

ALEXANDER R. PRUSS

### *ONE BODY*: RESPONSES TO CRITICS

I am grateful to all eleven authors who have taken the time to examine this book with such care and insight, and have helped me to see many points where the argument requires more work, as well as to Marcin Iwancki for conceiving and tirelessly directing this project. Regardless of sometimes differing conclusions, the fourteen of us are engaged in the same project to find and share the truth about these difficult and important moral questions, a project that is furthered at least as much by criticism as by defense.

Each critical essay identifies a weakness in *One Body*—some identify several. I won't be able to respond to all the important criticisms, sometimes due to reasons of space and sometimes simply because serious future research is needed. The book is a sketch for future research, research to which I invite my readers. Nonetheless, I believe that the central lines of argument survive critique and continue to be worth considering.

#### 1. UNIVERSAL LOVE: MURPHY

A central idea within *One Body* is that all moral duties are duties of love. I use this to argue that I fall short in loving when the form that my love takes is inappropriate to the subject. The argument is this. Having an inappropriate form of love—say, a parent's loving a mature adult daughter as if she were a child—is morally wrong. But if it's wrong, and all duties are duties of love, then by loving inappropriately we fall short in love.

While agreeing that Christian revelation requires Christians to practice universal love, Mark Murphy raises the question whether the requirement of universal love is itself universal—perhaps only Christians are required to

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love all—and whether the fact of this requirement can be known without revelation. I continue to think the answer to both questions is affirmative, but first I want to note that, on reflection, my bigger argument does not require this. All that I need is the claim that fully loving everyone is *sufficient* for fulfilling all moral duties. For imagine someone who loves everyone, although some of whose loves are of an inappropriate form. If fully loving everyone is sufficient for morality, then some of her loves must fall short of fullness given that it's wrong to love in an inappropriate form. And hence inappropriate loves do indeed fall short.

But now back to Mark's critique. I argued that love is the appropriate response to a good, and hence every good calls for love. Mark, however, distinguishes between requiring reasons and justifying ones, following Gert (2004, 19–39). To be rational in acting against a requiring reason one must have a contrary reason. But one need not have any reason to be rational in acting against a merely justifying reason. Mark then notes that while the goodness of something is a reason to love it, I have not shown that it is a requiring rather than a merely justifying reason.

However, I find the following argument convincing. Whenever I act, one of following is true:

1. My action is uncaused.
2. My action is caused, but not by a reason.<sup>1</sup>
3. My action is caused, and by a reason.

But *no one* is responsible for an uncaused event. And an action that is caused but not by a reason is not a rational action. Hence in all cases where I act both rationally and with responsibility, I act on a reason. Thus in the case of rational actions I am responsible for, I can only act against a reason on the basis of a reason. There is thus no room for the distinction between justifying and requiring reasons in cases of responsible rational action. And if there is no room for a distinction in these cases, the distinction is unmotivated in other cases.

So far I have this: I have reason to love each person, as a response to their value. This is a *requiring* reason as there is no other kind of reason. Nonetheless, I now see that my argument is incomplete even granting this. For it can be permissible to act against a requiring reason, in the light of *competing* requiring reasons (the word “requiring” is misleadingly strong). Perhaps while I have a requiring reason to love one person, I have a competing rea-

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<sup>1</sup> When I talk of an action being caused by a reason, I consistently mean its being caused *in the right way* by the reason, but I want to avoid awkward wording.

son not to. I doubt, however, that there are other moral considerations that would give me a good reason not to love someone, at least once we remember that there are many forms of love. For instance, while I have moral reason not to romantically love women other than my wife, that reason does not undercut my reasons to love other women in other ways. Nonetheless, more work is needed to fill the gap here.

## 2. FEELINGS OF LOVE: TALIAFERRO AND PEREZ

Before I discuss their central criticism, I emphasize—because the matter is of such great practical importance in our fallen world—that although love should be unconditional, I fully agree with Taliaferro and Perez that this unconditionality does not support sharing a household with a physically or emotionally abusive spouse. I am explicit about this in *One Body*. In Section 6.12, I argue that if one's beloved is abusive, then one's presence "opens an opportunity to the beloved for a life of vice", which is harmful to the beloved, and hence "*agapê* calls for one not to be near the beloved", and in Section 6.21, I argue that although Christian marriage is always for life, in cases of abuse a civil divorce (though not remarriage, of course) can be the right solution.

Taliaferro and Perez carefully develop a central criticism of the account of love in *One Body*. I do not have a definition of love, but I identify three central aspects: good will, union and appreciation. Taliaferro and Perez argue that a variety of feelings are also essential to love, such as feeling pleasure in one's beloved's company or pain at one's beloved's pain.

Let me start with a friendly amendment. While feelings are normal accompaniments of love, more care is needed to specify *which* feelings are required. For one need not feel pleasure in one's beloved's company. Suppose that one's son joined the Gestapo, came in uniform to a family occasion, and talked of nothing but hatred for non-Aryans. In this case, a loving and morally sensitive parent would feel tragic pain at the beloved son's company. One could, I suppose, imagine a saint feeling pleasure at the traces of the image of God still found in the son, but I do not think that love requires such pleasure—even in (or, perhaps, especially in) the saint, the pleasure might be overwhelmed by pain. We do not have any indication that when Christ was crying the cry of dereliction on the cross he felt pleasure in being amongst us. Yet on the cross we have the height of love. So my friendly amendment is that loving feelings are needed, but there are not necessarily feelings of pleasure at the company of the beloved.

It could be that Taliaferro and Perez are right about the need for loving feelings. But there is a suggestive empirical argument to the contrary. The case of saints like John of the Cross and Teresa of Calcutta shows the possibility of someone living a life of love of God while abiding in a dark night of abandonment. It is John of the Cross's influence that led me to the view that feelings are not a *part* of love. For John of the Cross, that great passionate mystic, over and over emphasizes the centrality of reason rather than feeling to the Christian life:

44. Be attentive to your reason in order to do what it tells you concerning the way to God. It will be more valuable before your God than all the works you perform without this attentiveness and all the spiritual delights you seek.

46. If you make use of your reason, you are like one who eats substantial food; but if you are moved by the satisfaction of your will, you are like one who eats insipid fruit. (JOHN OF THE CROSS 1991, "Sayings of Light and Love")

The evidence of dark night cases isn't decisive, because typically there are at least the feelings of emptiness, darkness, pain at one's sinfulness, and longing. But emptiness and darkness surely are not the loving feelings Taliaferro and Perez are talking about, pain at one's sinfulness does not seem central to love as such, and it doesn't seem clear that in the dark night there is *always* a feeling of longing for God. Plausibly, there might just be a longing for the former days of light, or there might be such exhaustion from walking in darkness that there is no longing.

Furthermore, it would be surprising if feelings were required for love, and yet this requirement could be fulfilled either by feelings of rapturous joy in love's consummation or by the very different negative feelings. Perhaps, though, the requirement for love is that one respond emotionally correctly to what one is undergoing, so that in union there is joy and in abandonment there is suffering. However, one must remember that the individual in the dark night is not *actually* abandoned by God. There is only the appearance of abandonment. God is nonetheless secretly working in the soul—the divine work in the soul is the point of the dark night for John of the Cross. So feelings of abandonment may not actually be correct emotional responses: they are more like illusions, and surely the presence of such an illusion can't be required for love. Maybe being *sad* at even apparently being abandoned by God is an appropriate response? These are difficult questions, but all in all considerations of the dark night of the soul make it more difficult to hold that emotion is essential to love.

At this point I want to try out a view that emphasizes feelings more than I do in the book, while yet allowing that someone in the dark night of the soul need not be in any way falling short in love. I will do this by briefly exploring this limited analogy: love is to feelings as judgment is to perceptions.

Our perceptions obviously often give rise to corresponding judgments. At the same time, in the last hundred years we have learned much about how our judgments shape our perceptions. On the one hand, what does not fit with previous judgments may not even be noticed due to cognitive dissonance, while on the other hand, some perceptions are only possible given a history of making judgments—only with the right training can one *see* a beta particle track as such in a cloud chamber and (as John McDowell has noted) *hear* what people mean.

At the same time, it is possible to have correct judgments without having corresponding perceptions. A blind or even hallucinating person can nonetheless have correct judgments about the world around her, and one can make the right judgment (say, on the basis of authority, or by careful comparison with a photograph in a book) that there is a beta particle track in the cloud chamber without *seeing* it as such. Normally, however, judgments are affected by and affect perceptions. The cases where there is no such connection are cases either of the agent not being fully perceptually mature—think of the physics student hesitantly picking out the relevant features of beta particle track after having been told that it is one—or of the agent simply suffering from a serious perceptual defect. But these cases are, nonetheless, not cases of a flaw of judgment.

Likewise, I think that feelings are normally associated with love, in a subtle and difficult to analyze way. Love gives rise to feelings and feelings give rise to love or at least color the form the love takes. The person who loves but does not feel is like the blind person who makes correct judgments about a painting on the basis of reliable testimony. There is no falling short in love or judgment, respectively, but the cases are deeply unfortunate. In such unfortunate cases love and sound judgment can particularly shine. It is challenging for the blind person to figure out where the objects are in a room, and a judgment that to a sighted person is nothing to brag about can be a significant epistemic achievement. Likewise, John of the Cross and Mother Teresa's love of God shone particularly brightly in the emotional darkness that they endured. These are sad cases, I agree. Something has gone wrong. But what has gone wrong is not the love. These are some of the highest cases of love.

I want to allow for the same possibility even in Taliaferro and Perez's case of the allegedly good Samaritan who feels pleasure at the sufferings of the wounded man. Just as a hallucinatory sight can be induced by stimulation of the optic centers, one would not be surprised if such a pleasure could be induced by neural stimulation. The induction of this pleasure *might* destroy the Samaritan's love, just as hallucinations could destroy one's sound empirical judgments. But it might not destroy love. A person with a strong love could continue to love despite such hallucinatory feelings just as someone of good judgment can sometimes maintain correct belief in the face of visual hallucinations. So, yes, I think one could imagine a good Samaritan who (say, due to involuntary neural stimulation or drugs) feels pleasures at the wounded man's suffering, and nonetheless loves the man.

### 3. ROMANTIC LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN CHRISTIAN CULTURES: TRAKAKIS

N.N. Trakakis gives us a fascinating account of two Eastern Christian groups, one a shepherd population—the Sarakatsani—in Greece and neighboring countries and the other the Byzantines, and how their attitudes to marriage do not fit with the attitudes that *One Body* calls for. *One Body* takes the normative attitude within marriage to be romantic love, and takes consent to be absolutely required for marriage. But consent seems in question among the Byzantines while romantic love does not seem to be a normal ingredient in marriage in either culture.

A cheap, but perhaps not entirely wrongheaded, response would be that it is not difficult to find Christian groups whose attitudes towards the poor are not those required by the Gospel, and yet that gives us no reason to doubt that the Gospel is right about how to treat the needy. But that response may suffer from a lack of charity for the groups that Professor Trakakis describes, especially with regard to romantic love, which is what I want to focus on (though the question of consent is an interesting one, too—though I suspect it is difficult to make general historical pronouncements about the degree of pressure to marry in a historical group, given that the degree of pressure imposed on a couple is apt to differ between individual families and between social classes).

Both cultures discussed are Christian cultures, and so their theological standards would have required spouses to love each other, since these standards required everyone to love everyone (at least with “agapaic love”, to use Trakakis' term). The question, though, is about *romantic* love. Here, I would conjecture that in situations of love, physical closeness and socially

permissible sexual attraction, the love has a natural tendency to take on a romantic form. First of all, if we love someone and spend a lot of time with him or her, affection is likely to develop: the love is apt to turn affectionate. There will be cases where a close-by person is particularly unappealing or even needs to be loved with the kind of love that we have for our enemies. But there is, I think, a natural tendency to affection in love and proximity. We expect colleagues who love one another also to feel affection for each other.

And when there is sexual attraction—as there is likely to be between young heterosexual people of the opposite sex who are fond of each other and have sexual relations—this affection is apt to take on a romantic form, unless for moral reasons one resists.

I worry that pronouncements about the lack of romantic love may have an overly romanticized notion of romantic love tied to the forms of cultural expression in our culture. The way the romantic aspect of this affection is expressed is going to differ from culture to culture, and it would require in-depth observation of the private interactions of a statistically significant number of individual couples for extended periods of time to discern whether the affection typically has a romantic form, which makes it difficult for an anthropologist to responsibly pronounce on how widespread romantic affection in married couples is in the culture. Romantic love is a love with distinctively sexual unitive elements and distinctively sexual appreciative elements. Obviously, the couples in the cultures mentioned have sex. We could suppose that typically they don't appreciate each other sexually, that they have sex solely out of a feeling of duty and so on, but do we really have good grounds for thinking this *prima facie* implausible thesis?

#### 4. IDEALIZATION, ABSTRACTION AND TELEOLOGY: HAMILTON

The thread that runs through Christopher Hamilton's criticisms is that *One Body* unduly abstracts and idealizes, thereby losing sight of the messy complexity of the human condition. This loss is particularly problematic in the case of love, and especially romantic love, since there the human condition is perhaps at its most complex (one thinks of the "It's Complicated" Facebook status).

Of course, every description is an abstraction. And *One Body*'s project is to provide a theory that unifies a wide body of data. To do that, the theory must itself be simpler than the data—otherwise, we could just restate the data. However, of course, Hamilton's objection isn't that *One Body* abstracts, but that it abstracts too much, and idealizes in a way that falsifies the reality.

At this point I need to lay some more of my cards on the table. Like Aristotle, I see the world in teleological and normative terms. I think much, and perhaps all, of the world is not completely understood unless it is also understood in terms of what something is for and how it should be, and I think that such understanding gives one deep insights. This teleological understanding allows one to unify vast swathes of the world, especially the biological world.<sup>2</sup> People reason in all sorts of ways with all sorts of subjective purposes, including (as Hamilton notes) in order to hide the truth from themselves. But what makes their reasoning *be* reasoning is in part that it is the sort of thing that aims at the true and the good. The number of limbs in humans ranges anywhere from zero to four, but four is the *normal* number for a mature individual, and so we can say “The human being has four limbs”, even though not all human beings do. Teleology and considerations of the normal allow us to unify data because there are typically many more ways for something to go wrong than for it to go right—Aquinas emphasizes this in the moral arena, but it is true more generally—and so a description of the correct functioning will be simpler and more elegant.

Of course, all this is highly controversial, but I am convinced that without such an understanding one cannot make sense of things like the vocation of the physician—that vocation is to heal, i.e., restore normal function (cf. LENNOX, 1995). Such teleology of course fits particularly well with a theological view, a view on which God is the final cause of the world and sets everything in motion. Can one make sense of teleology without theism? Aristotle thought so.<sup>3</sup> But if one cannot make sense of teleology without theism, then that’s just an argument for the existence of God, since teleology is, I take it, an obvious part of the world.

I suspect that Hamilton’s reasons for the rejection of teleology may explain his puzzlement about the idea of what objectively matters, rather than just being the object of the cares of people in various societies. For the *telos* of our deep cares is precisely that which matters to humans. I do not think humans can do without a notion of something that objectively matters. Even

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<sup>2</sup> Though perhaps the physical as well. For instance, Leibniz thought that variational principles—like Snell’s Law of refraction according to which light travels along minimum-time paths—imply a teleology central to physics, and the continued presence of variational principles in physics may make his view be correct.

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle did, of course, believe in gods and in the *Metaphysics* held that the world was teleologically oriented to imitate the gods. But it does not seem that he saw the gods as necessary to make sense of the very idea of teleology.



Harry Frankfurt, whose central project is to explicate what matters in terms of people's cares, in a revealing footnote (FRANKFURT 2004, 90 note 3) feels a certain pressure to allow that perhaps it's important to care about something, and hence that there is at least one thing, namely caring itself, that's important whether or not we care about it.

But now let us come back to the messiness of love. Hamilton observes obvious conflicts between loves, and argues that if I do not admit such conflicts, if I see love as unqualifiedly good, then my account of love moralizes in a falsifying way.

I have two responses, and I don't know which is the right one. In the book, I incline to the first, but now I think that a combination of the two might be the best story, and I am grateful to Hamilton for pointing out a need for significant future research.

The first response is simply to bite the bullet. When we love, we usually love incompletely. We fail to appreciate aspects of the good of our beloved, we fail to pursue important aspects of their good, and we fail in uniting with the kind of union the love pulls us towards. Further, we have many vices some of which we easily confuse with love, due to the self-deceptive tendencies that are so prevalent in humans and whose existence Hamilton notes in a different context. I suspect that biting the bullet will be implausible unless one accepts—as Hamilton apparently does not—the Socratic insight that the main part of human flourishing is the life of virtue, with this life perhaps best understood in the light of Wojtyła's idea that we exist to be gifts for others. For then when I ride roughshod over one person for your sake, I also fail to promote *your* central good, and hence I fail in love for you.

The second response is that when I say that love of neighbor is selfless, that loves do not conflict, and so on, these should be taken to be Aristotelian categoricals. They are idealizations. But Aristotelian categoricals tell us important things. First, in the case of good things, they tell us what we should try to make happen. If it is true that "The human being has four limbs", then we should strive to protect the four limbs that we and others have, and if it is true that love is kind (1 Cor. 13:4), then we should strive to make our loves be kind. But, second, we also get an understanding of what sort of a thing we are dealing with. A being that should have four limbs is a different kind of being from one that should have six but has lost two. Likewise, an attitude that is in fact unkind but should be kind is different from an attitude to which unkindness is natural.

## 5. PLEASURE IN NEUTRAL THINGS: ARCHARD

David Archard has many incisive criticisms of arguments in the book, especially the ones concerning gamete donation (I will discuss some related matters in my response to Helen Watt), but I would like to focus on his brief but particularly interesting criticisms of my arguments about pleasure.

Archard grants that it is bad to take pleasure in something bad, and good to take pleasure in something good. But he contends that it is also good to take pleasure in something neutral, whereas I had argued that this is bad. My argument was based on a thought experiment where one used a drug to self-induce the pleasure of moral satisfaction in one's selfless actions when in fact one's actions were morally neither good nor bad. I claimed that this was evidence that non-veridical pleasure, pleasure that fails to appropriately reflect the value of its object, is bad. This thesis, then, fit into my broader project by providing me with an argument that if sex was good on account of pleasure, it would need to be good on account of something deeper and morally more fundamental than pleasure as well.

Archard, however, makes a distinction between two kinds of what I would call non-veridical pleasure: "pleasure in what is not in fact valuable and ... pleasure in what was not in fact done" (p. 80 in this volume of RF). The satisfaction pill is a case where one takes pleasure in what one had not in fact done, and the negative evaluation of this pleasure should not generalize to the other case, that of pleasure in what is not in fact valuable.

This doesn't strike me as quite the right way to read the satisfaction pill case. In the pill case, I am taking pleasure in an action I *had* actually done. Nonetheless there is something just right about Archard's distinction. In some pleasures, I take pleasure in an object as falling under a description. When the object does not in fact fall under that description, the pleasure is non-veridical. The satisfaction pill case is like this: the pleasure is a pleasure *as in* a selfless action, but no selfless action was done. Hence the pleasure is straightforwardly non-veridical.

But this leaves open the possibility of case where one takes pleasure in something neutral, and the pleasure is not a pleasure *as in* something that is good, and the pleasure is still good. Are there such cases? Archard's own example of a pleasure in something neutral, that of taking gustatory pleasure in a meal prepared by someone else, does not help me, however. Food is a good thing, both as nourishing and often as a form of art.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This raises an interesting question: Could one also say that sex is a form of art? Maybe, but the central pleasures of sex are not the pleasures of artistic appreciation—significant pleasure can occur in the absence of artistry.

But now imagine that with the help of neurotechnology, I get myself to experience utter transports of delight at every mediocre musical production. Moreover, these transports of delight are *sui generis*. I am not experiencing the music as *musically* excellent. There is still something wrong here. My hedonic faculties are out of whack. Mediocre music is valuable but not very good. A very natural description of what has gone wrong here is that the pleasure is disproportionate to the value of the object. But when the object has *zero value*, then any amount of pleasure is disproportionate to value (the ratio of pleasure to value is something like infinity!) Similarly, if a pleasure had no object, then there would be no valuable object, and again any amount of pleasure would be disproportionate.

Linda Zagzebski<sup>5</sup> objects to the above argument by noting that film buffs get enjoyment from “bad movies” and philosophers enjoy “bad philosophy”. Let me focus on the film buff case, since the case of bad philosophy is either similar, or a case of a misplaced pleasure when the philosopher fails to realize the philosophy is bad. There seem to be two kinds of cases of cases of a film buff’s enjoyment of “bad movies”. One kind of a case is where the film buff is *slumming*: relaxing watching a shallow popular movie. Such movies are overall<sup>6</sup> bad only in a comparative sense: they are *worse* than decent movies. If one were on a desert island and the only entertainment available was a collection of such movies, we would think that it’s rather better than no movies at all. The second, and more interesting, kind of case is where the film buff enjoys the badness of the movie. I think what happens here is the kind of overcoming—I rather want to say *Aufhebung*—of a bad thing that happens in so much humor. One enjoys one’s *recognition* of the bad, and one enjoys seeing the norms of good film-making as shown in relief by the bad film. When one laughs at a bad thing, one isn’t enjoying the bad as such: one is enjoying a certain kind of superiority to the bad (this ingredient is particularly vivid in jokes by the oppressed about their oppressor, where one enjoys the fact that one is still in the deepest sense unconquered).

Alternately, one might respond that perhaps a small pleasure in a neutral—or even mildly bad—object could be good. I doubt it, but it isn’t relevant to the sexual case, since sexual pleasures are by no means generally considered to be “small pleasures”. And if they were small, then an account of the importance of sexuality in terms of pleasure would not get far.

<sup>5</sup> Non-anonymous referee comments.

<sup>6</sup> Of course, they may have segments that are bad *simpliciter*: for instance, racist or gratuitously violent moments. Such segments should not be enjoyed in the respect in which they are bad.

## 6. ECSTATIC CARESSES: GRIFFITHS

In a heart-felt essay with much wisdom about the human condition, Paul Griffiths offers a broad account of eros in terms of the ecstatic caress of a flesh that is gift. The caress need not be sexual. “The first caress is that given by mother to child in the womb”, Griffiths insists (p. 95 in this volume of RF), though by puberty there comes to be an interest in more sexual (though Griffiths prefers to avoid this term) caresses. But even in very specifically romantic contexts, lovers are “as likely to be interested in the toes and eyelashes of their beloveds as in their genitalia – to be interested in every aspect and element of the beloved’s flesh” (p. 97).

This is all correct and important. I have largely neglected this broader genus of caress in the book, and I am grateful to Griffiths for sketching it. But nonetheless, a distinction between types of caresses is also important. When lovers promise to be for each other alone, that promise is not broken by hugging a baby or a long embrace comforting a friend who has just lost a parent. Importantly, the distinction between what is and what is not a betrayal of a lover isn’t just physical. The physically identical long embrace that is perfectly appropriate when comforting a bereaved friend could also be an erotic betrayal in a different context. (This does not mean that the physical can’t suffice for betrayal: it would be sophisticated to say that an instance of coitus was just a comforting of a friend rather than a betrayal.)

On my view, the distinction depends on what is sexual, and I understand the sexual in light of Aristotle’s concept of focal meaning, which he illustrated with the idea of health. The central meaning of “health” is the good functioning of the body, but we can also say that food is healthy when it conduces to that good functioning, urine is healthy when it is indicative of that good functioning, and so on. Likewise, there is a central meaning of the sexual—the one body union—and other senses of sexual are drawn out from it by a varied set of relations to it.

This, of course, brings up Griffiths’ criticism about toes, eyelashes and genitalia, given that I see one body union as a union of reproductive parts. I do see union in this way, but a distinction is needed. The thirsty person desires water. Water is in fact H<sub>2</sub>O. But the thirsty person doesn’t need to know about that, and even if she knows it, she need not care much about molecules composed of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. What she wants is *water*.

Likewise, the person in a state of sexually erotic love (which I just call “erotic love”) has a desire for intimate sexual union as one body. But she

need not know exactly how this union is to be had or what it consists in, and she need not conceptualize it as “one body union”. What the union consists in is for the philosopher and theologian to figure out, much as the constitution of water is for the chemist to discover. The lover need no more be thinking about genitalia than the thirsty person about hydrogen atoms.

Griffiths, further, has brought me to realize that one needs to distinguish between the essential kernel of the union as one body, which is constituted by the joint reproductive striving, and other aspects of it. There is probably a rough essential minimum for what one needs in order to have a car, say wheels, axles, an engine, transmission, energy systems, a platform and a control mechanism. If I have that minimum, I have a car. But when I want to have a car, I want more than just the essential kernel of the car. (I may not even know what the essential kernel of the car is.) I want important things like seats, windows and an enclosure, and even luxuries like a sound system. These things naturally come along with the kernel and complete it.

The desire for union as one body naturally extends to a desire for caresses which combine with the essential kernel to fill out the union as one body, allowing one to experience that union more fully. Sex where only the genitals meet has the essence of union as one body, but lovers want more than the essence. And caresses can be desirable even when the couple is not making love (unlike an engineless car, which is largely useless, except as scrap or an emergency shelter). These caresses provide a way for the union as one body to extend temporally beyond time spent in bed to suffuse the joint life of the lovers (though of course these caresses, too, remain momentary). Two people holding hands do not thereby become one body in the deep, intimate sense that sexually erotic love is after, but their hand-holding has a certain relation to that union.

Nonetheless, it is important not to confuse the essence with what fills it out. The couple who engages in non-coital caresses has not united as one body in the relevant sense. If I am right that the experience of orgasm is an experience of the pleasure of one body union, caresses outside the context of that union should not involve orgasm, since romantic love is too important for us to deceive ourselves about the consummation of. Likewise, a lifelong marriage that misses the coital caress would be missing out on something really important, namely on consummation.

### 7. AN ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNT: WIELENBERG

Eric Wielenberg sets himself the task to come up with a better, alternative account of one body union. If he succeeds, he undermines the central claims of *One Body*. In a nutshell, Wielenberg's account is that one body union is constituted by a "commitment to subordinate what is good for oneself to what is good for the couple for the rest of one's life" (p. 113 in this volume of RF). And this account has a significant advantage over *One Body*'s. For whereas intercourse is only a small portion of a married couple's life, and I have to do some difficult work to explain how a couple can be said to be one body apart from coital episodes, the commitment Wielenberg talks of can endure for the whole marriage.

Nonetheless, I think my account has a significant advantage over Wielenberg's in that the union we are after in this investigation is a union that consummates *romantic* or *sexual* love. Admittedly, a commitment to subordinate one's own good to the couple's good outside of the context of a romantic relationship is uncommon, but it is clearly not innately tied to romance or sexuality. Even disembodied angels could have this kind of union as one "body". And presumably it is not rare among men and women joining a monastery that they do so with a commitment to subordinate their good to the good of the group for life—and in principle a monastery could in its charter specify that it has only two members (some of the pairings between spiritual father and spiritual son among the Desert Fathers might be a real-life example).

Granted, Wielenberg rightly and insightfully emphasizes the ways that sexual activity can support and further this commitment. But that is not enough to make the union in question suffice as an appropriate union for sexual love. Playing tennis together (example from GIRGIS, GEORGE and ANDERSON 2010) can also further the commitment, and one can imagine couples whose tennis compatibility is greater than their sexual compatibility and for whom playing tennis furthers the commitment more effectively than anything sexual would. An account of romantic union on which sex has the same kind of contingent role that tennis would for these couples is an unfortunately desexualized account.

*One Body* attempts to solve the problem of extending one body union from the short period of coitus to the relationship as a whole by invoking a commitment to a relationship of which the sexual one-body union is characteristic. On its face this complicates my account, but the complication has a point: to avoid the desexualization of romantic love and marriage in ac-

counts like Wielenberg's, a desexualization not uncommon in the philosophical literature.<sup>7</sup> (Ockham's Razor does not tell us to aim for simplicity at the cost of explanatory needs.)

Still, I am not sure that in the end there is significantly greater complication in my account than in Wielenberg's. My account could be put like this: there is union as one body *narrowly considered* and union as one body *broadly considered*. The broad union as one body is the lifelong relationship whose characteristic consummation is found in narrow union as one body, namely joint reproductive-type cooperation. There is a similar distinction implicit in Wielenberg's account: There is the *commitment* to subordinating one's good to the good of the couple and there is the actual activity of subordinating that good. And it is presumably because the actual activity of subordinating one's good to the good of the couple is unitive that commitment to that activity is unitive. So Wielenberg's story also requires narrow and wide union, where wide union (the commitment to subordination of one's good) is unitive because narrow union (the actual subordination) is. Thus my account is not, at least in this respect, more complex than Wielenberg's and further it avoids the desexualization of Wielenberg's account. Thus it is to be preferred.

#### 8. PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENT FOR ONE BODY UNION: KAŁOL

Tomasz Kałol subjects many of the arguments and claims of the book to careful examination, but there is one issue that he keeps on coming back to: Is there a *philosophical* justification for the claim that one body union consummates romantic love? This echoes a general concern by many critics of the degree to which *One Body* succeeds in giving a plausible non-theological case.

I think there are philosophical justifications for the consummation claim. The first is the global Inference to Best Explanation argument constituted by the book. The book offers a theory that makes unified sense of the philosophical data that I have identified, and that in itself is evidence for the truth of the theory.

But I think there are less global arguments. First, in the case of romantic heterosexual couples, it is generally taken that full consummation of romantic love requires intercourse. A heterosexual couple might have oral sex, but

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<sup>7</sup> For instance, sexuality plays a minor role in the accounts of Robert Nozick (1989) and Andrea Westlund (2008).

unless they have had intercourse they haven't "gone all the way", as the phrase goes. But the best explanation—once again, this is the same form of argument as the global one—of why it is that intercourse "goes all the way" is that intercourse constitutes a union as one body. After all, the other sexual acts can involve intense orgasmic pleasure. They can be intimate caresses, as Griffiths emphasized in his essay. One could try to explain the difference between coitus and the other acts as merely constituted by a contingent social meaning of intercourse, but a view on which there is an objectively deeply meaningful difference seems to do more justice to our attitudes.

Second, my claim that coitus constitutes a union of two biologically incomplete organisms into a reproductive whole and that the metaphor of "union as one body" is therefore much more aptly applied to such a union than to other sexual acts seems clear and does not require specifically theological justification. It is also clear that couples seek deep physical closeness. And among the caresses that a human couple is capable of, the caress that most fully unites two as one body seems to be the most intimate one, the best candidate for a consummation of that love. If such a union is possible to humans, then we would expect it to consummate romantic love. And such a union is possible to humans.

When Genesis talked of the man leaving his parents to become one flesh with a woman, this was probably not *news* to the typical reader. Rather, it was a poetic expression description of truths that the reader already implicitly knew, truths that can be known without revelation.

#### 9. PROPER FUNCTION AND MENOPAUSE: HERSHENOV

It's essential to the account in *One Body* that coitus be biologically aimed at reproduction. David Hershenov offers a creative and elegant twist on the common infertility argument against such theses.

1. The inability of an elderly heterosexual couple's coitus to result in reproduction is not a dysfunction.
2. Hence, an elderly heterosexual couple's available sexual activity does not have reproduction as a *telos*.
3. But marriage of elderly heterosexual couples is permissible.
4. So, the permissibility of marriage does not require that the couple's available sexual activity have reproduction as a *telos*.
5. If 4, then at least elderly lesbian couples can permissibly marry.



Hershenov at the end of his paper offers a very clever way to block the inference in 5, but I hope to stop the argument prior to that step.

First, I am skeptical of 1. Much of Hershenov's argument is meant to make a case that menopause is not a dysfunction because it is, plausibly, adaptive. Menopause can be reasonably seen as a part and parcel of the gradual loss of function in old age, which gradual loss itself seems to be part and parcel of our mortality. The doctrine of the fall, as Hershenov notes, does provide a theological reason to think our mortality is a dysfunction.

But I think there is some non-theological reason to think this, as well. One way is to extend Hershenov's insightful observation that we might not consider the non-occurrence of menopause to be a dysfunction. More generally, we wouldn't consider the non-occurrence of the many frailties of old age to be a dysfunction. I suppose these frailties could be neither a dysfunction nor a proper function, but given the obvious ways that they impede our flourishing it seems plausible that they are a dysfunction *unless* they are a proper function. Moreover, I take our attitudes of fear towards our own death and mourning at the deaths of others to correctly indicate that death is a tragedy. But that suggests that death is contrary to our flourishing in the way that a dysfunction is, and by extension we would expect the frailties that precede death in the elderly to be a dysfunction as well.

Hershenov's own account of proper function is that the healthy, proper function of a part is an activity because of which the organism lived or because of its being found in the organism's ancestors the organism came to live. This is unsatisfactory. If a tyrant kills off all people who develop legs, this does not make the failure of the survivors to develop legs proper or healthy. Nonetheless, that an organism lived or came to live because of an activity does provide *evidence* that the activity was healthy and proper, and so Hershenov's speculative evolutionary argument for the value of menopause carries some weight, though it is not conclusive in light of the above considerations about other frailties, for some of which presumably one could also come up with evolutionary stories (say, ones about making room in society for one's children).

Linda Zagzebski<sup>8</sup> offers an interesting argument against the idea that menopause is a defect, namely that a woman does not produce new ova as she goes through life. Naturally, then, there will be cessation of fertility once the ova run out. However, I do not know whether the failure to produce new

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<sup>8</sup> Non-anonymous referee comments.

ova is a part of natural human functioning. The current arrangement where new ova are not produced could be connected with the higher incidence of chromosomal abnormalities in the children of middle-aged mothers, after all. Moreover, recent scientific work has cast some doubt on the received wisdom that new ova are not produced in adulthood: there at least appear to be stem cells in women's ovaries that produce ova in laboratory conditions (WHITE *et al.* 2012).

While I remain skeptical of 1, I also have a more speculative place to challenge Hershenov's argument. The inference from 1 to 2 seems to require something like this principle:

1.5.If the inability of  $x$  to result in  $G$  is not a dysfunction, then  $x$  does not aim at  $G$ .

I am far from sure of this. One can aim at victory in a sport or game where one has no chance of winning, and one's play need not have any chance of success (think of a novice's playing chess against Kasparov). Yet there need be nothing dysfunctional about one's play. Likewise, a mathematician who, before Wiles proved Fermat's Last Theorem, strove to find a counterexample need have done nothing dysfunctional, even though success was logically impossible. But perhaps cases of *intentional* aim differ from cases of natural teleologies?

Still we could also have a case where a part (or aspect or activity)  $x$  of an organism has a certain *telos*, but another part (or aspect or activity)  $y$  of the organism properly functions in counteracting that *telos*, and there is no dysfunction either in  $x$  or in  $y$ . For instance, we could imagine a bird that dives into the water to catch prey which functions as follows. It has a breathing instinct that functions all the time, making it strive to suck air into the lungs through its nostrils. But it also has flaps that instinctually close over the nostrils when it is underwater. In a case like this (perhaps entirely hypothetical, but quite imaginable), the breathing instinct, even underwater, would have oxygen inspiration as its *telos*, while at the same time there is neither dysfunction nor a chance of success. So we can have cases where the inability to result in a process's proper object is not a dysfunction.

Note, too, that in our highly indeterministic universe, the difference between conceiving after menopause and conceiving in a randomly timed act of intercourse for a healthy couple in the 20s is presumably only a difference between two non-zero numbers, both of which are significantly less than a half. Granted, in this highly indeterministic universe, it might be possible for sperm to quantum tunnel from the man to the woman even absent coitus. But

it is plausible that in the freak post-menopausal conception, sex achieved its natural *telos*, while in the freak tunneling in the absence of coitus no process found its *telos* in reproduction.

Still, the fact that an outcome has vanishingly small probability is strong evidence that either there is dysfunction or the outcome is not a *telos* (or both). But this evidence is significantly weaker when the relevant reference class—post-menopausal women—in which the probability is small is far from being the whole population, and especially when membership in that reference class correlates with features that are clearly harmful to the organism's flourishing (in this case, the frailties of age).

#### 10. INTENDING A CHILD: WATT

Helen Watt tackles one of the parts of the book where I am least sure: the speculative Kantian argument, inspired by George and Bradley (1995), that one should not intend to produce a child. The argument goes like this. If we produce something in order that it might promote some further end, then our product is an artifact with the teleology given by our purpose. But if a couple intends to produce a child, then they do so either for the sake of the child or because they have some further purpose for the child. However, they cannot do it for the sake of the child, because (perhaps unlike God) they cannot have intentions tied to the particular individual that would result from their reproduction. So they have a further purpose for the child. But that makes the child be an artifact with a purpose assigned by the couple. And it is wrong to treat a person as an artifact. Persons assign ends to themselves, and *maybe* God can permissibly assign ends to creatures, but we have no right to assign an end to a person.

Helen persuasively argues that there is something incredible in the conclusions of the argument. For instance, surely a couple can pray for a child, and in so doing they are intending the existence of the child. I share Helen's puzzlement here. But the Kantian argument, nonetheless, appears sound. We seem to be facing a paradox here.

Helen notes that one can appropriately appreciate the good of reproduction in a mouse, and if so, then surely in a human as well. But if one can appropriately appreciate a good, surely one should be able to promote it as well under some circumstances. Helen might well be right. On page 405 of *One Body*, I consider a similar though more complex solution, namely that rather than intending the child *per se*, the couple intends their sexual activity to be an

instance of “reproducing *as a part of the conjugal good*”. Helen thinks that when I consider this option, I do so in order to reject it. But I do not see an argument in my book against this solution. On the contrary, this option seems to escape the Kantian argument, and thereby provides a way out of the paradox.

If so, then the thesis about intentional reproduction needs to be carefully stated. If the Kantian argument is sound, one cannot permissibly act with the primary intention *that a child should result*, but one can act with the purpose that the couple’s one body union be fruitful or maybe, as Helen suggests, with the purpose of successful human reproduction.

*One Body* argues that a couple using *in-vitro* fertilization is intending the existence of the child, and hence violates the Kantian argument. Moreover, the couple does not have a plausible analogue to the purpose of making the one body union be fruitful. Given Helen’s alternative, the next question worth exploring is whether the IVF couple might not be able to intend successful human reproduction rather than the existence of the child, and thereby escape the Kantian argument.

I suspect not. *One Body* argues that the purpose in reproducing should not be something minor—that would be an insult to the good of the child. Making normal human reproduction fruitful is not a minor purpose: the act is deeply significant, and not just instrumentally so, and so intending successful *natural* reproduction is an appropriate goal to reproduction. But the value of IVF-based reproduction is almost entirely instrumental. Thus it would make little sense for the couple to go through the indignities, discomforts and emotional upheavals of IVF in order to get the good of successful artificial reproduction as such. Still, this needs more examination, and while I am confident that reproduction and sexual union should not be separated, I am far from confident of the whole Kantian argument, and now even less so.<sup>9</sup>

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## ONE BODY: ODPOWIEDZI KRYTYKOM

## Streszczenie

W niniejszym tekście formułuję odpowiedzi na zarzuty kierowane wobec mojej książki *One Body*.

## ONE BODY: RESPONSES TO CRITICS

## Summary

In this article I respond to a number of powerful criticisms of my book *One Body*.

**Słowa kluczowe:** stosunek płciowy, miłość, ciało, seksualność, rozrodczość, prokreacja, wnioskowanie do najlepszego wyjaśnienia, teologia, filozofia, teleologia, menopauza, chrześcijaństwo, katolicyzm

**Key words:** sex, love, body, sexuality, reproduction, procreation, Inference to Best Explanation, theology, philosophy, teleology, menopause, Christianity, Catholicism.

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