Chapter 28
A Way Out of the Dialectics of Love and Desire as the Clue to an Adequate Education of Desire

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Abstract By means of an example of a conflict of desires, it is highlighted the importance of identifying with some desires and not with others, although that is something which ultimately relies on our loves, which exhibit themselves a certain order. To keep in mind the precedence of love with respect to desire (first part of our hypothesis), discovers that there are different types of desires. Educating our desires in an appropriate way is only possible in the context of the adequate or appropriate order or hierarchy of loves (second part of our hypothesis). The paradigmatic anthropological scenario of the beginning of our existence is a privileged picture of that adequacy. Along the lines suggested in such a scenario (interpersonal union in difference), our desires can be appropriately educated so as to reach, e.g. the identification with the desire that achieves the solution of a conflictive situation. To live according to the adequate order of loves is the upshot of an educative process fuelled by the intervention of prudence and the moral virtues.

Keywords Primacy of love · Desires · Adequate hierarchy of loves · Moral virtues · Prudence

28.1 Desire According to Popular Psychology and Its (Supposed) Reduction

My desire to rest moves me to leave the house to take a walk, because it is something I find pleasant, attractive, convenient, in short, good. Even today it is still accepted that desire includes both a motivational and an evaluative component (Lauria and Deonna 2017).

Aristotle (1993) already described desire in these terms in his *De Anima* (*DA*). Thus, in respect of the motivational aspect: "the soul's power of locomotion is

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desire" (*DA* 433a31-433b1). Desire moves us from one place to another. "The primitive sign of wanting is *trying to get*" (Anscombe 1979) Yes. But what? Well, trying to get something, of course.

Here it is the evaluative side of desire: what moves is "the desirable object" (*DA* 433a27). And such an object is "what is good or what is presented as good. But not any good object, rather good that is doable through action. . .something that can be different than what it is" (*DA* 433a27-30). Lastly, we should recognise that the object of desire moves "when it is understood or imagined" (*DA* 433b11-12).

Aristotle's sober clarifications recognise the complexity of goodness, that is, its analogous status, so they do not ignore that good is given or learned and also constructed. The good that is a close intimate friendship is as much a gift as something built between friends over time.

However, to delve into the explanation of what desire is, shouldn't we first refer to the pleasure that comes from its satisfaction? And what about the reward that this involves for people's psychology? Should we go beyond that?

Along with the reductionism present in some areas of anthropology or contemporary philosophy of mind, some people have put forward a supposedly simpler concept of desire. It appears that a neurological system is the basis of pleasure, of action and of reward. And of these three "facets" of pleasure, the key is in the last one (Schroeder 2004).

According to this notion, based on certain neuroscientific evidence, that structure is known as the *reward system*, a group of cells that release dopamine. The system plays a central role in producing the action and in stimulating pleasure: in terms of the former, the loss of dopamine is one cause of Parkinson's disease or of severe paralysis and in terms of the latter, drugs like nicotine and cocaine stimulate or imitate the release of dopamine.

Although some have argued that pleasure is equivalent to the release of dopamine in the reward system (Morillo 1990), it seems to be more likely that the activity of this neurological structure is not simply equivalent to the pleasure that comes from satisfying desire. This is just one of its effects or of its facets. It is more the case that what this neurological structure cause is a type of unconscious learning, *reward-based learning*. So, if one of us desires something, and search for it and obtain it, the achievement of the desired thing is the reward that leads us to learn *how to act in order to once again obtain what we desire.* So, in the end, desiring something is seeing it as a reward and portraying it this way leads to the person in question being motivated to get it. As a result, "to desire that P is to use one's capacity to represent that P so as to drive the sort of learning signal that characterizes the reward event" (Schroeder 2006).

28.2   Challenging Reductionism Based on an Example from Robert Kane

However, to liken the reasons we have for obtaining something with the secretion of dopamine in the presence of the representation of that something ignores some of the elements thanks to which the experience of desire usually seems intelligible to us, for example the evaluative component already identified by Aristotle. In fact, without taking that evaluative element into account, how can cases of a conflict of desires be adequately explained?

Let's remember a famous example in the contemporary literature on free will, according to which, on her way to an important work meeting, a businesswoman witnesses someone being assaulted in an alleyway. The executive has to decide whether to stop and help the victim or continue on her way so she isn't late for her meeting (Kane 2002).

Although the philosopher who raises the issue presents it as an example of what he calls *self-forming actions or volitions*, thanks to which the woman in question resolves the uncertainty into which she is plunged by the conflict between reasons or motives for acting, the latter should be described in terms of a conflict of desires.

Let's suppose the woman desires to stop and help the person who has been assaulted. Perhaps she also judges that this is the best thing she can do. If the woman decides to continue on her way against her desire and evaluative judgement in favour of the best option, it can be said that the desire to not compromise her professional career has won. On the contrary, if she chooses to stop and take an interest in the person who has suffered the attack, it can be said that the other desire and corresponding judgement have prevailed. That evaluative judgement is not distanced from her desires. By the way, this component of desire is not something that is merely cognitive, it is also linked to emotion, on which evaluative or value judgement relies.

There is something more against the attempt to reduce our normal discourse on desire to the functioning of the (neurological) system referred to earlier. According to this reductionist variant in the sphere of philosophy of mind, this physical system in the brain enables a "one to one" projection of the types of folk psychology (desires, beliefs, etc.) to the types of neurophysiology.

However, in addition to appealing to emotions, the supposed reduction to physical types in a cerebral system resorts to mental representations and actions! According to the explanatory model in question, when someone desires x, the mental representation of x appears as a reward for that person and in this way reinforces actions that tend to obtain the reward. It can be accepted that this and the pleasure involved in satisfying the desire have been reduced to the neurophysiological sphere. But this reduction is not of the representations or of the actions. So, it has not affected the desire, only the reward (Goldman 2017).

Lastly, to presume that, in the future, the development of experimental science could produce the reduction in question and even the elimination of explanations in terms of desires (and of other central concepts in popular psychology), is to invoke

an *IOU argument*—a manoeuvre that requires trust in the progress of science and once again trust that this process will take place in a particular direction. But, isn't trust one of the concepts in the structural framework of popular psychology? And isn't it the discipline that scientific progress in the area of neuroscience will definitively leave out of the edifice of knowledge?

28.2.1 Abandoning Reductionism

If the idea to reduce desire to a physical system leads to a situation like that one, which openly contradicts the reductionist aspiration, maybe it is worthwhile abandoning this new version of the scientific dream and return to the concept of desire that much-maligned popular psychology has always upheld.

Of course, the descriptive, explanatory and even predictive power of that psychological model is nowadays superior to any reductionist replacement. In accordance with popular psychology, desire is a cluster concept, which actually reflects a rich and complex reality. Our desires go hand in hand with our pleasures and displeasures, with our rewards and our actions, but also with our emotions and our beliefs, our cares and concerns and our loves.

If that is the case, we could imagine that, contrary to certain neuroscientific evidence (Schroeder 2004), desire is implemented not only in a single system, the famous reward system. In fact, functional analysis of desire points to its achievability or its multiple implementations at physical level (Katz 2005).

On the other hand, from a pragmatic point of view, desire and the family of concepts linked to it serve our interpersonal communication in a way that is more than notable. Abandoning this way of communicating with each other, using our ordinary language and thought, in favour of, for example the language of neuroscience, would bring huge complications to our interpersonal relationships.

In fact, it makes sense to ask the following: that world in which we human beings used only neuroscience categories to relate to one another, would it be like one of those scenarios described in science fiction stories, a *Brave New World*? But it isn't easy to answer questions like these, using ordinary language and thought, adapted to our, up to now, human way of living.

28.2.2 The Strategy of Displacement: From Desires to Emotions to Love

Let's take another look at the example of the businesswoman. If it is the portrayal of a real woman, of flesh and blood, it wouldn't be out of place to suppose that the biography of that woman, her past, included a particular form of education of her affectivity and consequently of her desires.

As a result of that education, her affectivity is configured in such a way that it will facilitate, although not determine, the direction of her choice in favour of her fellow human being or in her own favour. And that is because, of the two desires underlying the options she has to choose from, one will presumably carry greater weight than the other: the one that corresponds to the apparently more attractive option.

Let's now apply *the displacement strategy* to a case of conflict of desires like the one we're dealing with now. This consists of redescribing the agent's moral psychology, this time from the point of view of the main emotion linked to each of her desires (Arkonovich 2012). The overlap of desires and emotions (and beliefs) backs up this manoeuvre: "beliefs map the world, desires target the world with things we aim at and emotions colour the world by lightening or darkening it" (Wollheim 1999).

Let's continue speculating based on our example and ask: which of the woman's emotions goes hand-in-hand with the desire to carry on walking and which is connected with the desire to help the person who has suffered an assault in the street? Let's suppose that they are emotions relating to a supposed aggrandizement and diminishing of the businesswoman's ego, depending on the achievement or not of her professional promotion. Hence, the dialogue with herself on which the woman would embark would consist of something like this: "my presence at the meeting is key for my future in the company, as the Director of the head office section will be there and it's my chance to greet him and to have my section boss back my candidacy in front of him". And in relation to the other option: "I'm going to go and see how this person is and I'll have to wait and see how he or she reacts in the minutes following such a huge scare". Of course that will prevent me from making the most of a unique opportunity for promotion. When will I get another opportunity? Will there even be another one?". It's not an easy call. Feeling an emotion, or a set of emotions, linked in this case to the growth of the ego or to its opposite, comes with living and experiencing the world from a particular perspective.

Let's now suppose that the woman decides to hurry on her way so she isn't late for her appointment, as this is how *she identifies with* (Frankfurt 1988) her prima facie strongest desire. This is what she does. However, when the meeting in her office ends, she wonders how the person who suffered the attack a while ago is getting on. "Will he or she have recovered? Has someone helped him or her? But who? There was nobody around. Shouldn't it have been me who stopped? I've not only got a life, I've got a career, but that person. . . is even alive? If he or she is, what quality of life is he or she going to have?"

The woman's conscience won't quieten down. It nags at her. "What I did wasn't right. If we all behaved like that. . .". "What can I do now?" she asks herself. "Let's see. Identifying myself with the strongest *prima facie* desire and acting on it has left me unsatisfied. And it's not the first time this has happened to me. But there's no turning back. When I find myself in a situation like the one I've just experienced, what is in my hands is to not identify myself, at least not necessarily, and act according to the apparently keenest desire. It's clear, then. I have to examine my desires, so that my identification with one or the other desire is correct". The woman resolves to embark on a process of reviewing her desires. But, how can she do this?

Our suggestion for anyone wanting to embark on a process like this consists of taking the displacement strategy mentioned earlier beyond the emotions that accompany desires, to the experience of love, which includes desires as well as emotions and feelings, as far as elements of affectivity are concerned, although it is not reduced to it.

28.3   The Predominance of Love over Desire: A Paradigmatic Anthropological Scenario

> Given the predominance of love in human experience, the correct order or hierarchy of loves supplies the context or the channel in which to educate our desires correctly too.[1]

Let's look at the first part of the hypothesis: the precedence of love over desire in people's experience.[2] If the woman in the example—or any other person—begins a process of introspection that reaches the very beginning of their existence, what can we presume the woman, or, under normal conditions, anyone, is going to find?

The answer is: an interpersonal relationship of love. So, in her first moments of life and in normal conditions, there was a mother, a father and herself, just delivered to the outside world. A relationship of union in difference of each one of these three people, became public knowledge at a particular time and place. The loving care lavished on the newborn by the two adults lasted throughout early childhood, and with varying levels of presence throughout her entire existence.

Acknowledging in a comprehensive way this fact implies a criticism of the suggestion that (intrinsic) desires occupy the centre of people's moral psychology. To carry out that critical review, we'll use one of the examples that illustrate a notable contemporary version of the suggestion, according to which desire is given priority in our moral psychology. This version is "Spare Conativism".

Let's suppose Jason has the intrinsic desire for a small circle of friends and he achieves it. Jason spends time with them, he chats with them. This desire is so significant that it influences Jason's emotions, to the extent that, for example he is enormously affected by the fact that there are still hermits who can live with minimum contact with other people.

However, although Jason enjoys the experience of friendship, he does not adopt "strategies specific to the goal of keeping that number of close friends. . . /so that friendship/ continues to play no motivational role in his life" (Arpaly and Schroeder 2014).

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[1]In this way, we understand better the fact that our desires do not influence in our agency in an isolated way, as "motivational contextualism" does agree (Roth 2005).

[2]Though with differences in respect of the concept of love, its primacy over desire is a thesis found in classic philosophy (Aquinas), in modern philosophy (Descartes) and in contemporary philosophy (Frankfurt).

Well, it's true that the description of the example does not overlook the contemplative aspect of friendship: Jason enjoys the friendship of his friends in a non-instrumental way. But friendship is one of the most important kinds of interpersonal love. And if, in any kind of love, the lover wants to transmit something good to the loved one,[3] the former's motivation is likely to be included in that transmission or communication of good things to the latter. From this point of view, the portrayal of friendship we read into Jason's example does not seem plausible.

Even more, for this example to reflect the experience of friendship, it would have to include the reference to the permanent mutual caring between friends. It is something that needs time, which is behind the famous affirmation that says there is no such thing as love, or genuine love, without a love story. This presupposes that love must be cultivated, otherwise it will wither away.

The preoccupation binding people who love each other does not necessarily smother the lovers' personalities. If it did, we would be looking at one of the many misunderstandings or pathologies of love, such as the paternalistic treatment of the lover who doesn't look after the loved one as a person. In this case, the lover forgets that the loved one is not an extension of himself or herself. The loved one is the other one, with whom the lover must seek interpersonal communication or be united in difference.

To show the primacy of love over desire, we have turned to a paradigmatic anthropological scenario, which in the last instance is the main thread of our biographies and the content—explicit or otherwise—of our project of living a good life as people. Because, isn't it true that, depending on the type of relationship we have with each person, we look to live the experience of harmony we had with our parents in the first moments of our lives and during our childhood years?

To continue with the last example, now we're looking at a type of love, of friendship, that isn't paternal- or maternal-love. All kinds of love have shared features (a lover communicates a good to a loved one) and their own features (according to the good communicated by the lover to the loved one). Friendship love includes benevolence (a trait shared by all kinds of love), experience and the cultivation of intimacy between friends and, lastly, the symmetry between those involved in the friendship (a trait found in this type of love) (*Nicomachean Ethics* Books VIII, IX).

It is clear that the experience of friendship, and of any other type of love, includes desires and the urge to satisfy them. With respect to those who have a concept of love that is independent of desire, it's worth warning them that desires are something more than "independent responses that love merely unleashes" (Velleman 2006). It is rather that "love cannot wash its hands entirely of what it motivates the lover to do" (Kennett 2008). Amongst other things, love feeds many desires in the lover, that

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[3]"Love consists especially in this, that the lover wills the good for his loved one" (*Summa contra Gentiles*, III, ch.90). The source of this characterization goes back to the Aristotelian legacy: "we may describe friendly feeling towards any one as wishing for him what you believe to be good things, not for your own sake but for his" (*Rethoric*, II, 4, 1380b 35-36). Although these words refer to friendship, they have been generalized to other types of love. See Stump (2006).

can be summed up in the desire to communicate various kinds of goodness to the loved one.

28.3.1   Types of Desire

Recognising the predominance of love over desire and the complexity of the former in such a way that prevents its reduction to the latter, expresses the richness of our moral psychology. So, for example in addition to our appetite desires, such as the fleeting desire to cool myself down by bathing or to quench my thirst by drinking a glass of water (Davis 1986), there are others who are more sophisticated. They are volitional, ecstatic and dialectic desires. In them, we experience a progressive "self-augmenting attraction to persons and objects represented under the aspect of the intrinsically good" (Brewer 2009). They are desires of realities whose good is not revealed immediately, but rather as we become involved in achieving them. From a synchronic point of view, they are profound desires and from a diachronic point of view, they are perfectible.

The desire someone has when they love someone and want to start a family, or that another person has to start a friendship with someone they met recently are both examples of dialectic desires. This category also includes the desire to write a book, to delve into the art of painting seascapes or to learn to play the classical guitar.

How has the existence of different types of desires (simpler, more complex) been ignored? Perhaps this is due to the functionalist concept of desire, which accepts that desires have an object (indicating the direction of the desire) and a strength (indicating the weight or pressure of the desire), but ignores something that Aristotelian analysis already took into account: the importance of the location of each of our desires. That is, "the location of the desire's object within the agent's values or ends. . .A desire's place, then, is its place in an organism's good" (Richardson 2004).

Instead of talking about the agent's ends or values so to discover the place of one or another desire, we could likewise talk about loves. They do not only justify that we should have desires, but that we should also identify ourselves with some of them and not with others (Frankfurt 1988, 1999; Miller 2013). That identification allows us to distinguish desires from tics or obsessions (Quinn 1993) and that certain desires are effective in our lives due to our preferences, to our preoccupations and concerns, to our loves.

They are the ones that guarantee the satisfaction of appetitive desires and of volitional, ecstatic or dialectic desires. Our loves include the attitude held in favour of that satisfaction or fulfilment. That attitude supports this identification with particular desires.

28.3.2   The Order of Loves and the Education of Desires

It is precisely in the context of the particular ordination of loves of each one of us, that we identify ourselves with a desire and go about satisfying it or that we do not identify ourselves with it and prevent it from being achieved. This is in fact how our desires are educated, either appropriately or inappropriately.

Being in the first or the second case depends on whether that education is done by someone living according to the appropriate or inappropriate hierarchy of loves, or, at least, by someone who lives closer or further away from this hierarchy. How do we distinguish the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the hierarchy of loves according to which someone lives and according to which they educate their desires? The more or less fulfilled nature of people's lives reveals the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the hierarchy of loves that makes up their backbone.

Let's remember that experience of interpersonal love that takes place in normal conditions at the beginning of our lives and during the early years in our biography, which showed the predominance of love over desire in our lives. We'll repeat it again: that paradigmatic anthropological scenario displays the basic lines of the design of the good or fulfilled life[4] for people. Because, and let's ask the question rhetorically, how can we deny that we want to live that harmonious experience again with the various people we encounter with at each time in our lives, but now, clearly, at different levels, that is depending on the relationship we have with each one of them?

If we consider the scenario referred to, it can be argued that the fulfilled life that could be presumed of each person in that story, the one in a child's first years of life accompanied by their parents, is due to the mutual coordination of each other's desires.

In reality, in this episode and in any other with similar features, that connection of desires depends on the ordering of loves of each one of the individuals involved in the situation. The fact of the matter is that, although everyone loves, not everyone loves in the same way. Each person has their own particular hierarchy or ordering of loves.[5] So, staying in the context of interpersonal love, each one of us loves someone in the first place; in the second place, another one and so on.

In situations of conflict, a truth about our everyday lives comes through clearly, namely, that not all our interpersonal loving relationships are on the same level. It's a fact that we devote attention and care (love) to one person, to the detriment of the devotion to others, whom we nevertheless also love.

This is what happens with the woman in our example. She chooses to look after herself, rather than the person assaulted. Taking a look at her loves, it could be said that this time, her love for herself overcame love for the other person, specifically,

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[4] A good life or a fulfilled life is one in which it does accomplish that "meaning arises when subjective attraction meets objective attractiveness" (Wolf 1997).

[5] This label is more accurate than that of "hierarchy of preferences".

the person who suffered an attack in the street. The problem is that this choice didn't make her feel calm, instead it left her feeling anxious.

Shouldn't she has chosen to stop and help the person in need? That would have meant putting love for someone else before the love for herself *on that occasion*. Perhaps the devotion shown to her by her parents for so long would be in favour of this.

Contrary to that last suggestion, it could be objected that both that woman and that man had that daughter, because they wanted to satisfy a deeply rooted desire in human nature, that of being parents. In that case, could it be said that they had put their love for their daughter before their love for themselves?

In any case, wouldn't the care lavished on her for years, the quality of their not momentary attention to her and also the fact that, let's say, those parents opened up the doors for the birth and subsequent care of the siblings that followed her, be sufficient proof that they had gone beyond the deeply rooted desire to have offspring, presumably satisfied by the birth of their first child?

It does not seem inappropriate to continue with our example and add that the lives of such parents are better described as fulfilled rather than pleasant, since, in the midst of ups and downs, they are full of a strong meaning: that of making a life together, a family, in which they were able to continue and celebrate the gift—of life—received from their parents, the much-loved grandparents.

In this case, our hypothesis is backed up like this: the transmission and thoughtful care of the gift of life (the redundancy of the gift) depending on the type of relationship with the person concerned at that time, provides meaning to human existence and therefore to the master plan according to which anyone's loves are ordered.

In terms of this ordering, it has been argued that people with whom we are linked to "naturally",[6] deserve to be loved more. But perhaps there is an added indication in respect of the ordering in question in the (already highlighted) first amorous inter-personal relationship that we human beings experience in normal conditions.

In that experience, isn't it true that the man and woman, the father and the mother, are not dedicated to themselves or to the other spouse but to the newborn and not only when it comes into the world but also in the early years of its development? Looking at it in this way, it seems to follow that the weakest and poorest is the one who deserves our love the most.

Of course, the most needy one might, in fact, be me! There is a sense that, in general and without any further explanation, love for oneself should take priority over love for someone else.[7] We must admit that each one of us is a contingent and needy creature, vulnerable, and not self-sufficient, which constructs its personal

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[6]On the (relative) stability of relationships between blood relatives (*Summa Theologica* II-II, q.26, a.8). Also the article on whether those closest to us should benefit more (*Summa Theologica* II-II, q.31, a.3). See also (Pope 1994).

[7]"There is what we read in Lev 19, 18 and Mt. 22, 39: *Love thy neighbour as thyself*. This seems to imply that man's love for himself is like the model of the love he should have for another. However, the model is always superior to the copy. In consequence, for charity, man should love himself more

identity based on a context of amorous interpersonal relationships. "The virtue of love. . .is specific to creatures that fear separateness. And we fear separateness because we have some sense, at a deep affective level, of what separateness would amount to. From the earliest infancy. . .we fear being separated off. This is perhaps why love is so basic to us. It responds to a need that precedes socialization. . .The fear of separateness. . .is that of dissolution. That is the object of the anxiety that pushes us to seek "communion" with others" (Tabensky 2014).

Without overlooking the relevance of love for oneself, it is true that in our example, given that someone else's life or health was hanging in the balance, the woman should have stopped to give help to the person who had just suffered the terrible incident. In that situation,[8] love for the other person deserved to take preference over love for oneself, since that person's life was seriously compromised.

28.3.3   The Adequate Order of Loves and Prudence

The second part of our hypothesis argues that the context of the appropriate hierarchy of loves, on which people depend in order to flourish, is the framework that should guide the education of our desires. In fact, love properly understood and experienced is the donation of life for the person who loves and the reception of life for the person they love, all depending on the place that corresponds to the respective interpersonal relationships of those involved.

The love that corresponds to each of these relationships will occupy a place in the appropriate hierarchy of love. Of course, our appeal to adequate or appropriate love as the solution to the conflict in our lives includes the architecture of virtues.

And that means: the intervention of *prudence* (*phrónesis*) or right reason.[9] This virtue directs the way people act (*Summa Theologica* I-II, q.56, aa.2–3) and helps them to discover which loving interpersonal relationship should take precedence at a particular time of a conflict of loves.[10]

Aristotle (2009) and Aquinas (1981) warned that there is no universal deductive knowledge relating to particular actions. Getting it right in a particular situation in

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than his neighbour" (*Summa Theologica* II-II, q.26, a.4). On the importance of living oneself, see the chapter entitled "The Dear Self", in Frankfurt (2004).

[8]"If charity is extended to all, beneficence should also be extended to all, always taking into account circumstances of place and time, given that all virtuous acts should be within the limits demanded by circumstances", (*Summa Theologica* II-II, q.31, a.2.) Beneficence is the act of charity, as this question is noted in article 1 of that question 31 (*Summa Theologica* II-II). See also Porter (1989).

[9]Prudence is practical wisdom (*phrónesis*), which requires, amongst other things, time: "the patterns of our practical reasoning on particular occasions are the outcome of a lifelong history of conversations with ourselves and others, devoted to resolving conflicts of desire and to arriving at judgements about what we have reason to desire" (MacIntyre 2008).

[10]Although it should not be forgotten that "love moves the act of prudence" (*Summa Theologica* II-II, q. 47, a.1, ad 1). For the "charity-prudence" relationship (Westberg 1994).

relation to the appropriate action to perform, depends on prudence. This virtue is made up of advice, prudential judgement and the command (*imperium*) relating to acting in a particular way.

Of course, the necessary condition for the exercise of prudence is the rightness of the desire or appetite. That rightness or integrity is guaranteed by the moral virtues, without which there is no prudential exercise (*Summa Theologica* I-II, q.58, a.4; I-II, q.57, a.4).[11] The tendency to do good and avoid evil (*synderesis*, first principle of practical reason) is updated in human action as moral virtues grow. This mutual overlap of prudence and moral virtues (temperance, courage and justice) is reflected in the thesis of the unity of virtues: 'if you have any virtue, you will have some sensitivity for considerations relevant to others-you will have...all the virtues "to some degree"' (Watson 1984).[12]

If when we resort to prudence, we move within love, when we pay attention to moral virtues, we do not disconnect ourselves from affectivity. Moral virtues fulfil the integrity or rightness of affectivity. One of the stages in the experience of interpersonal love is the modification of the affectivity of the lover and the loved one.

An appropriately arranged affectivity means, on the one hand, that desires or appetites are directed towards (virtuous) goals or ends. On the other hand, it supposes to have emotions that are appropriate to the situation being experienced. For example, those corresponding to the loving interpersonal relationship chosen on each occasion as the one that deserves the preferential attention of the agent or the lover, due to the place it occupies in the adequate or appropriate hierarchy of loves. This (appropriate) way of having emotions and feelings has been recognised as the result of a *transformation or change of heart* (Burnyeat 1980; Helm 1996; Stark 2004).

Contrary to moral intellectualism, Aristotle accepted that, to act well, it is not enough to know the truth about the good of man (moral truth) in a certain situation. A properly developed affectivity is needed, or at least one that has a certain moral stature.

A fundamental question is that of who judges when someone has achieved an appropriate moral stature. The answer is: the prudent human being, the fulfilled life—up to the present—of the prudent human being, the appeal to which breaks the supposed vicious circle of this reasoning.

This prudent human being is the one who lives according to the appropriate ordering of loves. He or she is the one whom Augustine (1887) spoke about as "the one who estimates things without prejudice (*rerum integer aestimator*)...so that he neither loves what he ought not to love, nor fails to love what he ought to love, nor loves that more which ought to be loved less, nor loves that equally which ought to

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[11]And without prudence there are no moral virtues, because "prudence is of good counsel about matters regarding man's entire life, and the end of human life" (*Summa Theologica* I-II, q.57, a.4, ad 3).

[12]This is a weak version of the thesis of the unity of virtues. For a strong version see McDowell (1979).

be loved either less or more, nor loves that less or more which ought to be loved equally" (*On Christian Doctrine* I, 27, 28).

To repeat: appealing to someone else beyond the person whose moral stature is being discerned is appealing to the prudent human being or to the one who estimates things without prejudice. This brings to the fore once again the context of our argument, namely, interpersonality, which is present in the already mentioned scenario of the first loving experience that we human beings usually have.

But there is something more. It is not only that the adequate measure of affective maturity is supplied by the prudent human being, as his or her judgement includes the affective balance (integrity of desire, together with appropriate emotions and feelings) that is characteristic of someone with moral virtues. It is that his or her help is necessary for acquiring prudence and the other virtues.[13]

The integrity of reason that directs the actions of man is not something that he can achieve by himself. "No one is altogether self-sufficient in matters of prudence". This means that this virtue presupposes *docility*, the disposition that enables one to receive instruction from others appropriately.[14] The instruction should come not from just anybody, but from the prudent human being, from the moral hero.

Allowing oneself to be taught or instructed with docility by the prudent human being is to allow oneself to be loved by him or her and to love him or her back, inasmuch as the "master–disciple" relationship can be described as a particular type of love.[15] As love produces the *assimilation* of those who love each other, if the parents or guardians are incarnations of prudence, the "master-disciple" relationship can be a decisive help in the latter's virtuous development.

Acting within the parameters of virtue we have just described is equivalent to loving preferentially on each occasion the person who deserves that priority devotion compared to others and even compared to ourselves. In the example of the businesswoman, love for the other person should have gone to the fore, prompted by the virtue of mercy (*misericordia*), "of all the virtues that make reference to one's neighbour /it is/ the most excellent" (*Summa Theologica* II-II, q.30, a.4).

Mercy makes us feel pity for someone else's suffering that we now experience as our own, so we try to remedy it as if it were our own. Someone who practises mercy considerably broadens the circle of their interpersonal relationships. And, to the extent that mercy is linked to love, it can be considered that the desires of the one who acts moved by mercy, have been adequately or appropriately educated in the context of the adequate or appropriate hierarchy of loves.

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[13]Without prudence there are no moral virtues, that is, for a habit to be virtuous, there must be something more than the external adherence of behaviour to the rule of *recta ratio*. The presence of a judgement carried out cum *recta ratione* must be present in the one who acts (*Summa Theologica* I-II, q.58, a.5).

[14](*Summa Theologica* II-II, q.49, a.3) The words placed in inverted commas before are the reply to the third objection, contained in this article and in this question. See Hoffmann (2006).

[15]A variant of the love between parents and children.

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