Trust and Reasonable Partiality

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The moral relationship between strangers is sometimes characterized in terms of a kind of mutual recognition.[1] Ideal moral agents recognize in one another some aspect which separates them from objects, unites them as subjects, and which justifies some form of moral treatment. Just what form of moral treatment one recommends will be a function of what one thinks gives subjects the moral authority which requires this basic form of recognition. Some think this involves recognizing that the other is the bearer of rights, some the locus of value, some the source of reasons. But whatever the source of moral authority, we rightly expect that others will acknowledge it in us, and that we will be accorded the respect we deserve.

The form of recognition that is appropriate to our personal relationships differs substantially from that of mutual recognition. In recognizing a friend, we don't simply see another being deserving of respect, we see a being that is connected to us in diverse ways which make us responsible to treat them in a manner that goes beyond what is due as a matter of respect. We can understand this as the difference between recognizing in another that we share a form of life, and recognizing that we share a life. When we think about how we should treat strangers, we make judgments based on what people are owed drawing on general facts about persons (well-being, rights, etc). When we think about what we owe a friend, we think about what we've done together and, importantly, what we are doing.

[1] See Scanlon, T.M. (1998) *What We Owe to Each Other,* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, esp. 162. Sometimes this form of regard is characterized in terms of the second-person standpoint, Buber's "I – thou" relationships. See for instance Darwall, S., (2006) *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability,* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

In what follows I shall explore the connection between shared activity and special responsibilities. A proper characterization of personal recognition should give content to normative force of our relationships, and should account for their priority in our practical life. In the account I offer here, meeting these desiderata begins with an investigation into the importance of shared activity. Shared activity involves a unique intentional stance that connects the intentions of agents to one another and serves to order their practical life. Taking this stance is essentially a matter of trust and thus, relationships necessarily involve a risk which makes their parties vulnerable to one another. This gives each agent reason to jointly manage their mutual vulnerability so that it does not become a liability for either party. Responding to the demands of a relationship is therefore a matter of responding to the various ways in which others trust us.

I'll first sketch the view on offer. Then, in sections II and III, I'll develop this view in contrast to two competing explanations of special responsibilities: one that seeks to reduce special responsibilities to general responsibilities, and one that seeks to find an operative normative principle that governs all of partiality. In the final section, I'll deal with the objection that trusting relationships cannot be the source of special responsibilities because they are neutral with respect to internal and external wrongs that might be part of the history of any trusting relationship.

I

Often one is tempted to begin a discussion of relational duties, and reasonable partiality, with a discussion of agent-relative reasons, those reasons we all have which turn on some particular feature of our lives. Relationship reasons are too particular somehow. Sam has reason to comfort Ronnie when she sees Ronnie get that look in

his eyes. What do we have reason to do? Nothing. (Who's Ronnie anyway?) Sam might be thought to have an agent-relative reason to comfort Ronnie. But while it may be true that the reasons that come from specific relationships have no general practical significance, and therefore seem to be agent-relative, it would be fundamentally misguided to begin with this assumption. Relationships are not so much something we have, but something we do with someone else. Sam's reasons for comforting Ronnie do not derive from the fact that she has a relationship with Ronnie, but because she is in a relationship, because they are doing something together. If relationships are cooperative in this way, and generate reasons which are generated from the perspective of multiple individuals, then we should begin an investigation into the practical significance of relationships by looking at their cooperative structure.

To reflect the idea that there is some essential reference in the reasons statement to two agents we might call this class of reasons 'co-relative reasons', or, as I shall prefer to say, 'cooperative reasons'. In order to get clear on the sense of cooperative reasons we need to step back from a normative description of relationship reasons and look at these reasons from the perspective of the philosophy of action.

In ordinary activity, our reasons for acting are interpretive of our action in the sense that they explain that action, even though they may not justify it from a moral point of view. They are what we give as an answer to the question 'Why?' In cooperation, agents give a joint answer to the question. They're not cooperating to the extent that the individual answers differ. This means that the ultimate description of the action must be settled between agents. One might contrast this notion of cooperation with coordination. In coordination, we can imagine agents acting without any heed to

what the other party intends. So long as each does what the other expects, the coordination goes ahead. In cooperation, however, one can remain unsure as to what one is doing ultimately, even when their partner appears to act as expected. This is because one's interpretation of their action depends, in part, on the other agent's reasons for acting.[2]

This is what makes relationship reasons seem an obscure feature of our moral landscape: they can only be shared between those within the relationships. Mike can't assume Sam or Ronnie's part in their relationship because he hasn't the right entitlement to their intentions, or the authority to settle what it is that they should do. If he has a relationship with one or the other or both, he might have authority over other matters, or an entitlement to intentions in other circumstances. But these will depend on what they - Mike, Sam and Ronnie - are up to together. There is a strong sense in which we are shut out of other's relationships. Even the best intentions do not grant us admission to their practical life.

The cooperative model also helps to explain how it is that agents can be held responsible for actions where they were not present at the relevant time, and, to some extent, how it is that they can take responsibility for one another. Relations can claim responsibility for one another's actions in some cases because, in a very real sense,

[2] We can go a little deeper into this characterization by looking at two features that Abraham Roth thinks are necessary to shared agency: practical authority, and entitlement to other's intentions. See Roth, A. "Shared Agency and Contralateral Commitment" *The Philosophical Review* 113 (3): 359-410 (2004). When two agents are committed to one another, they have a practical authority to settle what the other will do, with respect to some manner, and have an entitlement to act directly on the intentions of one another. This makes it possible, for one to act directly on another's intention. This allows that there is another class of joint action, coordination, where this is not so. There will be fringe cases. One might imagine a pedestrian looking to cross the street who catches the eye of a motorist stopped at a crosswalk, and then crosses the street on the basis that she thinks the motorist intends for her to cross. Whether we class this case as cooperation or coordination will depend, anyway, on the sense of cooperation in the central case of close relationships.

they are already involved in what the other is doing, and so connected to what they have done. I'll return to this point in the next section, at present I want to look at what cooperative relationships require.

With the basic characterization of relationships in hand, we are now ready to reintroduce the normative sense of reasons that derive from relationships. In order for Sam to cooperate with Ron she must take a risk: she must assume that Ron will form a conception of his actions that depends on her conception. This risk is in some ways an asset, in others a liability. It is an asset because it makes joint activity possible and readies the relationship for intimacy.[3] It is a liability because Ron can let her down. While opening the space for Ron's loyalty, it also makes possible a betrayal. Ron takes similar risks in his part of cooperation and they are both vulnerable to one another. Each is responsible for responding to that vulnerability, to manage that risk so it does not become a liability. The trust between intimates is therefore the ground of special obligations; the recognition and response to trust is essential for acting well in a relationship.

The emphasis on the mutual vulnerability to one another's attitudes identifies the locus of moral interest in the standing attitudes of the parties. This suggests that the actions that we owe our relations are important because they are expressive of the

[3] Cf. Williams, B.A.O (2002) *Truth and Truthfulness*, Princeton University Press, esp. 88 – 93. Williams seems to think that the initial stages of cooperation do not require attention to specific attitudes of agents. This is what I am content to call coordination. It involves a kind of proto - trust. This trust is more than mere confidence because, presumably, the agent is capable to choose whether or not to coordinate. But it is less than full trust because the agent's reliance is not based on the other's having, say, a particular motivational set. For more discussion on the attitudes relevant to trust, and confidence see Baier, A. (1994) *Moral Prejudices*, Harvard University Press; Jones, K., 1996, "Trust as an Affective Attitude," *Ethics* 107(1): 4-25 (1996); Luhmann, N., (1990) "Familiarly, Confidence, Trust: Problems and Alternatives" in D. Gambetta ed. *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations*, Blackwell Press; Pettit, P. "Cunning of Trust," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 24 (3): 202-225 (1995).

attitudes that are expected. This provides an initial response to the worries about unreasonable partiality that often threaten to cripple discussions of special responsibilities.[4] Special responsibilities do not get in the way of meeting general obligations because holding attitudes toward one's intimates does not necessarily prevent one from responding to the needs of strangers.[5] In some cases, it will seem as if there are unjust actions that are required in order to express the right form of concern, sending a child to private school, for instance, to give them a 'leg up', or simply, to give them the 'very best'. But notice that on this model of special responsibilities one can negotiate the meaning of one's actions with intimate others, so that the demands of a

[4] Discussions of partiality in moral theory tend toward the reification of the value of intimate relationships, and others sorts of partial attachments, in order to meet a quite general challenge, launched by Williams and others, about the practical irrationality of perfect impartiality. As Christina Hoff Sommers says, "A moral philosophy that does not give proper weight to the customs and opinions of the community is presumptuous in its attitude and pernicious in its consequences. In an important sense it is not a moral philosophy at all, because it is humanly irrelevant", Sommers, C.H. (1996) "Philosophers against the Family" in *In the Company of Others: Perspectives on Community, Family and Culture* N.E. Snow ed. Roman & Littlefield. For more general concerns, see for instance, Williams, B. (1982) *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973-1980,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Williams, B. and Smart, J.J.C. (1973) *Utilitarianism: For and Against,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Stocker, M. "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," *Journal of Philosophy* 73 (14): 453-466 (1976). Also see Wolf, S. "Morality and Partiality," *Philosophical Perspectives* 6: 243 – 259 (1992).

For a more explicit discussion the view that the ground of our special obligations is held in the value of the relationship see Scheffler, S. "Relationships and Responsibilities," *Philosophy and Public Affairs,* 26 (3) (1997): 189 – 209; also his (2001) *Boundaries and Allegiances: Problems of Justice and Responsibility*, Oxford: Oxford University Press and more recently (2010) *Ethics and Tradition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, esp. chapter 2. The concept of special obligations has so held currency in debates in political philosophy, especially concerning defensible forms of nationalism, and the proper restrictions of cosmopolitanism. Many have worried about what our personal attachments mean for impartial moral theory, or for just distribution, or for an agent's autonomy, but few have attempted to give a more precise account of the grounds of special responsibilities, their moral psychology, and their scope. On my view, the value of relationship approach just gets the questions about partiality going; I see no straightforward way to go from it, to substantive ethical judgments.

[5] Cf. Kolodny, N. "Do Associative Duties Matter?" *Journal of Political Philosophy* 10: 250-66, (2002). There he shows that special ties do not undermine the basic aims of distributive justice. It may be true that partiality requires that we give priority to our intimates, but that does not undermine the normative foundation of a distributive paradigm. So, for instance, after I've transferred half of my wealth to my son, it is still incumbent upon both of us to distribute both of our wealth to those in need. On this model, priority doesn't rule out distributive justice. This relies on an individual agency competence, the idea that each person in the relationship is a fully formed agent. For more on the limitations of this, see Lazar, S. "Debate: Do associative Duties Really Not Matter?" *Journal of Political Philosophy* 17: 90-101, 2009. The model I advance here should supplant these sorts of worries because, on my view, cooperative agency does not strictly rely on each party having full agency.

relationship are not unreasonable from the perspective of justice. In doing this, we can cooperate at being just toward others. This is not meant to rule out tragic cases, where the actions which express the right concern for our loved ones must conflict with what would be best for others, or for ourselves as individuals.

But one might think that the real problems come into view when the joint activity is in some way perverted. Sam and Ron might be criminals, involved in a history of theft. This makes both vulnerable to the other's turning them in to authorities. But shouldn't this vulnerability be ignored? What if there is abuse: Sam hits Ron. Should Ron still respond to Sam's vulnerabilities? Wouldn't it be better to end their relationship? I'll return to these questions in the final section, first, I want to develop my position by considering two alternatives to my approach.

II

One might think that a suitable account of special responsibilities can be given by looking at general moral principles. There are several strategies that serve to reduce special obligations to some account of general obligations. One might, for instance, think that there are general social roles that dictate the norms of behavior and that some of these social roles are relational in nature. Or, one might think that special responsibility have to do with the unique benefit that we can bestow on our intimates, a benefit that is valuable independent of our relationships because it increases aggregate welfare. The reductionist view I've interest in discussing, because of its relative proximity to my view, is the strategy that reduces the norms of relationships to the norms of promising. On this alternative all of our special duties come from these discrete interactions, not from the vulnerability of a continuous shared activity. If Ron

and Sam had an encounter where Ron somehow led her to believe she would comfort Ron when he gets that look in his eyes then she should; otherwise, not.

Let's call the account which reduces special obligations to the norms of promising 'Contractual Reductionism.' As a theory of special obligations Contractual Reductionism won't do. This is for three reasons. First, as Seana Shiffrin has argued, promising can play a special role within relationships; it can for instance settle a disagreement or conflict by drawing attention to the trust that already exists between parties.[6] This is what Shiffrin calls, the 'power to promise'. But if there is this unique power held between agents, a power strangers lack, it would seem as if the basic norms of promising are amplified in the intimate case, and so it must be unlikely that there could be a reduction from the norms of a relationship to the norms of promising. Second, as Sam Scheffler has noted, our practice of citing relationships as the reasons for acting fits ill with a reductionist picture.[7] In many cases, we will cite someone's relationship to us, rather than a specific interaction, to explain the source of our special responsibilities.

Our duties to intimates are often not the perfect duties promising would suggest. Unlike promising, there is not usually one thing that satisfies our special responsibilities. (Often, when we think this is true, it turns out that said thing is the least we can do.) The question of whether or not one has promised will sometimes need answering. But there is little sense to the idea that that question will always, or even often, be the case. I owe certain things, for example, to my wife, even when they were not explicitly

[6] Shiffrin, S. (2008) "Promising, Intimate Relationships, and Conventionalism," *Philosophical Review* 117(4): 481-524.

[7] Op. cit. (2001).

promised to her, and even when there is no specific event from which she had opportunity to form certain expectations. She relies on me to respond to situations in ways that demonstrate the right concern for her, and our shared life, even where she has no specific interest in the outcome of my actions. Contractual Reductionism would be inadequate to explain this sort of reliance, which, in intimate relationships, is active even where there is no opportunity for specific expectations to be formed. Further reflection on this point will help to explain how, on my view, I account for the practical priority of our relationships.

Reflecting on the nature of activity will perhaps make this last point a bit clearer. Activities can be extended over time but do not require straightforward engagement in their composite events in order to say that they are in process. Baking a cake may have a set number of stages, smaller activities that create the cake. One doesn't have to be doing one of these activities in order to say they are baking a cake. 'I'm baking a cake' can be the answer to a question 'What are you doing?' long before one pulls the flour out of the cupboard.

Our joint activities have a similar basic form, and are extended into the future such that what one is doing is often a function of what one is doing with other people. In close relationships, we tend toward the plural pronoun to discuss broad trends in our lives, and especially events in those lives, even when responding to questions that do not advert directly to our relationships. For example, one might be asked, 'What did you do last weekend?' and respond, 'We took in a play.' The joint activities can also structure one's responses in a way that is more clearly normative. One might ask, 'Why don't you have another donut?' and receive the response, 'I can't. We're trying to cut

down on sweets.' The reference to an ongoing shared activity explains one reason this person should avoid a second donut, and, in some respects, justifies his abstinence. What this answer represents is a shift in the practical outlook of the agent that reflects the importance of his shared activity.

Understanding the importance of the relationship therefore requires extending the immediate temporal bounds of shared action into the future and involves speaking in terms of the present continuous. This is clear in cases where friends have no discrete interaction, but whose obligations are left intact. They are still doing something together, even though they haven't spoken for a while. This might also be how obligations carry on beyond death, or beyond the cooperative competence of one party. One forms expectations about the significance of an action - something we always do together - that marks that thing as always significant. The vulnerability and expectation, though they vanish in death, or dementia, have already cemented some future concern about the importance of the shared life, and have altered what is forever salient in practical deliberation of the remaining agent.

The focus on relationships as extended activities can also help to explain how obligations can be generated before one party to the relationship is capable of generating expectations. Parents and unborn children can be vulnerable to one another in the sense that there are already normative predictions about what their relationship involves, and some vague idea of what would constitute a betrayal, which is cast in terms of the particulars of the potential activities the relationship suggests. But while I think it is true that parents are vulnerable to the attitudes of their pre-natal offspring, I want to leave open the possibility that infants may not be specially, or uniquely,

vulnerable to their parents as particular individuals. I think this is a strength of my account, not a weakness, because it helps to explain the sense in which we think it is sometimes permissible to put a newborn child, but not a toddler, up for adoption.

The history of a relationship is extended beyond its events in the same way actions are extended beyond their events. This means that the vulnerability that is involved in joint activity is likewise extended beyond the concrete actions and events that constitute our shared experience. As a result, our relationships are a ubiquitous normative presence in our practical lives. Moral principles may also play a ubiquitous role in our practical thinking, but they do not structure our practical deliberation in the same way that our relationships do. Moral norms are always relevant, but they are mainly active as side constraints to how we think about what we should be doing. (Except, perhaps, when one thinks about what one should do as a matter of becoming a better person.) In thinking about what we should do, generally, we place our attention on what we, and others, are already doing. By and large, our practical lives are already structured by our relationships and morality comes in to add to that structure by limiting acceptable forms of engagement. Neither, it seems to me take deliberative priority.

III

Niko Kolodny has recently offered an account of partiality broadly conceived that, like my view, adverts to the history of the relationship. Kolodny asks us to imagine a List, exhaustive of all partiality principles containing all of the true normative claims that involve partiality. The task, as he defines it, is to explain why it is that the following belongs on the List:

1. One has reason for parental partiality toward children.

Whereas,

2. One has reason for prison-gang partiality toward other members in one's prison-gang.
3. One has reason for blood-type partiality toward others who share the same blood-type.[8]

do not. To meet this challenge, Kolodny introduces the notion of resonance:

> *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 (12).[9]

So, for example, I have reason to feel negative reactive attitudes, such as resentment, when someone aims to do me harm because these attitudes resonate with the non-reactive attitudes I would feel toward the state where I've been injured.[10] In events where I am injured, I feel negative emotions that are directed toward the state of affairs. In the case of actions, my reactive attitudes are directed toward someone, and this is meant to reflect the importance of the active dimension of intention and the dimension of interpersonal address.

This basic analysis leads Kolodny to suggest the following principle with respect to interpersonal relationships:

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[8] Kolodny, (2010a): 39.

[9] Ibid. 12, 47. See also Thomas Hurka's discussion of base-level goods and virtue in Hurka, T. (2001) *Virtue, Vice, and Value,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[10] For more on reactive attitudes see Peter Strawson's seminal paper "Freedom and Resentment" reprinted in (2008) *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays*, NY: Routledge, 1-29.

> *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.[11]

Suppose you and I have been friends for many years. Friendship requires, *inter alia*, discrete encounters of aid and cooperation, and our friendship has involved many of these discrete encounters. On the suggested principle, I have reason to respond to our history of aid and cooperation in a way that resonates with each encounter, but reflects the importance of that history. This gives me reason to feel gratitude toward you and our history together, because discrete encounters of aid no doubt warrant gratitude. Negative histories, on the other hand, do not generate reasons in the same way because what resonates with a negative act is some form of redress (or in the case of a negative relationship, dissolution or reparation).[12]

We want an account of special obligations that illuminates the normative significance of close, personal relationships, and in doing so sheds light on reasonable partiality. Resonance, however, is too broad a normative ideal to be altogether helpful. This is because, as Kolodny himself notes, resonance plays a role not just in personal relationships, but in other areas of our lives that are relevant to partiality. Take for instance

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[11] Kolodny, (2010a): 51.

[12] Kolodny takes the proposal one step further, to show how it is that resonance has a place in common personal histories that are shared between two strangers. Ibid: 51 – 53. This should be of particular interest for those concerned with how shared histories of oppression can generate responsibilities. Although it is worthy of more lengthy treatment, I haven't the space to do the subject justice here. For more, see Kolodny, N. "Which Relationships Justify Partiality? General Considerations and Problem Cases," in (2010) *Partiality and Impartiality: Morality Special Relationships, and the Wider World*, Feltham, B. and J. Cottingham eds., Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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.[13]

There may be many true partiality principles, but it seems as if some should hold a privileged place in our thinking, in fact, just those that have to do with histories shared with others. But we need a further set of concepts to say why this is so; resonance cannot decide the order for us. Resonance can only tell us what actions are required as a matter of internal consistency, internal to a specific history; its practical relevance is purely in terms of generating reasons that are basic to that history.[14] It cannot inform an account of the ways in which those histories matter, and thus cannot order our partiality principles. It might be that two sets of events, one having to do with personal aims, the other with an intimate relationship, resonate equally well as sets, but suggest conflicting activities. Shouldn't we aim to meet the interests and expectation of our loved ones, leaving aside personal aims? The fact that someone is already doing something with me should in many cases tip the balance in favor of meeting their expectations. There will sometimes be dilemmas between relational duties and personal aims, such as the case Williams provides where Gauguin will either become a famous painter, or will stay

[13] Ibid, 46.

[14] This last point may be no worry for Kolodny. The reader may recall that his broader project is simply to account for all true partiality principles and he needn't sort between them to meet this goal. However, if we want to say that we have special duties to friends and family that can, sometimes, trump our other long-standing aims, and other strong commitments, we need additional implements in our normative toolbox. There is some sense to the idea that there can be reason enough to leave one's family to follow a painting career, but we should not think that the decision between staying and leaving employs just the same normative framework in exactly the same way.

with his family. But notice that the resources to make the choice are absent where we simply advert to resonance, and many where we advert to trust.

This response doesn't rule out resonance as a heuristic for understanding the psychology of expectation. It may be true that many of our judgments about what is appropriate go by way of thinking in terms of resonance. In this way, resonance will play a function in any view of special responsibilities that takes seriously the idea that another's expectations are normatively significant. But it doesn't help with the problem of understanding why the content of our expectations is normative in anything like dependence itself. Vulnerability and trust order partiality because they order the whole of our practical outlook. The fact that one is in an intimate relationship shapes how one sees the importance of other attachments; it rules out those that undermine the maintenance of another's risk, and has bearing on how one understands the importance of all other significant activities. We see this most clearly, perhaps, when we are head over heels in love. But it takes a less pathological form in all loving relationships.

IV

One might object that my account cannot rule out the idea that negative trust relationships generate special obligations between parties. There are two ways in which a relationship can be negative which have been mentioned. A relationship might be externally negative in the sense that two individuals wrong a third individual, or it can be internally negative in the sense that there is abuse between parties.[15]

Internally negative relationships, such as those of abuse, simply do not have the right form to be a candidate for special obligations: one member is in no way properly

[15] "Internally negative" and "externally negative" come from Kolodny (2010a): 53-55.

vulnerable to the attitudes of the other. There are activities within the context of the relationship, which, though they involve both parties, are not cooperative. There is just no sense to the idea that the abuser's description of his actions depend on the other such that the other could hold attitudes which undermine the action. If the vulnerability and intimacy elsewhere in the relationship is somehow still valuable, then there are reasons to reform the activity and work out the impairment. But this is not always desirable, or even possible. Sometimes one cannot return to do with another what once one did before.

Suppose Sam and Ron's relationship is not abusive, but that they have been robbing Mike's t-shirts. This activity makes each vulnerable to the other, and seems to require them to continue their activity, and further, to keep it secret. But this assessment requires that we think that managing another's vulnerability always involves protecting the vulnerability, where this might not be the case. We might think that Sam can manage Ron's vulnerability by urging him to come clean to Mike. This would not constitute a betrayal of their activity, but a readjustment of the course of their relationship. In this way, externally negative relationships respond to the significance of mutual vulnerability without requiring that one continue wrongdoing.

Conclusion

The development of a shared activity should take place within the context of a shared understanding of permissibility that respects the rights of all persons. In this way, what we get up to with our intimates will have no deleterious effects for our moral outlook. When things go awry, and when another's vulnerability requires bad behavior on our part, we can take steps to mitigate their risk. We are not required to wrong others on

the basis that the other expects us to continue bad behavior. Yet, we have a duty to put our relationship on the right track, to help reform his view of what is rightly expected, and to help make our cooperative activity defensible to everyone. It is true that the standard of reasonableness for a relationship's duties are set in terms of our shared activity, but false that it is somehow outside the bounds of morality. Our general obligations can limit our activity by shaping the expression of our cooperative activity, just as our intimate activity can inform our ideas of the best attitudes to take toward strangers.