

FOREWORD TO CONSIDERATION OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

The importance of love and friendship does not have to be shown at length. Everything a man does, he does out of some kind of love; hence, as the loves of men differ, so do their lives. And some say that love is the beginning of the whole universe.

Further, many think that some form of love is the best thing in life. Many people think that the love between man and women is the best thing in human life while any saint will tell you that the love of God is the best.

Thus love seems to be the source of all our actions and, perhaps, an end of all of them.

Friendship seems to be the highest form of love, and no man would choose to live without any friends.

Let these things suffice for the present as regards the importance of our matter.

But should we speak of love or friendship first?

It seems of love first because love is more general than friendship. Friendship is love between persons, but there can also be some kind of love of things that are not persons, such as the love of candy or the love of wealth or the love of music.

And even love of another person is not always friendship. For friendship requires that the person we love, love us in return. And this often does not happen.

Moreover, love is in the definition of friendship. So how can we understand friendship if we do not first understand love?

Since it is necessary to understand the general before the particular, a consideration of human love should begin with a general consideration of it. Now the most universal, complete, and well-ordered consideration of human

love with the brevity of wisdom is found in three questions (containing fourteen articles) of the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas. Hence, we should begin with a study of these three questions.

In the first of these questions, Thomas considers the nature of love in general and the two most general distinctions of the kinds of love.

In the second, he considers the causes of love; and in the third, the effects of love.

From the first of these questions to which the second and third are proportional, we can see that the consideration is most universal. We can also see from this somewhat the completeness of the treatise since he looks at love in itself and before and after it.

But there is a difficulty in speaking about love. How should we speak of it?

It seems that we should speak of love in the way that love itself speaks. How can we speak well of love, if we have no experience of it? And does not the lover speak of love from the experience which he has of it? And surely the experience of love is necessary for speaking well of love.

But often true love prefers to be silent or show its love by deeds rather than words. Thus the Poet:

O, learn to read what silent love hath writ.¹

If love is silent, how can we speak of love as the lover speaks? In the first scene of *King Lear*,² Lear, about to divide his kingdom among his three daughters, asks them how much they love him. The first two daughters (Regan and Goneril) protest in words how much they love their father Lear (but their deeds later in the play show that they do not). But Cordelia, who truly loves him, makes this aside while Regan speaks:

What shall Cordelia speak? Love and be silent.

¹ Shakespeare, *Sonnet 23*, line 13

² Act I, Sc. 1

When Goneril professes her love in fulsome words and is granted rich lands. Cordelia in another aside:

Then, poor Cordelia!
And yet no so, since I am sure my love's
More richer than my tongue.

And finally Cordelia says to Lear himself:

Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth.

Antigone, in the play of that name, says to her sister (who professes love for their fallen brother, but) who will not help her bury their brother against the edict of Creon:

I cannot love a friend whose love is words.³

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* ⁴, Julia leaves silently when Proteus, her betrothed, bids her farewell:

Julia, farewell [Exit Julia]
What! gone without a word?
Ay. so true love should do; it cannot speak;
For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it.

When Troilus receives a letter from Cressida, whom he knows by her deeds to be unfaithful, he says:

Words, words, mere words, no matter from the heart;
Th'effect doth operate another way. [He tears the letter]
Go wind, to wind! There turn and change together.
My love with words and errors still she feeds,
But edifies another with her deeds.⁵

Thus, although an experience of love is surely necessary for understanding love (indeed all our knowledge seems to begin from some experience), yet the way we speak about love in order to understand it does not seem to be the way that love itself speaks. For true love shows itself by deeds more than by words. It is silent. True love does not speak.

³ line 543

⁴ Act II, Sc. 2

⁵ Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, Act V, Sc. 3

But perhaps someone will object saying that lovers do sometimes speak of their love. But to whom do they speak fully of their love? It seems to the one whom they love. But why do we express our love in words to those whom we love? Not in order to understand our love. But most of all so that the one we love will express in turn, their love for us, so that the one we love will be pressed to make a return of our love. This and perhaps also to delight the one whom we love, if they delight in our love. But most of all, it seems in order that there might be a mutual declaration of love. Indeed if you truly love someone, you naturally want them to love you in return.

Hence, if we wish to understand love, we cannot speak about it in the way that love itself speaks. For true love is either silent or speaks to provoke a mutual declaration of love, not to understand love.

Perhaps we should speak about love in the way the philosopher speaks. The philosopher tries to understand all things in some way, and especially the most important things, and love is surely among the most important things.

But there seems to be too great a distance between the philosopher and the lover. The philosopher seeks to be wise and there seems to be a great distance between love and wisdom in mankind. Thus Cressida says:

to be wise and love
Exceeds man's might. That dwells with gods above.⁶

The lover is often described as foolish, the opposite of wise. Listen to the conversation between the two gentlemen of Verona where Valentine speaks with his friend Proteus who is in love with Julia:

Valentine: To be in love, where scorn is bought with groans
 Coy looks with heart-sore sighs; one fading moment's mirth
 with twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights:
 If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain;
 If lost, why then a grievous labor won;
 However, but a folly bought with wit,
 Or else a wit by folly vanquished!

Proteus: So, by your circumstance, you call me fool.

Valentine: So, by your circumstance, I fear you'll prove.

Proteus: 'Tis love you cavil at; I am not Love.

Valentine: Love is your master, for he masters you,
 And he that is so yoked by a fool,

⁶ Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, Act III, Sc. 2

Methinks should not be chronicled for wise.

Proteus: Yet writers say, as in the sweetest bud
The eating canker dwells, so eating love
Inhabits in the finest wits of all.

Valentine: And writers say, as the most forward bud
Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,
Even so by love the young and tender wit
Is turned to folly, blasting in the bud
Losing his verdure even in the prime,
And all the fair effects of future hopes.
But wherefore waste I time to counsel thee
That art a votary to fond desire.⁷

Wisdom is the perfection of reason, and reason and love do not seem to go together. As Bottom says:

reason and love keep little company together now-a-days;
the more the pity that some honest neighbours will not make them friends⁸

Indeed, love seems to escape the grasp of reason that seeks to know why and give reasons for things. It is said in *Cymbeline*:

I know not why
I love this youth; and I have heard you say,
Love's reason's without reason.⁹

The last line reminds one of Pascal's famous saying that the heart has reasons that the reason does not know. Indeed, men often do not love those whom they have the most reason to love. And likewise, they love or continue to love those whom they have reason not to love. Thus it is said of Mariana's continuous love of Angelo:

This forenamed maid hath yet in her the continuance of her first affection: his unjust unkindness, that in all reason should have quenched her love, hath, like an impediment in the current, made it more violent and unruly.¹⁰

Love seems to carry people below or beyond reason, and therefore how can reason (or the philosopher who seeks the perfection of reason) speak well about love. The philosopher teaches us to live by reason; and, hence, in the

⁷ Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act I, Sc. 1

⁸ Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III, Sc. 1

⁹ Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, Act IV, Sc. 2

¹⁰ Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, Act III, Sc. 1

matter of love, what does he have to say, if men are not ruled by reason in love.

But whom then shall we listen to about love? Between the lover and the philosopher comes the poet. And it is to the poet rather than to the philosopher that we are sometimes referred in the matter of love. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Lucentio is studying philosophy (the part concerned with human life), but Tranio refers him to a poet in the matter of love. Here is a bit of their conversation:

Lucentio: And therefore, Tranio, for the time I study,
Virtue and that part of philosophy
Will I apply that treats of happiness
By virtue especially to be achiev'd...

Tranio: *Me pardonato*, gentle master mine:
I am in all affected as yourself,
Glad that you thus continue your resolve
To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy.
Only, good master, while we do admire
This virtue and this moral discipline,
Let's be no stoics nor no stocks, I pray;
Or so devote to Aristotle's checks
As Ovid be an outcast quite abjur'd.¹¹

Ovid is, of course, known as the poet of love. There is indeed a connection between the poet and the lover. Touchstone's poetry is wasted on the country wench Audrey he courts. And he touches upon the connection of the lover with poetry in speaking to her about this:

Touchstone: I would the gods had made thee poetical.

Audrey: I do not know what poetical is. Is it honest
in deed and word? Is it a true thing?

Touchstone: No, truly, for the truest poetry is the most
feigning, and lovers are given to poetry. And
what they swear in poetry may be said, as
lovers they do feign.¹²

We can single out the line here "lovers are given to poetry." If the lover speaks, he is most apt to adopt a way of speaking proper to the poet. The figurative, and especially the metaphoric, way of speaking is appropriate to the poet (for example *honey* or *sweetheart*)

¹¹ Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act I, Sc. 1

¹² Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act III, Sc. 3

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, love is seen to play a crucial role in the writing of the poet:

And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
 Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony.
 Never durst poet touch a pen to write
 Until his ink were temper'd with Love's sighs;
 O! then his lines would ravish savage ears,
 And plant in tyrants mild humility.¹³

The connection between the lover and the poet is seen in the imagination, a faculty which also characterizes the madman. This is why they all seem to be different from the man of reason:

Loves and madmen have such seething brains,
 Such shaping fantasies that apprehend
 More than cool reason ever comprehends.
 The lunatic, the lover and the poet
 Are of imagination all compact.¹⁴

Indeed we found The Poet most useful to quote on love in this Proemium. It is because of the connection of love with the poet that Plato has a discussion of love with poets in a *Symposium* in honor of the poet Agathon.

No one can understand love who does not understand love's own way of expressing itself and love's own way of speaking. But even though we must understand love's way of expressing itself and speaking, we cannot speak about this using love's own way of speaking, except to exemplify.

The experience of love (which is the lover's experience) is the beginning of thought about love. But one cannot go from that singular experience of love to the universal consideration of love by the philosopher. One must go through the poet's words in which the universal is singularized or the singular universalized. The lover is too particular and agitated, but the poet's way of speaking is more universal and more beautiful and more tranquil. In the very whirlwind of passion, he has a calmness as we see in Shakespeare and Homer. (See Hegel's remarks on the similes of Homer.) It is curious that Socrates hardly ever claims to know anything, but he does in the *Symposium* make such a claim about love. Is this Plato, the philosopher with some poetic gifts?

¹³ Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost* Act IV, Sc. 3

¹⁴ Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, Sc. 1

Perhaps the deepest reason why this is so can be seen from the reason why true love seeks to express itself. True love does not seek an understanding of itself. It is reason that seeks to understand true love. What is it that true love seeks at last? A real union with the beloved that cannot be untied and to be loved in return. True love expresses itself because it wants to be loved in return. Nothing moves us more to love another than the other's love for us. This is why true love expresses itself in deeds or suffering more than in words. For deeds are a more sure sign of love than words.

Love's own way of expressing itself and speaking is a necessary *manuductio* for understanding love. But when we define and divide love and state its causes and effects, we must use another way of speaking which is that of the philosopher.

We must not overlook the difference between *expressing* love and *explaining* it, between expressing it and *understanding* it. The poet expresses love, but the philosopher tries to explain and understand it.

The philosopher's way of speaking about love is good when our end is to understand and explain love and to the extent that love can be understood and explained.

The poet's way of speaking about love is good for three reasons. First, to express love. Second, to speak about love insofar as it goes beyond our ability to explain and understand it. Metaphors and similes are necessary to speak about things that we cannot fully understand or that are above or below our ability to understand. Third, the poet's way of speaking about love is useful for the philosopher's understanding of love insofar as the poet's "mirror" of love is a natural bridge between our singular experience of love and the philosopher's universal understanding of love; and insofar as the poet way of expressing love is itself an object for the philosopher to understand; and insofar as the poet's way of expressing love contains signs of the truth of what the philosopher says.

Since the end of a philosophic study of love is to explain and understand it so far as possible, the poet's way of speaking is good for such a course chiefly in the third way.

Music is perhaps the most perfect expression of love, but one does not play music when trying to say what love is or what is the cause or effect of love. In the *Symposium*, the first three speakers give a speech in praise of love. Praise has a special connection with love. No one can praise well who does not love well. But we do not want to praise love, but to understand it. We do not want to speak well of love in the sense of praising it, but in the sense of

speaking truly about it. The poets are placed next to Socrates in the order of speakers in the *Symposium*. A common beginning of Plato's dialogues is that Socrates discusses the topic with one who would seem to have, or be apt to have, some experience or knowledge of the topic discussed. In the *Symposium*, we have the poets and three who can give a speech of praise. Pope Paul VI, following Augustine, emphasized the connection between love and praise:

Love and praise call for each other, as St. Augustine again says: "amare et laudare: laudare in amore: amare in laudibus: to love and to praise, to praise in love, to love in praises" (*Enarr. in Ps. 147*).¹⁵

The beginning of a consideration of love for anyone is his or her experience of love. This is singular and we, following Thomas Aquinas, are going to consider human love in a most universal way. Because of this distance between our starting-point and the treatise of Thomas, it is perhaps well to go through the poet's representation of love. For this is more universal than our experience of love. (Hence, Aristotle said that poetry or fiction is more philosophical than history in being more about the universal while history is about the singular.) At the same time, it is closer to our experience of love. Thus, we can be led by the hand from our individual experience of love through the poet's words to the most universal consideration of Thomas.

APPENDIX ON THE THE SILENCE OF LOVE

Sonnet 102, lines 1-4:

My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming.
I love not less, though less the show appear:
That love is merchandiz'd whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act I, Sc. 2:

Julia: Why, he of all the rest hath never mov'd me.

¹⁵ Homily delivered during the Mass celebrated on Sunday, Sept. 24, 1972 in the Basilica of St. Peter for the Italian St. Cecilia Association

Lucetta: Yet he of all the rest, I think, best loves ye.
 Julia: His little speaking shows his love but small.
 Lucetta: Fire that's closest kept burns most of all.
 Julia: They do not love that do not show their love.
 Lucetta: O! they love least that let men know their love.
 Julia: I would I knew his mind.

The Merchant of Venice, Act I, Sc. 1, Bassanio:

In Belmont is a lady richly left,
 And she is fair, and fairer than that word,
 Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes
 I did receive fair speechless messages.

Much Ado About Nothing, Act. II, Sc. 1:

Silence is the perfectest herald of joy:
 I were but little happy, if I could say how much.

APPENDIX ON THE FOLLY OF LOVE

Romeo and Juliet, Act II, Sc. 2, Friar Laurence to Romeo:

Jesu Maria! What a deal of brine
 Hath wash'd thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline,
 How much salt water thrown away in waste
 To season love, that of it doth not taste.

Much Ado About Nothing, Act II, Sc. 3, Benedick:

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love: and such a man is Claudio.

The Merchant of Venice, Act II, Sc. 6, Jessica:

But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
 The pretty follies that themselves commit.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act I, Sc. 2:

Julia: Of all the fair resort of gentlemen
 That every day with parle encounter me,

In thy opinion which is worthiest love?...
What thinks't thou of gentle Proteus?

Lucetta: Then thus: of many good I think him best.

Julia: Your reason?

Lucetta: I have no reason but a woman's reason:
I think him so because I think him so.

Romeo and Juliet, Act II, Sc. 1, Mercutio:

Romeo! humors! madman! passion! lover!

Sonnet 148:

O me! what eyes hath Love put in my head,
Which have no correspondence with true sight;
Of, if they have, where is my judgment fled,
That censures falsely what they see aright?

If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote,
What means the world to say it is not so?
If it be not, then love doth well denote
Love's eye is not so true as all men's: no.

How can it? O, how can Love's eye be true,
that is so vex'd with watching and with tears?
No marvel then, though I mistake my view;
The sun itself sees not till heaven clears.

O cunning Love! with tears thou keep'st me blind,
Lest eyes well-seeing thy foul faults should find.

Sonnet 72:

O, lest the world should task you to recite
What merit lived in me, that you should love
After my death - dear love, forget me quite,
For you in me can nothing worthy prove;

Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceased I
Than niggard truth would willingly impart:

O, lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue,
My name be buried where my body is,
And live no more to shame nor me nor you.

For I am sham'd by that which I bring forth,

And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

APPENDIX ON LOVE AND THE POET

Love's Labour's Lost, Act I, Sc. 2, Armado:

Adieu, valour! rust, rapier! be still, drum! for your manager is in love; yea, he loveth. Assist me some extemporal god of rime, for I am sure I shall turn sonnet. Devise, wit; write, pen; for I for double volumes in folio.

Aristotle, *About the Poetic Art*, Chapter 17, 1455a 30-34:

Those in the passions are the most believable by nature - the one in a rage rages and the angry is violent most truly. Hence the poetic art belongs either to one well endowed by nature or mad - the former are easy to mould and the latter, outside themselves.

APPENDIX ON MUSIC AND LOVE

Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, first line:

If music be the food of love, play on.

Shakespeare, *Antony & Cleopatra*, Act II, Sc. 5, lines 1-2, Cleopatra:

Give me some music: music, moody food
Of us that trade in love.

S. Kierkegaard, from *Either/Or*:

The experts...all continue to reiterate that Mozart's Don Juan is the crown of all operas, but without explaining what they mean by that, although they all say it in a manner which clearly demonstrates that by this statement they intend to say something more than Don Juan is the best opera, that there is a qualitative difference between it and all other operas, which cannot well be sought in anything other than in the absolute relationship between idea, form, subject and medium.

The happy characteristic that belongs to every classic, that which makes it classic and immortal, is the absolute harmony of the two forces, form and content. this concord is so absolute that a later reflective age will scarcely be able to separate, even for thought, the two constituent elements here so

intimately united, without running the risk of entertaining or provoking a misunderstanding. Thus when we say that it was Homer's good fortune that he had the most remarkable epic subject conceivable, we may forget that we always see this epic material through Homer's eyes, and that it seems to us the most perfect subject, is clear to us only in and through the transubstantiation which we owe to Homer. But if, on the other hand, we stress Homer's poetic energy in interpreting the material, we easily run the risk of forgetting that the poem would never have become the thing it is, if the thought with which Homer has imbued it were not its own thought, if the form were not precisely the form that belongs to it.

The fortunate has two factors: it is fortunate that the most distinguished epic subject fell to the lot of Homer; here the accent falls as much on Homer as on the material. It is this profound harmony which reverberates through every work of art we call classic. and so it is with Mozart; it is fortunate that the subject, which is perhaps the only strictly musical subject, in the deeper sense, that life affords, fell to - Mozart. With his Don Juan, Mozart enters the little immortal circle of those whose names, whose works, time will not forget, because eternity remembers them.

....it is not probable that Mozart will ever have a rival. It was Mozart's good fortune to have found a subject that is absolutely musical, and if some future composer should try to emulate Mozart, there would be nothing else for him to do than compose Don Juan over again.

From Pope Paul VI's homily delivered during the Mass celebrated on Sunday, Sept. 24, 1972 in the Basilica of St. Peter for the Italian St. Cecilia Association:

Singing is a necessity of love and manifests it. Listen to how St. Augustine speaks about it: "singing comes from cheerfulness, but if we observe more carefully, from love: canticum res est hilaritatis, et si diligentius consideremus, res est amoris." (*Sermo 34*) and again: "cantare et psallere negotium esse solet amantium: singing and chanting is characteristic of those who love." (*Sermo 33*)

The natural sign of love, singing, has, therefore, an irreplaceable role in Christian worship, which is service of charity: of that love, in which, as we recalled in the prayer of Holy Mass, "the foundation of the whole law is placed." Since "de illo quem amas cantare vis" (St. Augustine, *Sermo 34*, PL 38), our love for God is also expressed in singing.

Love and praise call for each other, as St. Augustine again says: "amare et laudare: laudare in amore: amare in laudibus: to love and to praise, to praise in love, to love in praises" (*Enarr. in Ps. 147*).

But singing manifests and foments also love among brothers. The community is formed in singing, assisting with the fusion of voices that of hearts...uniting everyone in one aspiration, in praise

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