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Which Relationships Justify Partiality? General Considerations and Problem Cases*

NIKO KOLODNY

We have, or at least we take ourselves to have, reason for patterns of action and emotion towards our parents, siblings, friends, spouses, children, and others with whom we have significant ties.¹ This *partiality* involves seeing to it that both these *relatives* and our relationships to them fare well, as well as respecting both in our decisions. It also involves feeling certain positive emotions (e.g. joy, relief, gratitude) when they fare well or are properly regarded, and feeling certain negative emotions (e.g. grief, anxiety, resentment) when they fare poorly or are not properly regarded. Famously, these reasons for partiality are *agent-relative*. I have reason to be partial to my relatives, whereas you do not, and you have reason to be partial to your relatives, whereas I do not. Less often noted, these reasons support requirements that are *owed* to our relatives. When we breach these requirements, we wrong our relatives, if not morally, then in some other sense. We give them claim, which others lack, to privileged kinds of complaints, such as resentment.

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¹ Throughout, I make certain claims about what 'we' take to be true of ourselves. I don't mean to presume somehow that every reasonable or decent reader will agree with every such claim. The hope is only that enough readers will agree with enough of these claims for the attempt to make sense of them to be of interest.

This presents a puzzle, however. Although we have countless interpersonal relationships, we have reason for partiality only in some. Why is this? Why is there reason for friendship and love of family, but not for racism or *omertà*?² Without an answer, without a principled distinction between the relationships that support partiality and the relationships that don't, a creeping scepticism sets in about partiality as a whole.

My hope is to make some progress towards a principled distinction, or set of distinctions. In Section 1, I clarify the challenge. The challenge would be easy to meet, I observe, if reasons for partiality were not, in a certain sense, 'basic'. The problem is that some reasons for partiality are basic, in that sense. In Section 2, I discuss a neglected form of normative explanation, 'resonance', which might help us to meet analogous challenges about other domains, such as the moral emotions. In Section 3, I apply resonance to our challenge, suggesting how it might explain why some relationships—friendship and cultural membership are the examples—support partiality. (In a companion essay, 'Which Relationships Justify Partiality? Parents and Children', I distinguish various reasons for familial partiality, focusing on the relationships between parents and children.) In Section 4, I suggest how resonance might explain why other relationships do not support partiality, paying special attention to the case of racism. In Section 5, I end with some reflections on the implications of this account for other relationships, such as co-citizenship; for the defence of partiality in general; and for the difficult relations between partiality and other norms, most notably those of impartial morality.

1. A Request for Explanation

Think of the challenge this way. Imagine the exhaustive *List of partiality principles*, of all of the true normative claims of the form:

² Compare John Cottingham, 'Partiality, Favouritism, and Morality', *Philosophical Quarterly* 36 (1986), pp. 357–73; Simon Keller, 'Making Nonsense of Loyalty to Country', in Boudewijn de Bruin and Christopher S. Zurn (eds), *New Waves in Political Philosophy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 87–104; Katja Vogt, 'Freundschaft, Unparteilichkeit und Feindschaft', *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 40 (2001), pp. 517–32; Christopher Heath Wellman, 'Relational Facts in Liberal Political Theory: Is There Magic in the Pronoun "My"?' *Ethics* 110 (2000), pp. 537–62; and Nick Zangwill, 'Against Analytic Moral Functionalism', *Ratio* 13 (2000), pp. 275–86, at p. 280. Zangwill writes:

A lot of ethical theorists are happy to notice the friends, family and community cases, but they do not see the problem of where it might end . . . How about my colleague, my tribesman, my countryman, my gender, my patient, my co-religionist or my species? These are all controversial and disputed. We need to ask the question: *which* loyalties are okay and which are not? . . . *When* do indexical considerations contribute to determining a moral property? This is a fundamental moral question—perhaps even *the* fundamental moral question.

one has reason for parental partiality toward one's children,
 one has reason for spousal partiality toward one's spouse,

and so on. We need not imagine the List fully enumerated. It is enough to imagine it including relatively uncontroversial cases, like parental and spousal partiality, and excluding relatively uncontroversial cases, like prison-gang and blood-type partiality. Our challenge is then to *explain* the List: to explain why all and only the partiality principles that it contains are true.

To be clear, the challenge is not to provide *reasons to believe* the List.³ This latter challenge might be met with abductive arguments to the effect that the List best explains our particular judgements about reasons for partiality. But the challenge to *explain* the List cannot be met in this way. Nor is the challenge to explain how *any* partiality principle could be true. Such a challenge might be issued, for example, by philosophers who find agent-relative reasons, in general, inexplicable. Rather, granting (at least for the sake of argument) that partiality principles are *not otherwise problematic*, the challenge is to explain why only those partiality principles on the List, and no others, are true.

I assume that all *normative claims*, which, by stipulation, are of the form 'One has reason . . .', are explained only by other normative claims and claims with no normative or evaluative content.⁴ Given this assumption, it may seem that the explanation of any normative claim must take one of two forms. The first, *deduction*, shows how one normative claim follows from a more fundamental normative claim (and perhaps further nonnormative premises) by rules of inference familiar outside of the normative domain. For example, the explanation of the claim that I have reason to admire Mark Twain may be, first, that if someone is a great author, then everyone has reason to admire that person, second, that Mark Twain is a great author, and, finally, universal instantiation, twice applied. The second kind of explanation, *facilitation*, shows how one normative claim follows from a more fundamental normative claim and a transmission principle of the rough form: if one has reason for something, then one has reason for the (causal or constitutive) means to it. For example, the explanation for why I have reason to travel to New York consists, first, of the normative claim that I have reason to be in New York, second, of the nonnormative claim that my travelling there is a means to my being there, and, finally, of the transmission principle that if one has reason for something, then one has reason for the means to it.⁵

³ Christopher Heath Wellman, 'Relational Facts', in particular, seems to confuse the challenge to *explain* the List with this latter challenge to provide *reasons for believing* it.

⁴ I relax this assumption in n. 9, below.

⁵ See Joseph Raz, 'The Myth of Instrumental Rationality', *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy* 1 (2005), pp. 2–28.

Can we explain the List by appeal to just deduction and facilitation? Yes, say *reductionists*. They hold that no partiality principle is, in a certain sense, basic: more precisely, that every partiality principle:

one has reason to be partial in ways *P* to people with whom one has an interpersonal relationship of type *R*,

can be explained, by deduction or facilitation, from normative principles that are not partiality principles.⁶ Most often, reductionism appeals to a normative principle of the form:

one has reason to *phi* (or to feel *E*)

and a non-normative *response equivalence* of the form:

being partial in way *P* to people with whom one has *R* is an instance of, or facilitates, *phi*-ing (or feeling *E*).

For example, the reductionist might seek to explain the partiality principle:

one has reason to be parentally partial to one's children,

by appeal to the normative principle that:

one has reason to maximize well-being,

and the non-normative claim that:

being parentally partial to one's children is an instance of, or facilitates, maximizing well-being (because, e.g., one knows their needs better than others do).

Or the reductionist might seek to explain the partiality principle:

one has reason to be spousally partial to one's spouse,

⁶ This discussion of reductionism is indebted to Samuel Scheffler, 'Relationships and Responsibilities', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 26 (1997), pp. 189–209. However, Scheffler defines reductionism as the position that reasons for partiality 'actually arise out of discrete interactions that occur in the context of . . . relationships' (p. 190). For present purposes, this definition is, in one way, too narrow, and, in another way, potentially misleading. Too narrow, because some reductionist explanations (such as the one below that appeals to well-being) need not appeal to any discrete interactions between relatives. Potentially misleading, because a non-reductionist might hold that although reasons for partiality arise from relationships and not from discrete interactions, some of the relevant relationships (such as the histories of encounter discussed below) are *constituted* by discrete interactions. The whole provides reasons that the parts do not.

by appeal to the normative principle that:

one has reason to fulfil expectations, that one has voluntarily and intentionally, or voluntarily and negligently, led others to form, that one would perform morally permissible actions

and the response equivalence that:

being spousally partial is an instance of, or facilitates, fulfilling such expectations.

Reductionists thus have at least a clear *strategy* for explaining the List. They can claim that there are relevant response equivalences for all and only the partiality principles on the List. For example, they can claim that being gang-partial to one's fellow Aryan Brothers, or being blood-type-partial to fellow O positives is not an instance of, and does not facilitate, maximizing well-being, or fulfilling expectations of morally permissible actions.

Yet, setting aside whether it explains why the List *excludes* what it does, I doubt that reductionism explains why the List *includes* what it does. First, consideration of some familiar proposals suggests that reductionism does not explain reasons for many of the partial *actions* that we take ourselves to have reason to perform. For one thing, I may be no more efficient than strangers at promoting my relatives' well-being. If my mother became senile, it might not matter to her whether I or a stranger cared for her, and it might be clear enough to a stranger what her care required. For another, I may be no more efficient at promoting my relatives' well-being than strangers' well-being. Some children are much worse off materially than my daughter, and a deranged stalker might be no less emotionally vulnerable to me than my wife. Some reductionists may reply that the difference is that I did not voluntarily and intentionally (or negligently) lead the stalker to become vulnerable to me. But a voluntary act cannot be necessary, since I have reason for partiality to family members, such as my parents and siblings, regardless of any such act. And voluntarily and intentionally (or negligently) leading someone to become vulnerable to my failing to be partial to her cannot be sufficient, as the familiar phenomenon of 'leading someone on' confirms. Someone might voluntarily and intentionally encourage me to form the mistaken belief that she has the attitudes constitutive of being my friend or lover, thereby leading me to become vulnerable to her not treating me as her friend or lover. We would all agree that she has reason to 'let me down gently'.

But no one believes that she has reason to treat me as a friend or lover, precisely because there is no relationship that would make sense of such partiality.⁷

Next, even if reductionism explained *some* reasons for partial actions, these are not *the* reasons on which people, in being partial, act. When moved to do something for my daughter or my wife, for example, it would be oddly estranged to view her claim on me as merely that of a stranger whose well-being I could promote, or whose expectations I have raised. Finally, reductionism does not explain reason for partial *emotion*. Even if, on occasion, I have reason to do the same for a stranger's daughter as for my own, I do not have reason to feel the same way about the stranger's daughter.

It is natural to react to these last two points with the thought that the motivations and emotions distinctive of partiality have nothing to do with reasons. 'Those motivations and emotions are simply *love* itself, and love is not a response to reasons. Indeed, it cannot be: love is focused on a particular, e.g. *Jane*, and something's being the very particular that it is is not a reason for anything.' To take this view, however, is to misunderstand ourselves. As I have tried to argue elsewhere, it is false to the lived experience of love, rendering it an unintelligible urge; it is contradicted by our reflective judgements that love is called for by some objects (such as our own children) and not by others (strangers' children); and it fails to explain a variety of other facts about love, such as the prediction that I would cease to love my wife if I lost all memory of our history together, even if I retained memories of what preceded that history that allowed me to recognize her as the very particular she is (whatever that comes to). To love someone, I think, just is, in part, to see one's relationship with her as providing reason for partiality to her.⁸

My aim here is not to make a conclusive case against reductionism, which the foregoing no doubt fails to do. It is only to say enough about the apparent limitations of reductionism to motivate interest in the alternative, *non-reductionism*. This is the view that some partiality principles are *not* explained via deduction and facilitation from normative principles that are not partiality principles: that some partiality principles are, in this sense, basic. If so, then our question is how non-reductionism can explain the List. Clearly it cannot explain the List as reductionism does: by showing that all and only the partiality principles on the List follow by deduction or facilitation from normative principles none of which are partiality principles. What alternative is there?

⁷ Compare Talbot Brewer, 'Two Kinds of Commitments (And Two Kinds of Social Groups)', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 66 (2003), pp. 554–83, at p. 557.

⁸ See my 'Love as Valuing a Relationship', *Philosophical Review* 112 (2003), pp. 135–89.

Non-reductionists might propose, with reductionists, that all and only the partiality principles on the List follow by deduction or facilitation from other normative principles, but, against reductionists, that some of these principles are partiality principles. In particular, they might appeal to a Generic Partiality Principle:

One has reason for Generic Partiality toward people with whom one has a relationship of the Generic Type.

And they might seek to derive all other partiality principles on the List, by deduction or facilitation, using response equivalences of the form:

being parentally partial to one's children is an instance of, or facilitates, being Generically Partial to people with whom one has a relationship of the Generic Type,

being fraternally partial to one's siblings is an instance of, or facilitates, being Generically Partial to people with whom one has a relationship of the Generic Type.

The explanation of List would then be that relevant response equivalences obtain for all and only its entries. But this approach seems hopeless. There seems no way to specify the Generic Type, other than by a disjunction of all the relationships on the List, which would hardly meet the challenge. Moreover, there is no one kind of Generic Partiality. Parental partiality, for example, is quite different from fraternal partiality.⁹

⁹ We have been assuming that the explanation of the List would appeal solely to facts of the form: 'One has reason . . .'. However, some might think that facts of the form 'One has reason . . .' are explained by facts of the form: 'Such and such is of value . . .' or 'Such and such "provides" (or is a "source" of) reason . . .'.

While this is plausible, it does not help with our problem. Again, there will appear to be two kinds of explanation. *Promotion* explains the fact that *X* has reason to *phi*, or to feel *E*, by showing that the fact that *X*'s *phi*-ing, or feeling *E*, would *bring about* something of value, or *prevent* something of disvalue. *Recognition* explains the fact that *X* has reason to *phi*, or to feel *E*, by showing that *X*'s *phi*-ing, or feeling *E*, would properly *respect* or *acknowledge* or *be for the sake of* something of value, or disvalue. To say that something 'provides' or 'is a source of' reason, I think, is just to say that it plays the role of the thing of value (or of disvalue) in an explanation of that reason.

Now, non-reductionists might well explain each entry on the List by appealing to facts of this kind. The explanation would presumably appeal to recognition and would take the relationship mentioned in the entry as the relevant value, or source of reason. For example, non-reductionists might explain why:

one has reason to be parentally partial to one's children

by saying that:

At this point, one might well ask why we should *expect* an explanation of the List. ‘Consider an analogy. Why should we be troubled that we cannot explain, by appeal to further normative principles, why the principles:

one has reason to seek knowledge,
one has reason to cause pleasure,

belong on the list of true normative principles, whereas the principles:

one has reason to cause pain,
one has reason to count blades of grass,

do not? Perhaps we should be troubled if we accepted monism: that all normative claims follow by deduction or facilitation from a single normative principle. But we should not be monists.’

We need not be monists, however, to expect an explanation of the List. Granted, we may not expect a common explanation of why knowledge and pleasure provide reasons. But this is because knowledge and pleasure are so manifestly different, both in themselves and in the responses they call for. By contrast, friendship and marriage are remarkably similar, both in themselves

one’s parental relationship to one’s children is something of value, and being parentally partial to one’s children properly respects this value,

or:

one’s parental relationship to one’s children provides, or is a source of, reason to be parentally partial to one’s children.

And non-reductionists might then propose to explain the List by claiming that all and only the relationships mentioned by partiality principles on the List are valuable, or reason-providing, in the relevant way. (Compare the suggestion of Scheffler, ‘Relationships and Responsibilities’, that the relationships provide reasons for partiality are just those that we have ‘reason to value noninstrumentally’.) This is why all and only the partiality principles on the List are true.

The problem is that this seems only to postpone the challenge. Why, one now wants to know, are all and only the relationships mentioned by the partiality principles on the List valuable, or reason-providing, in the relevant way?

This is why it is unhelpful to suggest that the partiality principles on the List involve relationships of just those kinds that contribute to their participants’ well-being, or the meaning of their lives. The suggestion would be not the reductionist claim that one’s reason for partiality is to enhance one’s own well-being overall, but instead that relationships of kinds that contribute to one’s well-being other things equal are associated with the partiality principles on the List, principles that are not explained via deduction or facilitation from other normative principles. (In a given case, such a relationship might not enhance one’s well-being overall, because of the sacrifices it requires.) This connection to well-being or meaning is plausible, and it may even be useful in identifying, or justifying belief in, the principles on the List. But it does not help to explain *why* those and only those principles are on the List. On the most plausible views, when activities and experiences contribute to well-being and meaning, they do so because they are independently valuable. So the challenge recurs: why are these relationships, and no others, independently valuable?

and in the responses they call for. And where there are similar phenomena, we expect a common explanation. There ought, it seems, to be something that we can say about the partiality principles on the List that explains why they, and only they, are true.

So the challenge to explain the List remains. All that we have settled so far is that if we are to meet it, we need to find another kind of normative explanation, beyond those that we have already discussed.¹⁰

2. Resonance

To illustrate what this kind of normative explanation might look like, consider a similar request for explanation about the *reactive emotions*: responses—most notably, guilt, resentment, gratitude, and indignation—to attitudes, expressed in decisions, towards certain people and things. Why do I have reason to feel a given reactive emotion toward *some* decisions, but not *others*? For example, why do I have reason to *resent* it when, say, a paediatrician expresses in his decisions a lack of concern for my *child*, but not when he expresses a lack of concern for the *parasite* that threatens her health?

‘Because’, one will say, ‘you have reason to *care* about your child, whereas you do not have reason to care about the parasite. That is, you have reason to feel certain *non-reactive emotions* in response to how she fares: positive non-reactive emotions (e.g. hope, relief, joy) when she fares well, and negative non-reactive emotions (e.g. anxiety, fear, grief) when she fares poorly.’ But what is the nature of this ‘because’? This answer, namely that:

I have reason to *feel negative non-reactive emotions* at my child’s faring poorly, but not at the parasite’s faring poorly,

does not explain by *deduction* or *facilitation* why:

I have reason to *resent* lack of concern for my child, but not lack of concern for the parasite.

¹⁰ The problem can look easier than it is. Keller, ‘Making Nonsense of Loyalty to Country’, writes (p. 91):

There are some loyalties that you should not have . . . It is easy to explain why each of these loyalties is objectionable. Loyalty to the Nazi Party is immoral . . . [L]oyalty to a bank is imprudent. You should not be a loyal fan of Bon Jovi, because the object of that loyalty is aesthetically unappealing.

But, first, one might think whether loyalty is immoral depends, in part, on whether or not there are reasons for that loyalty. If so, then we cannot appeal to its immorality to explain why there are no reasons for it. Second, if my wife remained loyal to me although I became ruined, incapacitated, or ostracized, her loyalty would be imprudent. Finally, the object of her loyalty is aesthetically unappealing (looking something like a cross between a monkey and a squirrel).

The necessary response equivalence:

resenting lack of concern for my child is an instance of, or facilitates, feeling a negative non-reactive emotion at her faring poorly,

does not obtain. First, the *responses* themselves differ. The negative non-reactive emotions—such as anxiety, fear, grief, loss—lack resentment’s distinctively communicative register. Because resentment concerns how another person regards what we care about, it lays claim to responses from that person: apology, acknowledgement, respect, and so on. Because non-reactive emotions concern simply what happens to what we care about, by contrast, they do not demand anything from anyone. They merely celebrate or lament the course that events take. Second, they are responses to different *things*. If some malevolent no longer has the power to harm my child, then I have reason for resentment, but not for anxiety. And if good intentions, or mindless nature, harm her, then I have reason for grief, but not for resentment. One might put the point this way: the non-reactive emotions and the reactive emotions are addressed to different *dimensions* of importance.¹¹ It matters to us not only that certain people and things *fare well in nature*: that they escape harm, flourish, and so on. It matters to us also that they be *properly regarded by others*.

Why, then, do we take the fact that I have reason to care about my child, but not about the parasite, to explain why I have reason to *resent* lack of concern for my child, but not lack of concern for the parasite?¹² Because, it seems, we accept the more general principle that:

one has reason to *resent* decisions that aim at, or fail to prevent, events or conditions about which one would have reason to feel *negative non-reactive* emotions.¹³

¹¹ ‘Importance’ is meant here as a broad covering term. Something is important if it is something of value or disvalue, or if it affects reasons for positive or negative responses.

¹² I am trying to state the question neutrally, although it could be stated in terms of the contractualism of T. M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), to which I am sympathetic. Why do I have reason to *resent*, rather than feel *grateful* for, a willingness to act in such a way that a principle permitting such actions could be reasonably rejected on the basis of what people in my position would have reason to *want* (where wanting, when fully spelled out, might simply consist in a disposition to experience such emotions)?

¹³ There is more to it than this, of course. First, the action must lack a certain kind of justification. Second, the events and conditions must involve things that are specially related to oneself: things that one has *agent-relative* reason, which others lack, to feel certain non-reactive emotions about. Otherwise, one would have reason to feel indignation, not resentment. Finally, one can also have reason to resent decisions that do not aim at any natural event or condition, such as decisions to treat one unfairly. The point is only that, where there *is* a corresponding natural event or condition, it is one about which one has reason to feel *negative non-reactive* emotions.

But what explains this principle? Why shouldn't one have reason to resent decisions that aim at events about which one would have reason to feel *positive* non-reactive emotions? The underlying thought, as I shall put it, is that reactive emotions should *resonate* with non-reactive emotions.

Resonance of reactive emotions: one has reason to respond to a *decision* by which someone expresses an intention (or a lack of concern to prevent) that *X* fare a certain way with a *reactive* emotion that is similar to the *non-reactive* emotions with which one has reason to respond to *X*'s *actually faring that way*, but that reflects the distinctive importance of how *others regard* what one cares about.

Reactive emotions should be 'similar' to non-reactive emotions at very least by sharing their 'valence'.¹⁴ For example, since I have reason for *negative non-reactive* emotions, such as grief, when something *bad* happens to my child, I likewise have reason for *negative reactive* emotions, such as resentment, when *someone's decision* aims for that bad thing to happen (or does not take care to prevent its happening). Since I have no reason for negative non-reactive emotions when something bad happens to the parasite, I have no reason for negative reactive emotions when someone's decision aims for it to happen.

Here is another example of resonance. Certain aims are *agent-neutrally* important. That is to say that everyone has reason to respond to them in certain ways: reason not to impede their advancement, reason to hope that they progress, or simply reason not to deny or disparage their worth.¹⁵ However, when one has a *personal history* with a particular aim, when it has been, say, one's life's work to advance it, then that aim takes on a further dimension of *agent-relative* importance. One has reason, which others lack, to care specially whether *that* aim is advanced: to care more about it than one does about other, equally worthy, aims with which one shares no history. And one may also have reason, which others lack, to care specially whether one advances the aim *oneself*: reason, for example, to care whether someone else, even if equally qualified, replaces one in one's life's work.¹⁶

¹⁴ I do not have a general account of the difference between 'positive' and 'negative' responses to offer. I am here just relying on our shared intuitive grasp of the difference. The similarity is not restricted to valence. For example, n. 19. and the preceding text describe more substantive ways in which the responses called for by a discrete encounter are similar to the responses called for by a shared history of encounter.

¹⁵ Compare the reasons for respect discussed by Joseph Raz, *Value, Respect, and Attachment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁶ This may be the phenomenon that Harry Frankfurt, 'On Caring', in *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 155–80, has in mind when he writes, 'certain

Here a similar request for explanation arises: why do some personal histories provide these agent-relative reasons whereas others do not? Why has a researcher who has spent years pursuing a cure for some disease reason to care whether he succeeds, whereas a lunatic who has spent years counting blades of grass on the asylum grounds has not? The explanation has something to do with the fact that the cure is agent-neutrally important, whereas knowledge of the sum is not. But again the explanation cannot proceed by deduction or facilitation from a response equivalence. There is no response equivalence, since the agent-relative importance that finding a cure has for the researcher goes beyond its agent-neutral importance for the rest of us. Again, I think, the explanation is to be found in resonance.

Resonance of personal aims: one has reason to respond to a *history* of pursuing some aim with a concern for that aim, and one's pursuit of it, that is similar to the responses that one has reason to give that *aim apart from such a history*, but that reflects the distinctive importance of a personal history.

The aim of finding a cure is agent-neutrally important for anyone—everyone has reason, say, to hope that it is achieved—and so the aim is agent-relatively important for the researcher—she has reason to feel elated when her work moves forward and defeated when it is set back. The aim of counting blades of grass is agent-neutrally pointless—no one has reason to care whether it is achieved—and so the aim is also agent-relatively pointless for the lunatic—he has no reason to care whether he fills another tally sheet.

The point can be generalized. Many things of agent-neutral importance, not only aims, can come to have agent-relative importance for us when we are personally related to them: when they are specially 'ours', in some sense.¹⁷ The personal relation is often that of having a *history* of a certain kind with the thing: the history of *pursuing* an agent-neutrally important *aim*, the history of *engaging* with an agent-neutrally important *culture* or *institution*, or the history of experiencing some agent-neutrally important *adversity* or *loss*. But the personal relation might also be some ahistorical *situation* involving the thing. One might

kinds of activity—such as productive work—are inherently valuable not simply *in addition to* being instrumentally valuable but *precisely because of* their instrumental value' (p. 178). See also his 'On the Usefulness of Final Ends', in *Necessity, Volition, and Love*, pp. 82–94; and the ditch diggers described by David Wiggins, 'Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life', in *Needs, Values, Truth, Second Edition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 87–137, at pp. 132–4.

¹⁷ This is not to say that agent-relative importance is always explained by appeal to something of corresponding agent-neutral importance.

be *exposed* to some agent-neutrally important *adversity*, whether or not one has experienced it, or one might *have* some agent-neutrally important *trait* or *capacity*, whether or not one has manifested or exercised it. In all of these cases, the suggestion goes, the agent-relative importance of the thing for oneself resonates with its agent-neutral importance for anyone.

We have seen, then, several instances of the general phenomenon of:

Resonance: one has reason to respond to *X* in a way that is similar to the way that one has reason to respond to its counterpart in another dimension of importance, but that reflects the distinctive importance of the dimension to which *X* belongs.¹⁸

A deeper explanation of resonance is elusive. One might suggest that if natural emotions were not to resonate with moral emotions, or if our responses to things with which we have a personal history were not to resonate with our responses to those things whether or not we have such a history, then our normative outlook would be, in a certain way, incoherent. We would thank those who deliberately sought to destroy what we most cherished, while resenting those who came to our aid. We would attach great meaning to our history of pursuing aims that we otherwise saw as trivial, while attaching no meaning to our history of pursuing aims that we otherwise saw as important. However, I wonder whether appealing to ‘coherence’ in this way gives us any deeper explanation. Our sense that such a normative outlook would be ‘in a certain way incoherent’ may simply be our expectation of resonance under another description.

3. Resonance and Relationships

In any event, our aim is not to explain why there is resonance, but to appeal to it to explain the List: why we have reasons for partiality in some relationships, but not in others. To do this, we first need a clearer view of what ‘relationships’—that is, relationships of the sort with which the debate about partiality is concerned—are.

¹⁸ A further instance of resonance may be the relation, explored by Thomas Hurka, *Virtue, Vice, and Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), between virtues and ‘base-level’ goods, such as pleasure, knowledge, and achievement. Although virtues are no less ‘intrinsic values’ than base-level goods, Hurka suggests, they stand in a systematic relation to base-level goods: roughly, virtues consist in ‘loving’ base-level goods for themselves. (Somewhat more precisely, virtues are defined recursively as love of what is intrinsically valuable (including base-level goods and virtues) for itself and hatred of what is intrinsically disvaluable (including base-level evils and virtues) for itself.)

3.1. *Shared Histories of Encounter*

Consider first *histories of encounter*. One person has an *encounter* with another person when the actions, attitudes, or reasons of one affect, or are about, the other. *Histories of encounter* are temporally extended patterns of encounter involving the same people. Such histories of encounter include, for example, the relationships between spouses, friends, and siblings.

The suggestion, then, is that the proper responses to a *history of encounter* should resonate with the proper responses to the *discrete encounters* of which it is composed. Take friendship. I share a friendship with someone when we share a history of encounters of certain kinds: aiding one another, confiding in one another, pursuing common interests, and so on. A discrete encounter of one of these kinds might occur outside the context of a friendship. For example, a stranger might aid me, intentionally, disinterestedly, and respecting my autonomy. This encounter would give me reason for gratitude, consisting in reciprocating, or in expressing my thanks, in some way proportional to the help received, with like disinterest and respect. Friendship is a history of, *inter alia*, encounters of aid. And friendship calls for, *inter alia*, feelings and actions that might naturally be seen as resonant with, *inter alia*, the gratitude that discrete encounters of aid call for.¹⁹

The natural worry is that this is really a reductionist explanation, by deduction, from a normative principle that is not itself a partiality principle. ‘Friendship is just a series of encounters of mutual aid, and the partiality of friends is just the discharge of the sum of the debts of gratitude thereby incurred. In other words, the partiality principle:

one has reason for friendship toward one’s friends,

is derived, by deduction, from the normative principle:

one has reason for gratitude toward people who have helped one,

and the fact that

one’s friends are people who have helped one many times, and friendship is gratitude many times over.’

¹⁹ I have focused on encounters of aid, but friendship is, of course, also constituted by encounters of other kinds, such as sharing confidences and pursuing joint interests. Discrete episodes of sharing confidences elicit trust, albeit limited. Discrete episodes of pursuing a joint interest elicit cooperation, albeit instrumental. According to resonance, therefore, friendship should provide reason for more open-ended trust and non-instrumental cooperation.



This is false to the phenomenon, I think, in ways that at first may seem overly subtle, but on reflection appear fundamental. Imagine a lone traveller, of a bygone age, making his way west. Along the way, he helps and is helped by the people dwelling in the places he passes through, creating and incurring various debts. Contrast him with a different traveller who helps and is helped in the same ways, but by one and the same companion throughout. The companioned traveller has reason for responses that are not simply the sum of the responses for which the companionless traveller has reason, but just re-focused, as it were, on a single person. The companionless traveller has accumulated a series of debts that he might repay and then move on. But things are not like that for the companioned traveller. He has reason for a concern for his friend's interests that is open-ended: that keeps no ledger and that asks only that like concern be reciprocated. And he has reason not to move on, but instead to sustain his friendship going forward. Their history together roots an expansive loyalty, in a way in which no string of encounters with a changing cast could. Such is the distinctive kind of importance that only a shared history with another person can have.

Our present proposal, generalizing a bit, is:

Resonance of histories of encounter: one has reason to respond to a *history* of encounter in a way that is similar to the way that one has reason to respond to the *discrete* encounters of which it is composed, but that reflects the distinctive importance of a history shared with another person.²⁰

It is hard to say, in general terms, what 'reflecting the distinctive importance of a shared history' is, because in any particular case it will depend on the responses called for by the particular discrete encounters of which the particular shared history is composed. In some cases, as we have seen, it takes the form of love or loyalty, because the relevant discrete encounters call for resonant responses, such as gratitude, trust, and cooperation. However, in other cases, as we shall see, reflecting the distinctive importance of a shared history cannot

²⁰ 'Suppose that someone benefits me time and again, without any reciprocation', one might worry. 'If these discrete encounters give me debts of gratitude, then why should not the shared history of these encounters give me reason for friendship, or something like it, toward this benefactor?' If one is troubled by the suggestion that a friendship might be imposed on one unilaterally in this way, it is probably because one imagines that these discrete benefactions are either invasive or servile—as they most probably would be. But if they are invasive or servile, then they do not give one reason for gratitude. So resonance would not imply that a history of such encounters gives one reason for friendship, or something like it. Things might be different, say, when one castaway nurses another back to health after being shipwrecked on a desert isle. But in this case it does not seem so troubling that this shared history gives the beneficiary reason for partiality.



take this form, because it resonates with discrete encounters that call for no responses at all, or for responses of rejection.²¹

3.2. *Common Personal Histories and Situations*

Another important class of relationships is constituted by personal histories or situations of the kind discussed in Section 2: for example, the personal history of pursuing an aim, or enduring some trial. I share a *personal history or situation* with someone just when she and I each have a personal history or situation of the same kind, involving the same thing. We may share this personal history or situation even if we have never had any encounter. For example, I may have a personal history of engaging with a particular culture, having been initiated into its traditions and lived its way of life. This personal history gives me reason to continue engaging with, and seeking to preserve, the culture. By facilitation, I may already have reason to care whether others have a personal history of the same kind. It will be easier for me to engage with, and preserve, the culture if others do as well. But the fact that we share this history, it is ordinarily thought, provides us with reason for a partiality that goes beyond this. It gives me reason for a kind of solidarity with them. If I were to betray the culture, for example, I would have reason to feel not only that I had betrayed it, but also that I had betrayed them.

Resonance of common personal history or situation: one has reason to respond to a *common personal history* with, or *situation* involving, a thing in a way that is similar to the way one has reason to respond to the *personal history or situation* itself, but that reflects the distinctive importance of sharing a personal history or situation with another person.

As before, what ‘reflecting the distinctive importance of sharing a personal history or situation with another person’ comes to in any particular case depends on the personal history or situation in question. In some cases, as we have seen, it takes the form of a *solidarity* that is specially focused on the thing with which one has that history or situation. If what one shares is a history of engagement with an institution, for example, then the solidarity is focused on the survival and functioning of the institution. For example, one owes it to the others to close ranks in defence of the institution, but not necessarily to see to it that their lives go well in other ways. If the personal relation is of

²¹ Strictly speaking, it resonates with the responses, not the encounters. But putting it this way makes the sentence almost unparseable.

experiencing, or being exposed to, adversity—to take an example that will be important for what follows—then the solidarity is tied to efforts to recognize, alleviate, or overcome the effects of that particular adversity. As we shall now see, however, in other cases, reflecting the distinctive importance of a common personal history or situation cannot take this form, because it must resonate with a personal history or situation that calls either for no responses at all, or for responses of rejection.

4. Relationships that do not Provide Reasons for Partiality

Our question, again, is whether resonance explains why there is reason for certain kinds of partiality, but not for others. So far we have seen how it might explain why certain partiality principles are *on* the List. Now we need to ask whether resonance can explain why certain other (possible) partiality principles are *off* the List.

4.1. *Trivial Relationships*

The easiest cases are the countless trivial interpersonal relationships that no one imagines provide reasons for partiality. The fact that someone always gets off the train at the station where I get on, or that I have a kidney of the same weight as his, do not provide reasons for partiality. Resonance explains this straightforwardly. Neither the discrete encounter of boarding a train that another is leaving, nor the personal situation of having a kidney of a specific weight, matters. One has no reason to respond to this encounter, or to this personal situation, in any particular way. Thus, according to resonance, one has no reason to respond in any particular way to the corresponding history of encounter, or common personal situation. There is, so to speak, nothing for partiality to resonate with.²²

²² Keller, 'Making Nonsense of Loyalty to Country', asks why loyalty to a coffee mug, or to a group of people whose names start with 'P', involves a kind of error. Because, he answers, it involves mistaking 'the object of loyalty to be something with which you could share a relationship of mutual recognition and care'. The same error, he provocatively suggests, is involved in loyalty to country. In contrast, I think that one can have reason for partiality to persons (such as an autistic child) or things (such as one's life's work) with whom or which one cannot share a relationship of mutual recognition and care. So I prefer the explanation in the text: the encounters one has with one's coffee mug, and the situation one shares with other people whose names start with 'P', are trivial.

4.2. *Externally and Internally Negative Relationships*

The same cannot be said of what we might call *negative* relationships, however. Consider, first, *externally* negative relationships, which are either (i) shared histories of encounter in which relatives jointly wrong some non-relative, or unjustifiably disrespect or harm some thing of value, or (ii) common personal histories in which relatives have individually wronged some non-relative, or unjustifiably disrespected or harmed something of value. Examples are the relationships between members of the same prison gang, secret police, fascist party, military *junta*, terrorist cell, concentration-camp detail, polluting industrial concern, or iconoclastic cult (these last two being examples of harming things, rather than necessarily wronging people). Consider, second, *internally* negative relationships, which are composed of discrete encounters in which one relative wrongs the other. Examples are the relationships between master and slave, pimp and prostitute, abusive husband and abused wife, exploitative boss and exploited worker, or enemy and enemy. One surely has reason to respond to the discrete encounters and personal histories that constitute these relationships. So, according to resonance, one should have reason to respond to the relationships themselves. Yet this may seem like precisely the result that we sought to avoid: that these relationships do provide reasons.

While resonance may imply that *externally* negative relationships provide reasons, however, these are not reasons for *partiality*. One does not have reason to respond to discrete encounters, or a personal history, of wronging others, or harming something of value, by continuing to do so. Instead, one has reason to feel guilt, to repair the damage, and so on. According to resonance, one has reason to respond to an externally negative relationship with responses that are similar to these, but that reflect the distinctive importance of a shared history with another person. Perhaps this means seeing to it that one's relatives make amends. Or perhaps it means distancing oneself from them, just as one might have reason to distance oneself from one's own past history of wrongdoing. Either way, it means not sustaining, but rather undoing, these relationships (at least *as* externally negative relationships). Of course, a *particular* relationship may belong to more than one *type* of relationship, or may share constituents with another particular that belongs to a different type. Thus two people who share an externally negative relationship may also share a friendship, or some other kind of camaraderie or collegiality. In such cases, they would have conflicting reasons arising from both types of relationship.

There is a more basic problem with the idea that *internally* negative relationships might provide reason for partiality. It seems to offend against a

generalization of the principle of ought implies can: that it be possible, at least in principle, for every participant in a relationship to respond to the reasons that that relationship gives them. This is not possible when the relationship is internally negative and the putative reasons are reasons of partiality. If the *wrongdoer* responds to his (putative) reason of partiality to *care* about his relative, then he *ends* the internally negative relationship, thereby failing to respond to his (putative) reason of partiality to *sustain* that relationship.

The worry about internally negative relationships, I take it, is not that they provide reason for partiality, but instead that they provide reason for, as it were, partiality's negative image. The worry is that the master–slave relationship, say, gives slave reason to submit to master, and master to exploit slave. As Katja Vogt puts it: 'Have we just as much reason to harm our enemies as we have to help our friends?'²³

A discrete encounter of wrongdoing, again, gives the wrongdoer reason to feel guilt, to make reparations, and to seek forgiveness. It gives the wronged victim reason to feel resentment, to seek reparations, and to demand apology. It may also give the victim reason for other hostile or distancing responses, such as ceasing to wish the wrongdoer well, or refusing to trust and cooperate with him. I assume, however, that it does not give the victim reason for retribution, or reason of any other kind to *harm* the wrongdoer. Therefore, whatever resonance implies, it is not that an internally negative relationship gives the wrongdoer reason to *continue* wronging the victim, or the victim either reason to *submit* to it, or, alternatively, reason to *seek vengeance*. If anything, resonance implies the opposite: that the wrongdoer has reason to make amends, and that the victim has reason to stand up for herself, but not to pursue retribution. For wrongdoer and victim to respond to these reasons just is for them to end the relationship.²⁴

I have been trying to dispel the worry that resonance implies that negative relationships provide reasons for certain objectionable responses. In doing so, I have made some assumptions about the responses called for by the discrete

²³ 'Haben wir ebenso viel Grund, dem Feind zu schaden, wie wir Grund haben, dem Freund zu helfen?' 'Freundschaft, Unparteilichkeit und Feindschaft', p. 525. Vogt reminds us that this view was commonplace in antiquity, referring, in particular, to the exchange between Socrates and Polemarchus in *Republic*, Book I. I am also indebted to Hans Sluga, who put the same question to me, referring to the same text, after a talk some years ago.

²⁴ Some relationships may involve conflict or opposition, but no wrongdoing. Consider competitors in sports or adversaries at law (such as an assistant DA and public defender who confront one another regularly in court), who have long played by the rules of a permissible contest. Discrete encounters of this kind provide no reason for reparation or resentment. Perhaps they are really instances of an abstract form of collaboration, in which cooperation at one level makes possible competition at another. Resonance might therefore imply that a shared history of such encounters provides reason for respect and fair dealing. But this consequence does not seem objectionable.

encounters, or personal histories, of which these negative relationships are composed. All that matters for the dialectic is that those who find these responses objectionable also find these assumptions plausible. No doubt, other assumptions can be made. Imagine a warrior code according to which a raid on a neighbouring tribe gives the raiders no reason to make amends, but gives their neighbours reason to take revenge. When applied to such a code, resonance might well imply that enmity—the history of blood debts issued and collected—gives one reason to harm one’s enemy. But this is no objection to resonance. For no one who is troubled by the implication, namely that enmity gives one reason to harm one’s enemy, subscribes to such a code.²⁵

4.3. *Racism and Racial Partiality*

The challenge that we have been considering is often dramatized in the following way: unless we explain why partiality to members of the same race belongs off the List, we commit ourselves to racism.²⁶ As it stands, however, this a category mistake. Racism is, in one way or another, organized around the belief that one race is superior to others.²⁷ The belief that one race is

²⁵ Among extant treatments of the subject, the one closest to the view discussed here is Thomas Hurka, ‘The Justification of National Partiality’, in Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan, *The Morality of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 139–57; at p. 152:

Some activities and states of people, most notably their doing good or suffering evil, call for a positive, caring, or associative response. Others, such as their doing evil, call for a negative or dissociative response. Partiality between people is appropriate when they have shared history of doing good, either reciprocally or to others, partiality between them in the present is a way of honouring that good fact about their past. (This is why partiality among former SS colleagues is troubling; it seems to honour a past that properly calls for dishonour.)

See also Thomas Hurka, *Virtue, Vice, and Value*, pp. 200–4. The suggestion that the relevant shared histories are either of ‘suffering evil’ together, or of ‘doing good’ together, however, is too restrictive. For example, parents need not do good together, or suffer evil together, with their young children.

²⁶ Compare Cottingham, ‘Partiality, Favouritism, and Morality’; Andrew Oldenquist, ‘Loyalties’, *Journal of Philosophy* 79 (1982), pp. 173–93, at pp. 176–7; Wellman, ‘Relational Facts’; and Zangwill, ‘Against Analytic Moral Functionalism’. Kwame Anthony Appiah, ‘Racisms’, in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1990) also tends to confuse racism (at least of the ‘intrinsic’ form) with the belief that there is reason for partiality to members of the same race, as does Paul Gombert, ‘Patriotism is Like Racism’, *Ethics* 101 (1990), pp. 144–50.

Some of the discussion of this section applies similarly to other forms of group chauvinism, such as sexism.

²⁷ A standard dictionary definition of ‘racism’, for example, is: ‘a doctrine or teaching, without scientific support, that claims to find racial differences in character, intelligence, etc., that asserts the superiority of one race over another or others’. *Webster’s New World Dictionary, Third College Edition* (New York: Webster’s, 1988), s.v. ‘racism’. No doubt this is too narrow a definition, since racism is not limited to explicit doctrines or teachings. As the phrase ‘in one way or another, organized around the belief’ is meant to acknowledge, racist attitudes and practices are often far less directly connected to

superior neither implies, nor is implied by, the belief that there is reason for partiality to members of one's race. When agent and beneficiary belong to the allegedly superior race, it may be hard to see the practical difference between these beliefs. But the difference is evident in other contexts. If there is reason for partiality to members of one's race, then members of the allegedly inferior race do *not* have reason for partiality to members of the allegedly superior race, but they *do* have reason for partiality to one another. According to the racist, by contrast, members of the inferior race *do* have reason for deference, submission, etc. to members of the superior race, but they do *not* have reason to do anything for one another. (For example, in so far as the antebellum slave owner thought that there was a rationale for slavery, and did not turn a deaf ear to questions of justification, he did not believe that this rationale gave slaves reason to assist one another in resisting him. Instead, he thought that slaves ought to recognize their inferiority in the eyes of God or the order of Nature, and acquiesce in what, given that inferiority, was a justified social arrangement.) Since the claim that there is reason for partiality to members of one's race is not racism, to claim that there is reason for partiality to relatives of certain kinds is not to incur some special burden to explain why racism is false. At any rate, the burden is easily discharged. No race is superior to others.

The challenge must be restated. Even if *racists* do not believe that there is reason for partiality to members of one's race, *someone* might believe this. Does resonance vindicate this belief? Since I share a race with many people whom I have never encountered, relationships of shared race are not histories of encounter. However, sharing a race might consist in sharing a personal history or situation. But *which* personal history or situation? I take it that members of the same race share no biologically interesting essence. And I take it that the manifest ethnic and cultural diversity within familiar racial classifications shows that members of the same race do not share a personal history with some common ethnic or cultural heritage. Two possibilities seem to remain. On the *somatic basis* view, the personal history or situation is that of having (or, following the 'one-drop rule', being the genetic descendant of people who

the belief in racial superiority: a fact that helps to explain their resilience. For discussion, see Tommie Shelby, 'Ideology, Racism, and Critical Social Theory', *The Philosophical Forum* 34 (2003), pp. 153–88. The claim is only that some connection to such a belief is constitutive. For criticism of even this weaker claim, see the work of Jorge Garcia—his 'Racism and Racial Discourse', *The Philosophical Forum* 32 (2001), pp. 125–45, gives a succinct summary—and Josh Glasgow, 'Racism as Disrespect' (unpublished). For a response to Garcia, to which I am sympathetic, see Tommie Shelby, 'Is Racism in the "Heart"?' *Journal of Social Philosophy* 33 (2002), pp. 411–20. At any rate, even on Garcia's and Glasgow's alternative conceptions, racism is not distinguished by a belief that everyone has reasons to be partial to members of his or her own race. So their criticism does not affect the main point that I am making here.

had) the superficial, physiognomic traits by which members of a given race are classified. On the *social consequence* view, the personal history or situation is that of experiencing, or at least of being exposed to,²⁸ the social consequences of that racial classification.

Having the somatic basis associated with a certain racial classification is, in itself, of no significance. Like having attached earlobes, or a widow's peak, it provides no distinctive reasons. So, according to resonance, sharing this personal situation with another provides no distinctive reasons. The social consequences of racial classification, by contrast, are far from trivial. Since different racial classifications have different social consequences, members of different races have different kinds of personal histories and situations. American blacks, for example, share a personal experience of, or exposure to, a specific kind of adversity, namely, that of being mistreated because of their racial classification.²⁹ In general, a personal history of adversity gives one reason to honour what the adversity destroyed and to repair what it harmed. To the extent that some part of oneself was harmed, then one's efforts at repair will be focused, to that extent, on oneself. According to resonance, therefore, a common history of adversity provides reasons to work with, or minister to, other people who faced adversity of the same kind, in order to honour, repair, and preserve the things at which it struck, including aspects of those other people themselves. This does not seem an implausible conclusion, at least if the widespread acceptance of organizations such as the NAACP and of the sense of solidarity that they embody is any guide.

Why, then, does the relationship of shared *whiteness* not likewise give whites reason to minister specially to the needs of other whites? Why should we not welcome equally an NAAWP? Because whites do not share, as whites, a personal experience of, or exposure to, mistreatment on the basis of their classification as whites. If they share a personal history or situation as whites, it is that of fostering, acquiescing in, or at very least benefiting from, the practice of mistreating blacks (and others) on the basis of their racial classification. While such a personal history or situation might provide some reasons, they would be reasons to repudiate benefits received and to ameliorate harm done. So the common personal history or situation of whites would not provide reasons for the same sort of responses as the common personal history or situation of blacks.³⁰

²⁸ As noted earlier, one can be exposed to adverse social consequences without yet having experienced them.

²⁹ This understanding of the relevant relationship is heavily indebted to Tommie Shelby, *We Who Are Dark: Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

³⁰ Compare Hurka, 'The Justification of National Partiality', p. 152. Of course, racist organizations often appeal to the rhetoric of adversity (e.g. 'Too long have whites sat back while their rights have

One might object that this explanation is circular. ‘How have blacks been mistreated? By being excluded from the partiality that whites show other whites. But to call this “mistreatment” is already to assume that whites have no reason for partiality to other whites. And this is precisely what you set out to explain.’ The reply is that blacks have been mistreated in ways (e.g. slavery, disenfranchisement, their enduring effects) that went, and go, far beyond merely being excluded from favours that whites may have done one another. Moreover, this mistreatment was born of, and still is largely sustained by, the doctrine, objectionable in itself, that blacks are inferior.

‘But indulge in a fantasy that unburdens us of our past,’ the objector will counter.

Those who would be classified as white have lived together, with peace and justice, as political and economic equals, with those would be classified as blacks. Suppose that, in this world, whites were partial to other whites. To claim that whites had no reason for this partiality, you would have to claim that they were mistreating blacks. But in order to call it mistreatment, you would have already to have assumed that they have no reason for this partiality.

The reply here is that we do not need to claim that whites would be mistreating blacks in order to explain why whites would not have reason for such partiality. Once we strip away the social consequences that our collective past attaches to whiteness, shared whiteness is just a shared somatic basis, which, as we saw earlier, provides no reasons.

5. Implications

I end with a few words about what this account implies about the broader debate about partiality.

5.1. *Partiality in Other Relationships*

Thus far, I have tested the account by considering relationships that relatively uncontroversially belong on the List, or off it. One hopes, however, that once calibrated against less controversial cases, the account might then provide guidance about more controversial ones. Among these more controversial

been taken from them’). Perhaps this betrays some dim recognition of the justificatory power of a common history of adversity.

relationships, co-citizenship has attracted perhaps the most interest recently, no doubt because of the profound differences in the actual treatment of co-citizens and non-citizens. In the present framework, co-citizenship might be understood as a common personal history of involvement with the institutions of the state. The responses for which this common personal history gives reason should resonate with the responses for which the personal histories give reason. And these responses should resonate, in turn, with the responses for which the institutions provide reason, apart from any history. It would take another chapter to explore what this would imply in any detail. In broad outline, though, it would seem to suggest that the responses that co-citizenship calls for will depend on an independent appraisal of the value or disvalue, justice or injustice, of the state in question—and, indeed, of states in general.

5.2. *Other Objections to Non-reductionism*

I have aimed to defend non-reductionism against only one objection: that it cannot explain the List. While other objections are possible, this defence suggests that these objections are not available to certain philosophers, namely, those who accept that there are reasons for reactive emotions, or reasons to respond to personal histories or situations. There is something unstable, or at least unmotivated, about accepting that discrete encounters can give us reasons for reactive emotions while denying that the histories that those encounters compose can give us reason for partiality, or in accepting that personal histories or situations can give us reason while denying that sharing them can. To accept that there are reasons for resentment, guilt, and gratitude, or that personal histories or situations can have agent-relative importance, is to accept that there are agent-relative reasons. And to accept that there are reasons for the reactive emotions, which are keyed to reasons for the non-reactive emotions, or to accept that there are reasons to respond to personal histories and situations, which are informed by the agent-neutral importance of the aims, institutions, or sufferings that they involve, is to accept the phenomenon of resonance. Provided there is intuitive support for the claim that relationships of these kinds provide reason for partiality, therefore, it is obscure what theoretical basis for denying it might remain.

5.3. *Partiality and Other Norms*

Finally, this account may shed some light on the troubled relationship between partiality and other norms. Most important among these are the norms of

impartial morality: what we owe to others whether or not we share any special relationship with them. But partiality can also come into competition with other norms, which do not reflect what we owe anyone, but instead govern how we are to relate to things of impersonal value, such as cultural achievements and the natural environment. Proper responses to shared histories of encounter, I have suggested, resonate with proper responses to discrete encounters. And the proper responses to discrete encounters are largely the province of impartial morality. Similarly, proper responses to common personal histories and situations resonate with proper responses to personal histories and situations. And proper responses to personal histories and situations are informed by other norms: by the importance, moral or otherwise, of the aims, institutions, experiences, etc. that they involve. This does not mean that reasons for partiality cannot conflict, in particular cases, with other norms. But it does mean that partiality does not represent an outlook somehow divorced from, or incompatible with, them.³¹ On the contrary, it draws its content from other norms.

A consequence of this, which I end by noting, is to raise the stakes of a much-discussed complaint: that certain conceptions of impartial morality, such as consequentialism, are overly demanding, because they would morally prohibit responding to reasons of partiality, such as those of friendship.³² If consequentialism is true, then departures from maximizing the agent-neutral good are instances of wrongdoing. So, if consequentialism is true, the discrete encounters of which friendship is composed are, in all but rare cases, instances of wrongdoing. So, if consequentialism is true, friendship is an externally negative relationship, which provides no reason for partiality. So, if consequentialism is true, there *are no* reasons of friendship in the first place. However, the point cuts both ways. If there *are* reasons of friendship, then it follows immediately that consequentialism is false.

³¹ Contrast Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Is Patriotism a Virtue?', *Lindley Lecture* (University of Kansas, 1984).

³² Arguably, this complaint cannot be brought against indirect forms of consequentialism, such as those explored by Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pt 1; and Peter Railton, 'Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 13 (1984), pp. 134–71. If so, then the discussion that follows does not apply to such forms of consequentialism.