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The above quote suggests that a morality which consists simply of the two love commandments constitutes or summarizes the whole of morality. Call such a morality "the Rule". In this paper, I address two challenges to the claim that the Rule is complete. The first challenge claims that the Rule is incomplete because it lacks a value theory. I respond by showing that the Rule implies a God-centered value theory that Robert Adams defends. The second challenge claims that the Rule does not have the resources to resolve conflicts. I argue that the Rule implies a variant on the "Veil of Ignorance" strategy made famous by Rawls.

I. The Problem

The idea that love is the ultimate source of all morality is a familiar one. Perhaps its most recognized source is the New Testament, where Jesus urges his followers to:

[L]ove the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.[1] He continues by saying that "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." In Romans, Paul writes:

For the commandments "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal" ... and if there is any other commandment, are all summed by in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.[2]

These quotations suggest that the two love commandments by themselves contain or sum up or entail a complete morality, one that could stand alone as the whole truth about how we ought to act (and speak and think and be).[3] For convenience, let us call this morality "the Rule". Critics have objected that the Rule is not complete—that it doesn't tell us how to help or avoiding harming a single individual, since it does not tell us what her interests consist in, nor what to do when the interests of two or more people conflict. Before addressing these challenges, let's consider what it is to say that a morality is complete? I suggest:

A morality is complete $=_{df}$ for each bit of behavior or possible bit of behavior (including behaviors of saying or thinking or being a certain way)

it implies—with the addition of a complete description of the empirical cir-
cumstances but without any extra moral premises—either that the behav-
ior ought to be done or that it is not the case that the behavior ought to be
done.[4]

A morality that said, "Keep your promises but otherwise do as you
please" is complete in the sense just defined, although we might regard it
as incomplete, since it's far too lax, allowing murder, torture, etc. It has too
many permissions and too few obligations. Too many and too few for
what? Well, more and fewer than there really are. In other words, it is
incorrect. It entails that some behavior is permissible when, in fact, that
behavior is not. A morality might also be criticized for being too restric-
tive—forbidding behavior that really is permissible. Are moralities that fail
in these ways complete? It seems sensible to say that they are, and to sepa-
rate the question of whether a morality is complete from the question of
whether it is correct.

Consequentialism, roughly the view that one ought to produce the best
consequences, is not complete, since it requires a value theory—an account
of which consequences are best—for its completion. By contrast, utilitarian-
ism, i.e., consequentialism combined with hedonism, seems perfectly com-
plete. Although it is very difficult to know how to practice utilitarianism—
because of our ignorance of the future, of counterfactuals, of the inner
states of others—these difficulties amount to ignorance of empirical rather
than moral matters. Let me emphasize at this point that any epistemic or
practical difficulties agents have in practicing a moral theory—such as util-
itarianism or the Rule—are not grounds for judging it incomplete.
Completeness is a metaphysical, not an epistemological, concept.

What about a theory like W.D. Ross's prima facie duty ethics?[5]
According to Ross, we have seven different prima facie duties. Someone
subject to only one (token of) one of them has an all things considered duty
to act in accordance with it. But someone faced with a conflict between two
or more of them has an all things considered duty is to act in accordance
with the one whose claim is most stringent. Is such a morality complete?
Suppose I have made the proverbial promise to meet a student at noon and
then I encounter the proverbial drowning child at 11:55. Does this theory
imply that I ought to keep my promise to meet the student or that I ought
to save the child's life? Well, it entails that I prima facie ought to keep my
promise and prima facie ought to save the child. But that isn't all we expect
from a complete morality. We want to know what our all things consid-
ered duties are. More simply, we want to know what to do. Ross's theory,
of course, adds that we ought (all things considered) to act in accordance
with the duty that has the most stringent claim, in this case, clearly, the
duty of non-maleficence. But notice that the extra stringency of the child's
claim isn't a line item in Ross's view; nor can it be straightforwardly
derived from his view. In fact, it seems to be an independent non-empiri-
cal, *moral* fact. If Ross is correct, then there is no further *moral principle* aside
from his list of prima facie duties and his account of how to weigh them
that can help determine how one ought to act in a particular choice situa-
tion, but neither can the matter be decided by purely empirical means.
Since there are moral facts not included in the theory that partly determine

what one ought to do, this theory is not complete. While that is a strike against it, it's a reason to reject it only if the more complete alternatives are correct. What if, for example, Ross is right in thinking that no correct and humanly comprehensible theory could be complete? Presumably an incomplete but correct theory is better than an incorrect, complete one. Moreover, completeness comes in degrees and some degrees of incompleteness are more devastating than others. In what follows, I shall consider two arguments for thinking that the Rule is seriously and objectionably incomplete; and shall defend it against those challenges.

II. Is the Rule complete?

The Rule tells us to love one another. One cannot truly love if one doesn't strongly and genuinely desire the beloved's well-being; and one cannot strongly and genuinely desire something unless one is disposed to try to achieve it. So the Rule implies behavior that results, or can reasonably *be expected* to result, in the welfare of others being better than it would otherwise have been. Which others? Who is my neighbor? This is a big question, but the Christian answer appears to be "all other human beings" or, at least, "any other human being you come across."[6; 7]

This morality has been criticized as suffering from the same sort of incompleteness as unadorned consequentialism, as lacking a value theory. As Basil Mitchell writes:

Anyone knows who has experienced such a dilemma [that involved in deciding whether to practice euthanasia] that love is not enough. Love ensures that the only question before the lover's mind is "What can I do to help?" It does not answer the question.[8]

Consider a case of the sort of conflict he has in mind. Fatally ill and in great pain, a man asks his children to help him die. Loving him dearly, they are concerned to do what is best for him. But the question arises: what is best for him? One moral philosopher will say pleasure and the absence of pain; another the satisfaction of his desires; another dignity; another long life, and so on. These different value theories, together with the injunction to promote his best interest, will point towards different resolutions of the dilemma. And this is not an isolated example. A mother—motivated solely by a concern for her son's safety—might face a dilemma over whether to listen to his telephone conversations, or to read his diary. Those who value autonomy for its own sake would discourage these actions. The hedonist, on the other hand, would advocate limiting freedom if this would protect the teenager from pain or death. Three things seem clear. Loving family members sometimes make mistakes in such cases; they sometimes disagree unresolvably, and they are sometimes profoundly uncertain about what to do. Insofar as the Rule's only relevant instruction is: do what is best for him, it seems unable to resolve these dilemmas and hence to be incomplete.

An anti-realist or relativist might suggest that there is no such thing as the neighbor's interest over and above what someone who loves him concludes.[9] In cases of conflict, each lover's conclusion is as good as another's. When unable to resolve a dilemma, the lover should take a leap of faith, and then take responsibility for her choice. In other words, the beloved's

best interest is, by definition, what those who love her do or would choose for her. This account of one's neighbor's best interests makes long, drawn-out and agonizing loving attention inexplicable. What's the point of taking as much trouble as we often and reasonably do to find out someone's best interest if whatever is going to seem right is right? If you're unsure, why not simply toss a coin to decide the matter? Why do we sometimes try to change someone's mind about how she treats a third party if whatever she decides is right—or no less right than what *we* decide? It seems that loving attention, scrutiny, and argument about values make no sense unless we believe that there are evaluative facts that we are striving to discover and about which it is possible to be mistaken. This raises two questions:

1. Can these facts be derived from the Rule?

2. If they can be derived from the Rule, the derivation will be a difficult matter. Do honest mistakes count as failures to obey the Rule?

III. Deriving a Value Theory from the Rule

If it were an analytic truth that anyone who loved (in the best sort of way) used a particular empirical criterion for determining what was in her beloved's best interest, then anyone who followed the Rule would have an algorithm for finding out what she ought to do, and so the Rule would be complete. Does love entail such a criterion?

Mark Fisher suggests, "My fundamental thought is that to love someone is to desire whatever he desires for the reason that he desires it."[10] Why is it to be supposed that a lover would want what his beloved wanted? Because her desires always correspond to her interests? But they obviously do not. A toddler wants to chew on electric cords or wet diapers. Even adults regularly face pressures that make it difficult for them to judge their own interests. Saying this or acting on it needn't make one paternalistic or contemptuous. We acknowledge it easily enough in our own case.

Perhaps Fisher's point is that love will aim at satisfying the beloved's desires even when those desires don't coincide with her best interest. That is insane when the beloved is a toddler and implausible in other cases. Suppose, for example, that my friend knows that I am seriously allergic to peanuts. Surely his fondness for me will, at least, prompt him to *remind* me of my condition rather than simply handing me the bowl. If I continue to want the peanuts in spite of being reminded about my allergies—for example, because I am deeply depressed, one would hope that he would try to *dissuade* me from eating them. What if I persist? Would it be best (or most loving) for him to prevent me by force? Well, again, it would depend—in part on how seriously the peanuts would harm me—would they send me into anaphylactic shock or merely make me sneeze and cough—and in part on how serious a violation of my freedom would be required to prevent me—were they his own peanuts that he could simply *refuse* to give me, or were they my peanuts and in my clenched fist, so that he would have to retrieve them by prying my hand open? What this suggests, I think, is that satisfaction of desire is one element of my interest, which can sometimes outweigh other more concrete goods like health and pleasure, but which can itself be outweighed by other goods. If so, then a loving agent will not

be concerned to respect his beloved's wishes when they conflict with her overall good.

A loving agent, of course, is concerned to promote and honor her relationship with the loved one as well as to promote the latter's interests, but those two goals are compatible with informing, dissuading and even forcibly preventing someone from satisfying her desires. I conclude that Fisher's suggestion isn't the right way to complete the Rule.

An ideally loving agent wouldn't use Fisher's criterion in all cases, because that criterion leads to serious errors about someone's interests, because people are often grossly mistaken about their own interests, and often—because of addiction, depression, etc.—incapable of acting on what they know to be in their own interest. This suggests that if Fisher's account could be modified to correct for these factors, it would be more plausible. Peter Railton offers an account that does just that—an account in terms of what someone *would* want, or would want herself to want if she were well-informed and in an ideal cognitive state. He writes:

Let us introduce the notion of an *objectified* subjective interest for an individual A, as follows. Give to an actual individual A unqualified cognitive and imaginative powers, and full factual and nomological information about his physical and psychological constitution, capacities, circumstances, history, and so on. A will have become A+, who has complete and vivid knowledge of himself and his environment, and whose instrumental rationality is in no way defective. We now ask A+ to tell us not what *he* currently wants, but what he would want his non-idealized self A to want — or, more generally, to seek — were he to find himself in the actual condition and circumstances of A.[11]

If the toddlers were perfectly informed, they would not want themselves to chew on electric cords and wet diapers. A drug addict, if functioning at her best and fully informed, would not want herself to take the drugs. Combining Railton's suggestion with the Rule, we get the claim that to love someone is to be disposed to desire whatever his idealized self would desire for him.

Railton's criterion gets the right results in many cases, but it won't always work. The perfect information of the perfectly informed self makes him maximally efficient at achieving his basic desires, and perhaps at thinning out inconsistent basic desires, but what if his basic desires are consistent and defective? Suppose he desires to suffer, to have as many children as possible or to keep his hands as clean as possible.[12] New information wouldn't change these desires, although it would affect his instrumental desires. It is obviously not in someone's interest to suffer or to have as many children as possible. For these reasons, I am inclined to believe that incorporating Railton's device for generating a value theory into the Rule would lead to some results that a thoughtful loving agent would shy away from.

Hud Hudson points out that Railton's suggestion is reminiscent of a Kantian one. In determining whether some treatment counts as using someone as a mere means, some Kantians say, it is necessary to determine whether that person would wish to be treated in that way if he were rational and were stripped of his sensuous nature. This counterfactual rational self, however, does not retain all of the original self's basic desires. The

rationalizing process causes him to lose some basic desires and to gain some new ones. The kind of objections I raised for Railton's suggestion may not apply to this Kantian suggestion. For all I know, the Kantian ideal self's desires may, therefore, be reasonably identified with the self's genuine interest. My only worry is that the notion of rationality at work here may be morally loaded and hence, that the resulting theory may be incomplete in the sense I have identified. Without definitely rejecting this suggestion, I shall explore another that I believe to be more promising.

The suggestion I have in mind relies on recent work by Robert Adams.[13] Things are good, he says, insofar as they resemble God. They are better insofar as they resemble God more closely. A good person resembles God in being wise, kind, just, and perhaps beautiful. What is good *for him* is perhaps a slightly different issue—since it seems that he might be better but not *better off* for making some tremendous sacrifice. Adams argues that "what is good for a person is a life characterized by enjoyment of the excellent."[14] Different excellent things can be enjoyed in different ways—talents, careers, friends, God himself, art objects, aspects of nature. If this is correct, then someone's good consists in enjoying things that resemble God. Promoting that good amounts to increasing the resemblance of what she already enjoys to God or seeing to it that she enjoys more things that resemble God.

Several questions arise. Firstly, even if this is the correct account of value, doesn't it still mean that the Rule, by itself, is incomplete—that it requires an extra moral principle (namely, Adams's divine resemblance value theory) to complete it? Well, not if that value theory can itself be derived from the Rule, as I believe it can. The Rule instructs us to love God with all our hearts and minds. Adams argues, plausibly I believe, that good is, by definition, that which we ought to love and seek. So, God, according to the Rule, is the greatest good. Another, more or less, analytic principle, is that if x is good, then anything intrinsically exactly like x, is good too; and that if x is good in some respect, then anything that resembles x in that respect is good in that respect too. A morality that tells us to love God above all else is telling us that God is the ultimate good and that other things are good insofar as they resemble him; and that they become better by becoming more like him.[15] As such, the Rule implicitly contains a value theory, and avoids one challenge to its completeness.

It might be objected that this suggestion has little practical import—since it is very difficult to know whether someone is more or less like God than someone else. This seems true but, once again, this paper is not concerned with the question of whether the Rule is epistemologically or practically complete.[16]

A different objection is that this account is subject to counterexamples. If so, the Rule may be complete, and yet radically incorrect. Correctness is not my topic here, but it is worth pausing briefly to explore these alleged counterexamples—not only to allay the suspicion that this way of completing the Rule is a non-starter, but also to find out whether the theory can be fixed without being rendered incomplete. Adams considers the challenge that God-likeness is not necessary for goodness. Some things, such as a gourmet meal, are good, although they don't resemble God. Similarly, cer-

tain human virtues—such as courage, endurance and humility—only make sense given our finitude, and hence cannot correspond to anything in an infinite God. Adams responds that it is important to remember that the resemblance may well be distant and abstract, and that with that caveat, it is not unreasonable to say that God resembles gourmet meal in being delectable ("Taste and see that the Lord is good.")[17] In our courage and endurance we can resemble God in having the right values and having them with the right sort of firmness. The humble share God's accurate perception of their station.

On the other hand, and perhaps more troublingly, resemblance to God doesn't seem sufficient for goodness. Caligula, who self-ascribes divinity, resembles God but doesn't seem any better for it. In response it can be pointed out that he is unlike God in having severely mistaken beliefs and an improper sense of his own importance. But this raises the danger that the 'Godlikeness' account may turn out to be empty since everything resembles everything in some respects, and differs from everything in other respects. In fact, since there are infinitely many properties, it will turn out that the number of respects in which any two things resemble one another will be the same as the number of respects in which they differ.[18] This rather prosaic point—if it is meant to imply that there are no objective facts about degrees of resemblance—conflicts dramatically with our experience. There must be some sense in which identical twins resemble one another more than either resembles a prime number, a coffee cup or Margaret Thatcher. To say that x resembles y is to say more than simply that x and y share a property or that they share a large number of properties. Which shared properties count towards resemblance and which don't? Relational properties don't usually count, nor do most negative ones. The properties have to be salient, important, natural, etc.

This is not the place to settle the vast and tangled debate over the nature of resemblance. Suffice it to say that if facts about degrees of resemblance are objective and non-moral, as they seem to be, then Adams's is a promising account of how to derive a value theory from the Rule.

IV. Honest Mistakes

Even if Adams's value theory is correct, and does follow from the Rule, it is still possible that someone who loves in the best sort of way (and even loves both God and her fellow human beings in the best sort of way) might make a mistake about someone's interest. E.g., she might give him poison, because she was trying to give him medicine, and the labels had been switched. Or she might earnestly believe that pain is "just in the head," and that her husband is making a logical error in feeling pain, or in complaining of it, and that, if he thought about it properly, he would stop being bothered by it; or she might simply judge that his interest would be well served by facing his pain and developing courage. In these situations, it seems that she has loved him, and acted out of her love for him, but she has nevertheless harmed him. Following the Rule has led her to act wrongly. So, it looks as if the problem with the Rule is not that it is incomplete, but that it is incorrect, since certain actions appear to be wrong, in

spite of the fact that they are the products of the best sort of love.

Unless she is willing to surrender, an advocate of the Rule will have to argue that these actions are not really products of love, or that they are not really wrong. I shall argue that these actions are not morally wrong, in spite of the fact that they involve or rely on an incorrect (i.e., wrong) value judgment. It would be difficult to argue that the woman who made the mistake about the poison was thereby shown to be less loving than someone who made no such mistake. Similarly, if she had been misled by some false philosophical theory (like hedonism—supposing it is a false theory) her love might well remain intact in spite of her false judgments.

It may be objected that this view is just like the relativist or anti-realist view I attacked in section 2 in that it implies that one can do exactly the right thing, exactly what one ought to have done, even if one seriously harmed someone without producing any outweighing good. I think I can draw some of the sting of this objection by stressing that my view avoids most of the problematic implications of the anti-realist view. That view seemed to undermine the point of loving attention; if there is no fact about someone's interest independent of my search for it, then my search is pointless. This problem does not arise on the present account, however, since this account allows that there are facts about another's interests independent of the agent's mind. Although I can avoid wrongdoing in spite of failing to discover these facts, my love (and my duty) direct me to do my very best to discover them. The search does have a point, and the Rule urges the agent to make an effort to conduct it. In fact, the agent attempting to follow the subjective version of the Rule (that I am here defending) will be guided by exactly the same considerations as an agent attempting to following an objective version of the Rule.[19]

What's the difference then? Well, *in retrospect*, it does make a difference whether he adopts the subjective or the objective version. Suppose he made an unavoidable mistake and discovered this after the fact. On the objective interpretation, he should judge that he has done wrong, and should feel guilty. On the subjective interpretation, however, he should not judge that he has done wrong as long as he made the appropriate efforts to avoid the mistake. Is this a reason to prefer the objective version? It might be if the subjective version implied that the agent can simply shrug off his mistake complacently, saying, "So what? I did the right thing, didn't I? It's no concern of mine that I happened to make a mistake," which seems a horrible response—especially if the mistake had seriously bad consequences. If the agent really is following the Rule, however, that is, if he really does love, both before and after the fact, a significant part of his concern is with his beloved's welfare. So if he has harmed her, and comes to realize this, he will be distressed. He will regret his action, and do what he can to rectify the mistake in light of what he now takes to be the true value theory. The content of this regret doesn't have to include *moral* self-reproach, but anyone who really loves will be motivated, not solely, or even primarily, by a desire to be moral, but at least in part by the interests of his beloved. His regret, therefore, doesn't have to be the regret of someone guilty of a moral failing. It can merely be the regret of someone who has failed to achieve a goal he held dear.

Adopting the subjective version also makes a difference from the point of view of third parties. If the agent has really done his best, if he really has loved, even if we perceive that he has made a mistake, we should judge that he has done the right thing, and not blame him. That is, in evaluating an agent's behavior, we need not bring in our own best estimate of what is in the beloved's best interest. Again, this may seem like a problem for the subjective version. Surely it's important to use your own best estimate (or let's say, your *knowledge*) of the beloved's best interest to instruct others or to correct their behavior? Surely, the pediatrician shouldn't simply congratulate the new father on his good intentions while ignoring his truly dangerous mistakes? But the subjective version of the Rule doesn't have this implication either. The pediatrician wants to help her infant patients. As such she has a reason to promote (what *she* knows to be) their best interest. She also wants to help their parents to avoid the sorts of mistakes that will injure their children and devastate their own lives. So, she has Rule-motivated reasons for setting them straight even while avoiding moral criticism. If the father won't accept correction, she has reason to intervene to protect the child. If, however, the father has harmed his child in spite of loving her and doing his best to find out what was in her interest, then the Rule provides no reason to punish him or even to judge that he has done wrong.

None of this is meant to imply that people are never culpable for their moral errors. If someone mistakenly embraces Nazism, then what I have said above will not excuse him. The sincere Nazi does not aim at the good of all and simply make a mistake about what (some) people's interests consist in. His moral flaw consists primarily in the fact that he hates and aims at destroying people. He cannot be described as following the Rule on any interpretation of it. My point above is not that, in general, people are excusable for honest mistakes. If someone rejects the Rule in favor of some alternative ethical theory, and as result, treats people in harmful ways, it is appropriate from the point of view of the Rule to judge that he has acted wrongly, and perhaps to hold this against him.

Moreover, my interpretation of the Rule can make room for the idea that people are culpable for some of their moral errors—even evaluative errors. For example, where they acted without thinking about what is really in their neighbor's interest, where they have ignored the promptings of their sympathy or where they have earlier acted in ways that have left them with rotten characters that interfere with their perception of value.

V. Another Challenge to Completeness: Many-Person Conflicts

John Rawls raises a different objection to the Rule's claim to completeness. The difficulty is that the love of several persons is thrown into confusion once the claims of these persons conflict. ... It is quite pointless to say that one is to judge the situation as benevolence dictates. This assumes that we are wrongly swayed by self-concern. Our problem lies elsewhere. Benevolence is at sea as long as its many loves are in opposition in the persons of its many objects.[20]

This is a different objection from the one about value theory. At least on the face of it, determining what each of two people's interests consist in

doesn't help with the question of what to do when their interests conflict. Moreover, people's interests conflict all the time, and we are often called upon to resolve these conflicts.

How does the Rule help? A first step is to argue that the Rule tells us to love each of the disputants as much as each of the others. Without this constraint, there will be no hope of its leading to a unique resolution to any of the conflicts Rawls worries about. But why suppose that the Rule tells us to love our neighbors (i.e., everybody or anybody) equally? To love your neighbor as yourself entails that you love the neighbor on your left as yourself and love your neighbor on your right as yourself. Hence, you ought to love your neighbor on your left as you love your neighbor on your right. This syllogism seems a little crude, but one thing about it is right. The Rule is clearly urging us to love each of our neighbors fully and completely. (Not as much as possible, though. The First Commandment reserves *total* devotion for God.)[21] Loving one more than the other (or acting as if one loves one more than the other) is at odds with such full and complete love.

The claim that we ought to love our neighbors, that is, everybody, fully and more or less equally, may be rejected on other grounds. "No way am I going to love some kid in Denmark or Thailand as much as I love my own daughter. This is not psychologically possible, nor is it desirable, nor could it have been what Jesus intended." I sympathize with this complaint. I don't, I won't, I can't, love some other child as much as I love my own children. But that is to say either that the Rule is not *correct*, or to say that I'm not going to live up to the full demands of a morality even if I recognize it to be correct. I think, however, that if we take the words of the Rule in the most straightforward way, and we juxtapose them with Jesus' strange, harsh-seeming words in other places, we will see that familial partiality is not intended to take precedence over the love advocated by the Rule.[22]

One possible way to reconcile our powerful intuitions with the apparent meaning of the Rule is to say that the Rule represents an ideal—how things will be in Heaven, or how they would be on earth if humans hadn't fallen, an ideal that we are to supposed to try to approximate, even if in ordinary, everyday life, the best we can do is love our families, respect strangers, help some of those in need, avoid causing needless suffering, etc.[23]

Even if we insist that we must love all parties equally (in some sense) Rawls's difficulty remains. Parents who love their children equally, and who know what is best for each don't always know what to do when their interests conflict.

If the Rule has any answer to the question of how to decide between competing claims of different people, it will have to say something of the form, "Use principle P, because someone who loved the people involved in the right sort of way would act on Principle P (or behave *as if* she were acting on P)." J.L.A. Garcia suggests that one way of telling whether the principle you use is equally loving is to see whether you could use it in explaining your behavior to the person who lost out in the conflict.[24] This approach has problems. What would you be trying to convince him of? That you loved him (as much as the one who won)? But you might be able to do that in spite of the fact that fear or greed or sentimentality led you to

do something unloving. Love is compatible with weakness of will, after all. That your behavior was reasonable for someone who loved all parties equally? That is better perhaps, but it raises difficulties of its own. What if *he* is unreasonable? If we stipulate that the agent should be able to convince the person who lost out *as long as he is reasonable*, this account seems somewhat circular. In spite of these difficulties, however, I have found this to be a useful heuristic device. Moreover, it fits nicely with a love ethic in requiring the agent to face and talk to each of the people she has affected and to try to reconcile them to her treatment (at least, theoretically). In justifying one's choice to the loser, you cannot assume that he loves the winner. But you can reasonably expect him not to complain about the fact that you love someone else as much as him. You need to be able to convince him that you neglected his interest only because if you hadn't, you would have had at least as hard a time defending your decision to someone else.

I shall restrict myself to cases where the agent has to decide how to distribute some good between two parties. Let's assume for simplicity's sake that the agent *must* make the choice in each situation; and that the choice will not have a bearing on his own interests, except insofar as he takes the interests of the others as his own. For most of my discussion (except at the very end) I shall assume that neither of the parties has any antecedent claim on the good, it does not belong to one rather than other, for example, and it hasn't been promised to either, etc.

Let's consider some cases, starting with one where the good can easily be halved at no cost to the overall amount to be distributed, and where neither recipient has a greater need than the other. Suppose, for example, that the good is a loaf of bread and both recipients are equally hungry. In that case, giving each person half seems the easiest to justify. Neither recipient could legitimately complain that the action showed that the agent loved her less. On the other hand, if the agent gave less than half to one, that one would have a complaint—even if there were no difference in the amount of good achieved overall. Given the desire to convince the recipients that one loves them equally, there seems to be a presumption in favor of equal treatment.

But this presumption can be overridden. Consider a case where the good, such as a car or a dose of medicine, cannot be divided without being destroyed or rendered useless. A loving agent would not relentlessly aim at equality in such a case, by dividing the good anyway or by refusing to give it to either, since doing so would mean squandering the chance to help either of them—which would seem distressing to someone who loved both. She would surely prefer helping one to helping neither. It seems that the Rule would advocate what we might call the Non-Waste Principle: don't squander a chance to help. One way to square this with the impulse to equality is by allowing chance to decide the matter: giving the car or the medicine to the winner of the coin toss. An equal chance is like an equal share of the loaf. If they find out what she is doing before the coin toss, they have as little reason to complain as they did in that case. They would presumably not complain that she didn't divide and hence destroy the good, and each couldn't reasonably insist that she simply give it to him rather than to the other, since, if she did, the other would have had a legitimate ground for complaint. Once the coin has landed, the loser has no

grounds for complaint, since the way it fell was not an expression of the agent's preference.[25] I think, however, that the agent will feel some sympathy for the one who lost out—and will be motivated to compensate him where possible. For example, if the good to be distributed is a car, perhaps she will ask both to contribute money that will be given to the loser, or perhaps the loser will receive the lion's share next time.

What if the good can be halved but if it is, both will be worse off than if it were divided unequally, for example, if it is divided equally, each will receive 3 units of good, whereas if it is divided unequally, one will receive 4 units and the other will receive 7? For a more concrete example, consider a case where two young brothers are making each other miserable. Both would be better off if separated, but the brother who goes to the airport to fetch his cousins will be (or will be perceived as being) better off than the brother who stays home to help his father clean the house. In that case, the Non-Waste Principle suggests that the good should be divided unequally. Choosing the 3-3 distribution simply amounts to wasting the extra five units of good. If an unequal distribution will make everyone better off no matter who receives the larger share, then *who* receives the larger share can be decided by chance. If an unequal distribution will make everyone better off only if, say, Tom, receives the larger share, then Tom should receive the larger share. This result can be defended as an extension of the Non-Waste Principle: Inequality is acceptable if it doesn't harm the one who receives less.[26] Again, it seems that neither party has legitimate grounds for complaint.[27]

But what about the hard cases where an unequal distribution makes one person worse off than she would be under an equal distribution, but maximizes the overall amount of good? In that case, the Equality Principle would imply that the good be divided equally; whereas the Non-Waste Principle would suggest that it should be divided unequally, since, it seems that, unless the agent maximizes the amount of overall good, she is squandering some of her chance to do good. Suppose the agent must choose between giving each recipient 3 units of good, on the one hand, and giving one of them 2 and the other 10. Let's suppose, first, that it makes no difference who receives 10 and who receives 2. In that case, the principles we have enunciated so far suggest that she must choose between an equal division, on the one hand, and an unequal division, where the larger share is given to the winner of a coin toss. How is this choice to be made? Well, a natural way to decide it would be to ask the recipients what they would prefer. If they are rational and both would much prefer the chance to receive 10 units (at the risk of an equal chance of receiving only 2) to a certainty of 3 units, then, it seems that the goods should be divided unequally. Similarly, mutatis mutandis, if they would prefer the equal division. Given what I have said above about difficulties for desire-satisfaction value theories, however, I think we should ask, not what Tom and Jane *want*, but what would be in *their interest*. That is, would it be in the interest of each to have a .5 chance of receiving 10 units of good rather than a certainty of 3?

It seems that there are, at least sometimes, answers to questions of this sort, that it is in the teenager's interest to have her risk of becoming pregnant reduced, that it is in a child's interest that her parents have life insur-

ance—even if she never uses it. Perhaps this is simply some kind of function of the teenager's interest in *not becoming pregnant*, and the child's interest in not being left destitute, but exactly what kind of function this is is a controversial matter. I'm assuming, somewhat cavalierly, that the true and complete value theory will provide answers to these questions.[28]

Returning to the particular choice situation we were considering: which would be more in someone's interest—to gamble or not to gamble? Rawls seems to think that in all such choice situations, a rational person would prefer the equal division, but that is not at all obvious.[29] It would clearly be in a moderately well-off Mary's interest to buy a five dollar lottery ticket that gave her a one in a thousand chance of winning a million dollars; (and *hence*, it would be rational for her to do so) whereas it would not be in a poor Peter's interest to spend his grocery allowance on lottery tickets where his chance of winning was slight (and hence, it would be irrational for him to do so) no matter how big the prize. Prior to the lottery, it is in Mary's interest to spend the five dollars on the ticket; whereas, prior to the lottery, it is in not in Peter's interest to spend his grocery allowance on lottery tickets. This suggests that the appeal to the interests (or rational desires) of the recipients should be made on a case by case basis.

Now, suppose the agent must choose between giving each recipient 3 units of good, on the one hand, and giving one of them 2 and the other 10, but let's suppose it does make a difference who receives 10 and who receives 2. The agent is faced with a choice between giving each 3 units, on the one hand, and giving Jane 10 and Tom 2, on the other. Giving Tom 10 is not an option. In that case, the unequal division will not be in Tom's interest at any stage in the process. So the agent cannot appeal to his interests or rational preferences in justifying the unequal division to him. On the other hand, in cases where the inequality will cost the loser little and gain a lot for the winner, it seems that a loving agent would be reluctant to insist on equality.

To resolve this issue, let's return to the choice situation where it doesn't matter who receives the larger amount. Suppose that *before* Jane and Tom decided whether to opt for an equal or an unequal division, a coin was tossed to determine who would benefit from an unequal division. If neither or them knew how the coin had landed, then their choice situation was just like that in which the coin had not yet been tossed. In that case, it seems reasonable for them to choose the unequal division in exactly the same circumstances in which it would have been reasonable to choose the unequal division before.

Of course, we often do know who will benefit from an unequal division. But suppose we could (honestly) pretend that we didn't. In that case, the agent could argue that she was both trying her best to promote the interests of the recipients and that she was trying to do so evenhandedly. If the recipients are ideally clear-headed and rational, they should be able to see that they would have acted in the same way under the same conditions, and so have nothing to reproach her with.

It will come as no surprise that I think that the most effective procedure for someone to use who loves both recipients equally and wants to convince both that she loves them both equally is something like the Veil of Ignorance. If she gives each what it would be in his interest to choose from behind the

Veil of Ignorance, then she can claim that she has taken each of their interests to heart as passionately as they would have done (and loved them as she loves herself) and that she has given each of their interests an equal weight in her decision making process. This notion seems to generate the Equality and Non-Waste Principles enunciated earlier.[30] I won't venture to speculate on any more general principles that it would generate, except to indicate that I expect that, in choice situations where one of the recipients enters the arena much worse off than the other, that one will benefit more; and where one of the recipients has an antecedent right to the good, that right will have a presumption to be respected. This last point is perhaps analytic. The issue in such cases will be what grounds the right in question—under what conditions, for example, does someone come to own something?[31]

VI. Objections And Questions

I offered the Veil of Ignorance as a means of responding to a challenge from John Rawls that the Rule is incomplete. I expect that a Rawlsian might object that this is cheating. Rawls's notion of the Veil of Ignorance is supposed to be a competitor to the Rule. Isn't it illegitimate simply to co-opt that useful mechanism as part of the Rule?

I think not. Suppose that the Veil of Ignorance had had a different history; suppose it hadn't been invented or publicized by Rawls, in fact, suppose it had never been thought of until I thought of its connection to the Rule. In that case, it would have a plausible claim to being the right mechanism for someone acting on the Rule to use. (It's close to the Golden Rule, which is close to the Rule). But surely the history of a principle should make no difference to its plausibility?

It might be objected that the Rule implies that the agent ought to be motivated by certain psychological states such as sympathy, tenderness, etc., but that true justice requires a greater objectivity and emotional detachment.[32] I agree that the Rule adds this requirement but I don't see why it is a problem. It is true that strong attachments often introduce bias, and that some kinds of love might kick up clouds of feeling that obscure the light of reason. But remember that we are talking here about someone who loves both parties to the conflict *equally*. Theoretically, at least, bias is avoided. Moreover, although love can blind, it can also give insight. The loving judge cares very much and is very strongly motivated to find the right solution. She empathizes with the conflicting parties and so perhaps can see their needs more clearly. Some kinds of love are harmful or distracting, but the Rule is not advocating those kinds of love. It might seem that a literal interpretation of the Rule would have it telling each agent to love others exactly as he loves himself—in some cases fiercely, in some cases destructively, in some cases carelessly, in some cases kindly, etc. But this cannot be the correct interpretation. By analogy, a mother who observes her small son cutting half the birthday cake for himself, might tell him to give each child the same sized piece as he gives himself. She is not suggesting that he give each of the six children at the table half the cake. She is rather suggesting that he adjust his own share and then divide the whole cake into six equal shares. Similarly, someone following the Rule

may first have to modify the way she loves herself. So an ideal Rule-follower will not love in a defective way, and probably, not love in a way likely to interfere with good judgment. In addition, if there is something good about love itself—and good for people who are treated with love—as I believe there is, then it can compensate for the small loss in objectivity.

A critic has written: "Over and over the paper presents intuitive answers to what the correct course of action is. The Rule is then judged by whether it yields similar results. But there then seems to be no work for the Rule to do. Is there an equilibrium between what the Rule demands and what one feels intuitively, such that the Rule can be used to judge intuitive judgments to be wrong and need correcting?"

In response, I do believe that the Rule generates moral implications which help answer difficult moral issues and even strain our intuitions a little. It implies, I believe, that there is no moral distinction between killing and letting die, where other things are equal; that our moral obligations are far more extensive than we would otherwise have thought; that subjective considerations – what one knows, what one intends, what one cares about—enter into determining whether one's actions are right—contrary to the views of 'objectivists'.[33]

Secondly, as I have said above, I'm not treating the Rule as an epistemological guide to finding out what is right. For all I've said, moral truths may be *discovered* in other ways—by consulting our intuitions, by recalling what we learned at our mothers' knee, by reading the Bible, listening to sermons, etc. Even if my account did imply that the Rule conformed to intuition in every detail, the Rule could still constitute the metaphysical underpinning for morality.

VII. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that the Rule avoids the debilitating incompleteness it is sometimes accused of. To this end, I gave an account of what it is for a moral theory to be complete, and then took on two arguments for thinking that the Rule was incomplete: firstly, in not containing an account of interests; and secondly, in not containing an account of what to do in cases where the interests of two or more people conflict. In response, I argued that we can use the first great commandment to generate an account of interests, and we can use the Veil of Ignorance to help resolve many-person dilemmas. I argued that these two notions can be seen to follow from the Rule itself and are not ad hoc additions to it. I do not take myself to have shown that the Rule is immune to every possible charge of incompleteness. Some questions remain, such as: Exactly what feelings does the Rule require us to have? What happens if you cannot love—what second best option does the Rule advocate? The theory may have resources to answer these questions. Or perhaps they may not have humanly accessible answers. Like Ross's theory, an ethic of love may well require judgment for its proper application. If so, whether that is a reason to reject the theory will depend on whether there are better and more complete alternative theories available.

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NOTES

1.   Matthew 22: 37-40. New King James version.
2.   Romans 13:10.
3.   I shall use the term "morality" or "moral theory" for theory about what we *ought* to do, say, think, be, etc. As such a morality might be complete without including facts about virtues or values, except insofar as these are necessary for an account of what we ought to do. This is not a substantive point, but merely a stipulative one about how I shall be using the term.
4.   See Allan Gibbard, *Wise Choices, Apt Feelings: A Theory of Normative Judgment* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990) p.100, for discussion of a very similar notion.
5.   *The Right and the Good* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988).
6.   The story of the Good Samaritan is a classic source here, but another indicator is the suggestion that the Rule is the summary of the Law, that it implies the commandment not to kill. In that case, "my neighbor" must include all those it is wrong to kill or lie to, etc. – i.e., all other human beings.
7.   What does it imply about non-human animals? Nothing as far as I can see. In which case, either the Rule is offered as the complete account of how we ought to treat other persons or humans, or the Rule is offered as a complete account of how we ought to behave simpliciter, and implies that we have no non-derivative obligations to non-human animals. If the first, it may not be absolutely complete. If the second, it may be faulted for being incorrect.
8.   In Gene Outka and Paul Ramsey ed., *Norm and Context in Christian Ethics* (New York: Scribners, 1968) p.353.
9.   Perhaps this is what Joseph Fletcher had in mind when he wrote: "Christian ethics or moral theology is not a scheme of living according to a code but a continuous effort to relate love to a world of relativities through a casuistry obedient to love; its constant task is to work out the strategy and tactics of love, for Christ's sake" *Situation Ethics* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966) p. 158.
10.   "Reason, Emotion, and Love," *Inquiry* 20 (1977) p. 196.
11.   "Moral Realism," *Philosophical Review* (April 1986) p. 174.
12.   Richard B. Brandt, *A Theory of the Good and the Right* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) defends a similar theory to Railton's.
13.   See chapter 1 of *Finite and Infinite Goods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Adams writes:"[O]ther things are excellent insofar as they resemble or imitate God. Resemblance brings several advantages to this role. Much of the intuitive appeal of broadly Platonic theories of value lies in the thought that experienced beauty or excellence points beyond itself to an ideal or transcendent Good of which it is only an imperfect suggestion or imitation. The idea of resemblance can hardly be eliminated from this model. It is important also that the excellence of anything have grounds in its own nature or condition, and resemblance satisfies that requirement by having parts of its grounds in each of the resembling things." p. 28.
14.   Adams, p. 93.
15.   By parity of reasoning, we should understand the second commandment as entailing that our neighbors (i.e., other human beings) are good or at least as good as we ourselves are. I believe that this is not an unwelcome result. Although it is often claimed that Christian love is unmotivated by the qualities of the beloved, this cannot be literally true. We ought to love other human beings more than we ought to love stones—at least, in part because of differences between humans and stones. Recognizing that is compatible with insisting that we ought to love all humans no matter how they change.

16.   A referee has worried that there may be a vicious circle lurking here, since one of the most salient characteristics of God is love or loving kindness. If that were God's only characteristic I agree that the circle would be vicious, but since it is plainly not his only characteristic, I believe that the circle, if it is one, is not vicious. Loving our neighbors, we should try to help them to enjoy power and knowledge and beauty and, yes, love, and we should encourage them to be more loving, which means to encourage them to pass these goods on to others. Where's the viciousness in that?

17.   Adams, p. 29 ff. For a thorough discussion of this value theory and treatment of counterexamples, please consult this work.

18.   See Nelson Goodman, *Problems and Projects* (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1972).

19.   This distinction between 'subjective' and 'objective' versions of the Rule echoes distinctions between subjective and objective versions of consequentialism. The subjective/objective debate is one that straddles many different moral theories.

20.   John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. P., 1971) p.190.

21.   The notion of equal love is often criticized. Child development experts, Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, make interesting points about this notion. On the one hand, they argue that it is unproductive for a parent to insist that he loves his children equally, but better to insist that he loves each uniquely (and perhaps as much as possible). They also point out, however, the misery that can result when it is clear to children that their parent loves one more than the others.

We all know that Cain slew Abel when the Lord showed more 'respect' for Abel's offering. And we also know that Joseph's brethren threw him into a pit in the wilderness because their father loved Joseph more and gave him a coat of many colors. That was a long time ago, but the feelings that provoked those violent acts are eternal and universal....

I wanted to weep for her. And for all the other children who had to watch the glow in their parents' eyes and know that it would never be for them.

Siblings Without Rivalry, Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish (Avon Books, New York, 1987).

22.   "I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother... " Matthew, 10, 35; "And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!" Matthew 12, 48-49.

Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." (Luke, 9, 60)

23.   For an extended discussion of this notion in the context of consequentialism, see my, "The Heart of Consequentialism," *Philosophical Studies*, October 1994, and "A Consequentialist Case for Rejecting the Right," *Journal of Philosophical Research*, vol. xviii, 1993, with Alastair Norcross.

24.   See his "Love and Absolutes in Christian Ethics," in Thomas Flint ed., *Christian Philosophy* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1990) pp. 162-199.

25.   Two objections: "A coin toss it too frivolous a way to make life and death decisions"; "A coin toss is a way of opting out of one's responsibility." In response, it is important to note that I am not advocating using a coin toss as a general way of making moral decisions, only as a way of deciding matters that are otherwise equally balanced, and where a choice is required. In such cases, the arbitrary device is an expression of the fact that one's values are equally balanced, not of indifference or of desperation.

26.   This sounds like Rawls's Difference Principle, except that it allows an unequal distribution that leaves the worst off person no worse off and no bet-

ter off. Moreover, it doesn't commit itself on the question of whether inequality is acceptable if it does leave the worse off person (slightly) worse off—an issue I discuss below.

27.   Sometimes inequality creates second-level harms such as envy. These harms need to be factored into the equation.

28.   Here's a possibility. Combine the Railton suggestion I rejected above with the Adams suggestion that I endorsed. Imagine idealized versions of Tom and Jane who know and accept the true value theory and are otherwise well-informed and rational. Now find out what they would choose under the conditions of risk described.

29.   See *A Theory of Justice*, pp.150-166. Part of Rawls's argument is that the participants behind the Veil are unaware of the probabilities of various outcomes. I suspect that this stipulation may skew the results of his mechanism in an unjustified way.

30.   I believe it generates them as prima facie duties or perhaps merely as rules of thumb.

31.   Can advocates of the Rule help themselves to 'rights' talk? Not without some explanation perhaps, but that explanation is fairly straightforward. Rights talk can be translated into 'ought' talk. If I have a right to free speech, then others ought not to prevent me from speaking and (perhaps) it is not the case that I ought not to speak. (The details needn't tie us up here). If the Rule implies that we ought not to interfere with Jane's use of a certain bicycle (within obvious limits) and that it is not the case that Jane ought not to use the bicycle in various ways, then the Rule implies that Jane has a property right over the bicycle. If (as seems plausible) it is in people's interests to have exclusive use (within limits) of certain personal objects, then it seems that the Rule will generate property rights. Of course, it will not permit conspicuous consumption in the face of destitution, so the property rights it generates will not be of the sort to please fiscal conservatives, but that should not come as a surprise. As William Hasker has suggested, this may provide the basis for a less radical response to the worry about how to square familial preferences with the Rule. He writes (in correspondence) "Isn't it obvious that, in certain contexts, a proper loving concern for particular others will lead us to make firm promises, or other commitments, to upholding an promoting the well-being of those particular individuals? Marriage and parenthood, I should think, would be virtually unintelligible without such commitments. But then, given that such a commitment has been made, a needy but minimally reasonable third party …surely ought to recognize that it gives those individuals some priority with regard to my loving attention."

32.   Joel Kidder raised this objection.

33.   This is not the place to discuss all of the interesting and controversial implications of the Rule. This paper is not intended as an account of every detail of the Rule.

34.   I am grateful to and Daniel Howard-Snyder, Hud Hudson, Ned Markosian, Robert Audi, Richard De George and Steve Layman for really helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.