholeness our passions conflict with our intellectual judgments or conscious choices. We may be inexplicably sad or depressed despite a fully positive evaluation of our lives. We may fail to be romantically attracted to someone despite our judgment that she is an attractive person. We may be deathly afraid of common spiders despite our knowledge that they are relatively harmless. In such cases, our passions tell us something that we do not voluntarily endorse or even

deliberately reject. Perhaps, such passions reveal an internal conflict, but such conflict is not simply a disagreement between judgments.

Second, even if passions include judgments, many aspects of these judgments are clearly influenced by involuntary factors. Passions are influenced by factors beyond our volition such as the amount of oxygen in our bloodstream, the amount of dopamine in our brain, values that are inculcated in our early upbringing, and whether we are adequately rested. Such factors help motivate contemporary psychology's willingness to include a pharmaceutical treatment of emotional disorders. Counselors prescribe anti-depressants and similar drugs because they acknowledge that many people cannot simply choose to stop experiencing undesirable passions, since these passions are thought to have at least a partial physical cause.

Furthermore, Solomon underestimates the superior resources Aristotle offers for addressing erotic love and distinguishing between virtuous and vicious love. First, we should notice that Aristotle, unlike many modern act-centered ethicists, views the passions as morally relevant. Aristotelian virtues are not merely dispositions towards externally acting in a certain ideal manner, but also towards experiencing ideal internal passions, emotions, and motivations before, during, and after right actions.<sup>30</sup>

Aristotle has at least two kinds of resources for distinguishing between virtuous and vicious love. First, his distinction between useful, pleasant, and virtuous relationships can be used to distinguish between virtuous and less than virtuous erotic loves.<sup>31</sup> Aristotle himself uses these categories to describe ideal marriages in terms of friendships of virtue.<sup>32</sup> Surely, erotic relationships more generally can be classified based on whether they occur within friendships of utility, pleasure, or virtue just like other relationships. He explains,

Now these reasons differ from each other in kind; so, therefore, do the corresponding forms of love and friendship. There are therefore three kinds of friendship, equal in number to the things that are loveable; for with respect to each there is a mutual and recognized love, and those who love each other wish well to each other in that respect in which they love one another. Now those who love each other for their utility do not love each other for themselves but in virtue of some good which they get from each other. So too with those who love for the sake of pleasure; it is not for their character that men love readywitted people, but because they find them pleasant. Therefore those who love for the sake of utility love for the sake of what is good for themselves, and those who love for the sake of pleasure do so for the sake of what is pleasant to themselves, and not in so far as the other is the person loved but in so far as he is useful or pleasant. And thus these friendships are only incidental; for it

is not as being the man he is that the loved person is loved, but as providing some good or pleasure.<sup>33</sup>

Using these three categories of relationships, a person's character within erotic relationships can be viewed in the broader context of all of a person's relationships. If a lover habitually seeks relationships of utility, pleasure, or virtue and continues this pattern within erotic relationships then this broader disposition towards relationships is morally relevant. It would be unsurprising if someone who consistently prefers pleasant rather than virtuous friends continues to express this disposition as he chooses a lover. Since we can evaluate a person's choices in erotic relationships within the broader context of relational choices in general, this fact eliminates the 'rarity' of erotic relationships that Solomon uses to establish the passion of love as a virtue.

A second way that erotic love can be analyzed in terms of broader Aristotelian traits is by focusing upon the lover's disposition towards physical and emotional desires more generally. Some vicious agents uncritically embrace each and every desire they experience whether or not these desires are prudent. A pattern of intemperance and poor handling of desires in general can be identified in such agents. It would be unsurprising if this intemperate character disposition was similarly expressed within romantic relationships. In contrast, it is unsurprising when a careful, temperate person displays those same traits in erotic relationships.

Finally, we can identify patterns in the way agents handle desires related to romantic attraction even when such desires do not lead to romantic relationships. Any evaluation of an underlying disposition concerning erotic relationships must be informed not only by examining the erotic relationships an individual pursues, but also by examining both the potential erotic relationships an individual chooses not to pursue as well as the potential partners he experiences no attraction towards at all. Some agents are too quick to embrace such desires and habitually follow them regardless of the desires' prudence, wisdom, or objective goodness. Aristotle might accept that Solomon's agent who experiences a unique passionate, intractable, long-term love towards another is virtuous, but he would be quick to point out that such love is not really 'out of character' for the virtuous lover since she may possess a disposition to handle attraction well which has previously been demonstrated by avoiding many foolhardy relationships. Such lovers are better able to embrace positive relationships when the opportunity comes about in part because they have avoided foolish entanglements. Therefore, while 'falling in love' may be rare there is a broader personal history that the Aristotelian can use to examine the lover's underlying disposition.

In comparison, Solomon's resources for distinguishing between virtuous and vicious love are more limited. He acknowledges that love is not a virtue when it is misplaced, foolish, or overly possessive. Yet, consider the concept of misplaced love. For Solomon love is an act of voluntary *self*-definition. It is through voluntary passions like love that

one constructs her reality. Therefore, the idea of misplaced love seems impossible by definition. The passions construct and define the self and reality; therefore, there are no further rational criteria to appeal to in order to determine that love is misplaced. While misplaced love seems to be a genuine experience, Solomon's view lacks resources to explain this phenomenon.

Similarly, consider Solomon's claim that the passion of erotic love can be viciously foolish. Surely, love always includes prudential risks, but this concern cannot be what he means by 'foolish' love since this criterion would rule out all love as vicious. He also cannot mean that foolish love is irrational, since he has already argued that its 'irrationality' is part of love's excellence.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps, he means that some instances of love entail extraordinary prudential risks and are therefore vicious. However, if an agent judges through her passions that love is worth extraordinarily high prudential risks, it is difficult to see what objective criterion Solomon might appeal to in order to establish that love's viciousness. Furthermore, it is unclear why Solomon would view such prudential risks as inherently vicious. While Aristotle views prudentially risky love as vicious based on his claim that prudence is a central virtue,<sup>35</sup> Solomon should not since he portrays love's uncertainty,<sup>36</sup> intractability, and non-responsiveness to reasons, including prudential reasons, as part of its virtuousness.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, Solomon is left with over-possessiveness as a criterion for identifying vicious love. While most of us are likely to grant that over-possessiveness is a genuine phenomenon and that it is vicious, it is unclear what resources Solomon's view possesses in order to identify such jealousy since it cannot be determined by objective reason. Perhaps, it could be defined inter-subjectively. Since love is self-definition, it is plausible that over-possessive love occurs when one partner loves in a significantly more bonded way than the other. Such love is overly possessive in comparison to the beloved's much lower degree of bondedness. Yet, even if we grant that Solomon can offer a plausible account of over-possessiveness, this criterion only identifies a single sufficient condition for vicious love, leaving Solomon with few resources for distinguishing virtuous love from vicious love.

However, we can identify many people with whom love would seem to be vicious: passionate love experienced towards an underling, someone under the age of consent, a blood relative, someone who is already in a committed relationship, someone who despises us, someone who is hopelessly vicious, etc. Furthermore, such loves are not vicious merely because they embody over-possessiveness but for a variety of reasons: love in such circumstances may be bad for the beloved, it may threaten the beloved's autonomy, it may be harmful to a third party with whom the beloved already has a mutually fulfilling relationship, it may be prudentially foolish, etc. Aristotelian views can take a wider variety of considerations into account when deeming a love as 'virtuous' or 'vicious' due to its emphasis on objective practical rational. Therefore,

Solomon's account of virtue has fewer resources than Aristotle's for distinguishing between virtuous and vicious love.

## V. Conclusion

Robert Solomon offers an interesting account of the passion of erotic love as a virtue that is based upon no reason beyond the subjective choices of the individual. While his account of love avoids the traditional Aristotelian criticisms that passions are involuntary, derivative, and only virtuous within appropriate contexts his account has other problems. His account relies upon a controversial view of moral psychology that portrays the passions as voluntary judgments. Furthermore, Solomon's view offers substantially fewer resources than Aristotle's for distinguishing between virtuous and vicious love.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert C. Solomon, "The Virtues of a Passionate Life: Erotic Love and 'The Will to Power,'" *Social Philosophy and Policy* 15 (1998): 93-94.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Christine Swanton offers this description of virtue, "A virtue is a good quality of character, more specifically a disposition to respond to, or acknowledge, items within its field or fields in an excellent or good enough way." Similarly, William Frankena<sup>2</sup> portrays virtues as character dispositions. He explained how virtues are based in deontic principles claiming, "For every [deontic] principle there will be a morally good trait, often going by the same name, consisting of a disposition or tendency to act according to it; and for every morally good trait there will be a principle defining the kind of action in which it is to express itself. Rosalind Hursthouse also depicts virtues as constituted by dispositions rather than passions. She explains, ". . . the character traits that virtue theory emphasizes are not simply dispositions to intentional actions, but a seamless disposition to certain actions and passions, thoughts and reactions." These views, and numerous others, are influenced by Aristotle's portrayal of virtues as dispositions and conflict with Solomon's claim that passions are virtues. See Christine Swanton, *Virtue Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 19, William Frankena, *Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973), 65, and Rosalind Hursthouse, "Virtue Theory and Abortion," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 20 (1991): 238.

<sup>3</sup> Solomon interprets Aristotelian and Neo-Aristotelian views of passions this way. While he may be incorrect to at least some degree, this is how he views the debate.

<sup>4</sup> J. David Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion," *Ethics* 109 (1999): 338-374.

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, W. D. Ross (tr.), in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, Richard McKeon (ed.) (New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 2001), 1164a-1172a.

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- <sup>6</sup> Hugh LaFollette, *Personal Relationships* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).
- <sup>7</sup> Niko Kolodny, "Love As Valuing a Relationship," *Philosophical Review* 112 (2003): 146
- <sup>8</sup> Harry Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004)
- <sup>9</sup> Robert C. Solomon 1998, 94-95.
- <sup>10</sup> Robert C. Solomon 1998, 104.
- <sup>11</sup> Robert C. Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), 125-126. Cf. *The Virtues of a Passionate Life*, 103.
- <sup>12</sup> For an in-depth critique of these alternative views of love Cf. Eric J. Silverman, *The Prudence of Love: How Possessing the Virtue of Love Benefits the Lover* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers' Lexington Books, 2010), 17-41.
- <sup>13</sup> Robert C. Solomon 1998, 94-95.
- <sup>14</sup> Robert C. Solomon 1998, 104.
- <sup>15</sup> Cf. Robert C. Solomon 1998, 94.
- <sup>16</sup> Cf. Robert C. Solomon 1998, 104.
- <sup>17</sup> Robert C. Solomon 1998, 94.
- <sup>18</sup> Robert C. Solomon 1998, 104.
- <sup>19</sup> Robert C. Solomon 1998, 108.
- <sup>20</sup> Robert C. Solomon 1998, 96.
- <sup>21</sup> Note that for Solomon emotions are a subset of the larger group of passions.
- <sup>22</sup> Robert C. Solomon 1993, 125-126. Cf. *The Virtues of a Passionate Life*, 103.
- <sup>23</sup> Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1115a-1116a.
- <sup>24</sup> Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1117b-1118b.
- <sup>25</sup> Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1107a.
- <sup>26</sup> Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1144b
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1145-1148.
- <sup>28</sup> Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1105b-1106a.

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<sup>29</sup> See Robert C. Solomon 1998, 96.

<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1103b-1106a.

<sup>31</sup> Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1155b.

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1158b.

<sup>33</sup> Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1156a.

<sup>34</sup> Robert C. Solomon 1998, 104.

<sup>35</sup> Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1040a-1145a.

<sup>36</sup> *Cf.* Robert C. Solomon 1998, 96.

<sup>37</sup> *Cf.* Robert C. Solomon 1998, 95.

<sup>38</sup> I would like to thank Daniel Haybron, Elisa Hurley, Jeremy Neill, and Paul Prescott for their comments on earlier versions of this paper. To see a nascent treatment of the debate between Solomon and Aristotle, which is superseded here *Cf.* Eric J. Silverman 2010, 13-14.