

# Second Philosophy

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| Led by | Sojourna Alexandre  |
| Title  | Love versus Loyalty |
| Date   | 08 February 2009    |

## INTRODUCTION

### Love or Loyalty?

Sunday's discussion will begin with a brief focus on defining 'romantic love' and 'loyalty' as a way of informing a discussion that will consider two 'love dilemmas' – one, a myth dating back to the Mediaeval years, the other, a modern one which some/many of us may have faced.

### About Romantic Love ...

Falling in (romantic) love is a complex act that involves both the emotions and the intellect. But love - romantic, passionate, erotic love - is often portrayed, understood, or lived as a type of madness.

Scientists reveal chemical imbalances, psychologists classify it with various disorders, Mediaeval myth makers wrote of magical love potions.

Martha Nussbaum (inspired by Aristotle), however, once wrote:

*"...emotions such as love, grief and anger are based upon reasoning about what's valuable, and in fact are suffused with reasoning."*

With Nussbaum in mind, I would like to argue that falling in \*romantic\* love is a philosophical act; an act of reason.

- a) In falling in love we act to improve our life.
- b) In falling in love we make a choice between one way of life and another way of life.
- c) In falling in love we make a choice between holding one set of values instead of another set of values.
- d) In falling in love we are concerned with the 'good' and how to live a good life.
- e) In falling in love we make decisions about our personal identity.
- f) In falling in love we make judgements of value.

### About Loyalty ...

Romantic love may mark the beginning of a relationship, but the passionate, erotic and spiritual feelings initially bring two people together might die in the course of a relationship. Romantic love might then be replaced by other feelings, such as loyalty. Loyalty is grounded in ideas of honour, reason, responsibility, sanity, permanence.

### Two Love Dilemmas ...

I would like us to focus on two love dilemmas (below) to inform this discussion. Both dilemmas require us to consider, compare and evaluate:

1. a long-term relationship (marriage or other serious commitment) which is functional, caring and mutually respectful, but where there is no longer a feeling of romantic love, and
2. a romantic relationship, where one person in the relationship in No.1, above, has fallen in love with another person.

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In discussing these dilemmas I seek to understand the philosophical reasons as to *\*why\** we might *\*pursue\** a new romantic love when we are already in a long-term relationship\*, in which feelings of romantic love may have died (or never existed), but the relationship is still functional, caring and mutually respectful.

In short:

- a) Should we remain loyal to our long-term (legal, proper) partner, or should we pursue the new feelings of love that have arisen towards another person?
- b) Do we have a duty to one relationship over the other?

## 1. THE MEDIAEVAL LOVE DILEMMA

In the legend of Tristan and Iseult, the two fall in love, but Iseult is married to King Mark who is Tristan's uncle. They have an adulterous affair that ends tragically. Even though their love is the result of a love potion, which they take by mistake, they do fall in true love. Let's call the love between Tristan and Iseult "true and romantic love" and the love between Iseult and Mark "correct and loyal love." Which type of love do you think should be pursued?

*In discussing this dilemma on Sunday\*, consider also the following dichotomies:*

love <-----> loyalty  
emotion <-----> reason  
madness <-----> sanity  
a lie <-----> a truth  
transient <-----> permanent  
shame <-----> honour

[A thought on the love potion – does it diminish the validity of their love? I would say that there is a bit of madness and magic in all our experiences of falling in love.]

## 2. THE MODERN LOVE DILEMMA

You are in a long term relationship, but the romantic love you felt in the beginning is lost, and while you love and cherish your current partner, you have since met someone else who has inspired all the feelings of romantic love again and you desire to be with them, instead. But you are in conflict, because:

- a) You love your current partner, but you are no longer romantically in love with him/her. Because of this, you feel you do not identify with your current partner, but truly feel you identify with the new person.
- b) While you could remain loyal, and live reasonably well, your feelings of romantic love with the new person have made you believe that you could live even better if you chose to be with them, instead.
- c) Moreover, you feel that there is no room for further personal development in your current relationship. But you feel that with the new person you could bring out an even better self.

What do you do?

*\*In discussing this dilemma on Sunday\*, consider also the following ideas:*

- a) Identification (to love someone is to identify yourself with them)
- b) Justification (to love someone is evaluate that life with them is justified for various reasons, such as those given in 'my argument for romantic love').
- c) Self-value and well-being and 'bringing out the best in each other.'

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## QUESTIONS:

1. How shall we define romantic love?

- a) How does romantic love differ from other love?
- b) How does loyalty differ from romantic love?

(Try to come prepared with a one sentence definition for this – doing the survey (link at top) beforehand might help you prepare this.)

2. Consider the Mediaeval Love Dilemma, above.

If we call the love between Tristan and Iseult "true and romantic love" and the love between Iseult and Mark "correct and loyal love," which type of love do you think should be pursued? Why?

3. Consider the Modern Love Dilemma, above.

If you chose to pursue a new relationship with the person you have fallen in love with, instead of remaining loyal to your current partner, how would you argue in favour of your decision to a philosopher?

## REFERENCES:

Bennett Helm's "Love" at The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/love/>

Alexander Moseley's "Philosophy of Love" at the Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy:

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/l/love.htm>

Irving Singer's MIT lectures on the Philosophy of Love:

<http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/Linguistics-and-Philosophy/24-261Fall-2004/LectureNotes/index.htm>

YouTube:

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=4AL95TcwXQc&feature=PlayList&p=3794C8CF5B0C7278&index=0>

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## DISCUSSION:

Just a brief note about the survey (and thanks to all who completed it!). I have summarised some of the survey responses and you can see those notes on the boards. If you touch the board you will receive a note card with some of my notes also

The purpose of this survey was to help me to get a feel of where people are coming from in order, especially, to facilitate the process of agreeing on definitions of love/loyalty before we discussing the proposed 'love dilemmas.'

We will not agree on a definitive understanding of the terms 'romantic love' and 'loyalty' but I would like us to consider what these terms might mean within two specific contexts - the contexts of the 'love dilemmas' that we will discuss later.

So, let's spend some time discussing the first question on the agenda today, which is: 1.How shall we define romantic love?

- a) How does romantic love differ from other love?
- b) How does loyalty differ from romantic love?

**Oswy:** OK Well I see these things as both part of the love process. I guess Romantic love comes near the beginning loyalty follows; That's my starter for luv

**Sojourna:** Yes; lurrve; haha

**Marya:** I'm not certain I would call what happens initially 'love' - I think that only comes later - but then I suppose it is a matter of what the word love means to different people

**Sojourna:** What does romantic love mean to you?

**Marya:** as a decidedly unromantic person ... that is a difficult one to answer. It sounds like a fairy tale to me - something that goes on more in our own minds than in reality

**Reflection:** It seems as though romantic love must mean love that is sexualized and therefore with quite profound biological drives attached

**Oswy:** For me it's to be in the grip of passion so that you feel almost irrational in your behaviour.

**Sojourna:** Yes, an illusion?

**Patrick:** Romantic love begins with an expectation of or desire for intimacy.

**Shingles:** interestingly, it seems to me that love descends as a fairy tale regardless of the sentiments of its victim, Marya

**Reflection:** certainly it involves powerful positive illusions, I think Soj

**Sojourna:** The biological aspect is interesting - seems like romantic makes the bio drive...er, more romantic.

**Sojourna:** Yes, there is nothing wrong with illusions so long as they serve a functional purpose - and so long as we are aware of them.

**Magenta:** great highs, crushing lows

**Oswy:** Loyalty is a more considered a more mature thing a different more assessed way of loving but they are not mutually exclusive.

**Sojourna:** not driver heeh ?

**Reflection:** the fairy tale aspects come from the unrealistically positive perceptions which are attached to the biological drive (and which pass inevitably in due time ;-))

**Shingles:** why should we think them illusionary? they seem very palpable, Soj

**Renald** sighs

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**Schopenhauer:** Romantic love is narcissistic. Romantic love is the strongest form of "love", but only lasts if the two partners satisfy each others needs and live up to each others expectations. Loyalty is a sense of duty which may or may not coincide with feelings of love.

**Reflection:** loyalty has a strong rational and logical foundation, I think Oswy

**Shingles:** wait a minute, pass 'inevitably, Ref?

**Starling:** For me, love has to be looked at as a verb, as a measurable tangible thing, or it is lost in the internal muddle of sloppy definitions and lost in selfishness. The selfishness of obsession with our internal states. If love is a verb, then it's about Loving Actions, about nurturance, about how you love people. So an objective definition of love places the focus of any discussion of love on what Good it does the world, What Good it does the objects of our love feelings, and not so much on our navel staring.

**Lokifluff:** concur Schopenhauer - and am reminded of Plato's Symposium

**Sojourna:** Schopen - yes

**Magenta:** yes, and romantic love is frequently irrational, but good

**Sojourna:** Yes, love as an action - I like that

**Schopenhauer:** Seeing as you mention that Loki, I will read Symposium.

**Starling:** Objective love is the antidote to Schopenhauer 's Narcissistic love

**Lokifluff:** lol

**Alaya:** I don't separate romance and loyalty, if loyalty mean respect the sensitivity of others in the recyporque relation, but I do think that passion and loyalty are really not getting along, and choosing one or the other is not a choice to make, they happened temporarily in many sort of relation

**Reflection:** I think the functional purpose which romantic love fulfils is creating a "pair bond" but after that, it's pretty random as to whether it lasts or not Soj

**Shingles:** would you elaborate what Objective Love is, Starling?

**Oswy:** Srarling But love is many things it is a many splendored thing. I feel a song coming on but that's a serious point.

**Lokifluff:** indeed Alaya - is there something not exceeding romantic about being loyal?

**Sojourna:** Why do you all think that when I posed the (simplistic) dichotomy of LOVE or LOYALTY that Love won out? The results currently show 80% love and 20% loyalty.

**Chico:** I wonder whether PET techniques are able to locate \*love\* in the brain....

**Reflection:** yep Shing, afraid so (and marriage is the cure for romantic love, I think:))

**Starling:** sure, if love is "many things" or love is narcissistic pair bonding pre-occupations...then all your talk of love does not Good in the world.

**Schopenhauer:** Marriage is the KILLER of romantic love.

**Shingles:** I disagree fundamentally, Reflection

**Sojourna:** Chico - I had read about pheromones - being associated with producing the love/lust feeling

**Magenta:** lol reflection

**Starling:** Narcissistic love is selfish, objective love is about what you do to promote the health of those you claim to love. And health here includes psychological /emotional health

**Marya:** I expect it does that because it brings with it the realities of the other person, whereas the initial feelings are partly based on what our own minds have made up about the other person - I don't think that is a conscious thing though

**Shingles:** good distinction, Starling :)

**Reflection:** sure Chico, there is lots of biological research on love (popular topic for members of our species:))

**Starling:** thanks, and that's how you can see that loyalty and love are identities.

**Sojourna:** Why do you all think that when I posed the (simplistic) dichotomy of LOVE or LOYALTY that Love won out? The results currently show 80% love and 20% loyalty.

**Oswy:** Starling i am not disagreeing I think it is a multi faceted thing.

**Lokifluff:** following your definition Starlig, is objective love not then in your own best interests as well?

**Starling:** Loyalty to an idea is loyalty to a person, and loyalty to persons is a physical expression of objective love.

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**Starling:** Loki, of course.

**Alaya:** loyalty, lokky is something that can happen in many types of relation, and even may not involve reciprocity, in romance it's, representing a type of social sensitive respect, but not in the context of the sharing of the same life space, but more in the type of relation.

**Shingles:** Why of course love is intertwined with self-interest, Loki/Starling

**Starling:** Loki, with objectivist thought there's no false dichotomizing between self interest and the interests of others.

**Chico:** no religious \*god=love\* statements here as yet:-)

**Patrick:** I think our desire for intimacy drives our romantic love. By that I am not substituting intimacy for sex. Intimacy can include sex, but is more. Intimacy is the state in which a person feels safe to be completely vulnerable with another.

**Schopenhauer:** Yes Starling. I agree with Loki. IF love is not narcissistic (at least to a degree), then why do people who are married expect some sort of commitment from the other?

**Oswy:** Soj, to answer directly I think we perhaps saw love as being able to sustain a relationship whereas loyalty seemed a thin and perhaps miserable way of doing the sustaining. So we opted for the happier love.

**Sojourna:** Starling - are you saying that one cannot remain loyal to a person if there is no love/? That one is loyal only if one is in love? Romantic love, I mean.

**Chico:** (god was not romantic - got it)

**Lokifluff:** indeed... Alaya... and here we seem to me to be starting to look at either the different types of love and loyalty, or rather, the different forms of expression of love and loyalty

**Schopenhauer:** Even those who are in relationships (non-marital) expect commitment.

**Starling:** Schop, because of the love they have expressed, if you make a commitment to nurture another .. breaking your commitment(to and extent) is a betrayal of your self.

**Alaya:** commitment for each other, is less likely to happen about sharing a life long place, but more on the type of respect they like to have for one another

**Shingles:** But to be loved and affirmed by your life-partner - to be loved then allows one to have love for oneself, so I do not see that that would be narcissism, Schopenhauer

**Sojourna:** Oswy - that is interesting - yes. In the end, loyalty I think comes up as a better option of almost half the survey group - which is odd. In the end it seems the deeper and more profound option...but more on that later.

**Schopenhauer:** That is superficial Starling. We need to delve deeper to the feeling behind the feeling. The unconscious feeling.

**Alaya:** loyalty, and stability goes along, but may not need a same life space to happen

**Starling:** Shingles, that's a velveteen rabbit definition of love, that violates logical personal boundaries and is merely an enmeshment of one's self in the other, it's co-dependency

**Lokifluff:** but shingles... is that not self interest again... (if not narcissism)? One would be benefitting one's own interests in your example

**Shingles:** I see it more as an optimal state, Loki

**Lokifluff:** please explain shingles

**Starling:** Brim, you can navel gaze all you want and all you will end up is the semi=poetic verbiage that most talk of love for the last millennia has produced, or you can push the internal back into the small corner it deserves to be restricted to, in order to improve your life, and the lives of those around you.

**Shingles:** love violating logic, why should we be surprised by that, Schopenhauer?

**Schopenhauer:** Loyalty is the commitment part. But love only comes about if both parties are satisfied with the relationship. See, commitment and love are distinct. I can make a commitment to something, but not necessarily love it.

**Oswy:** All I am getting a bit lost here are some of you saying that all love is self regarding?

**Renald:** Can't be.

**Renald:** Oswy... love is self-in-other regarding.

**Starling:** It is. It cannot be anything else.

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**Sojourna:** Schop - I agree with that. But what are the implications of committing but not loving? Oswy suggests possible misery - what do you think?

**Starling:** You do not love another for reasons you do not have.

**Reflection:** shingles, optimally one does not find self-love, from the validation of a partner, in my opinion

**Lokifluff:** well put Renald

**Sojourna:** Renald, hey I like that!

**Renald** smiles

**Renald:** Thanks

**Shingles:** That to love and to be reciprocated in that love makes possible very much more, such as joy delight and clarity, Loki

**Sojourna:** Ref - would you say that romantic love however is a type of validation?

**Starling:** I think you're saying it is self regarding, and it regards the values one has for the other as one's own selfish valuations.

**Starling:** Renald, you just reframed selfishness so it sounds less selfish.

**Shingles:** Do they not? Then forgive me, I fundamentally disagree again, Renald

**Alaya:** loyalty is very altruistic commitment and it doesn't come with self satisfaction, but a good relation that meet some accurate reciprocity

**Sojourna:** Starling - haha

**Renald:** Wait, what?

**Oswy:** Ren I can see that just! I can see love benefits the lover but the lover is also prepared o sacrifice. It's not just a thing of personal gratification without being prepared to sacrifice oneself to an extent.

**Lokifluff:** I would agree shingles, but would also argue that they are all also self serving I guess

**Starling:** altruism is a selfish feeling people have, pride in their own values...valuing others.

**Reflection:** Soj, I would say that because romantic love is primarily a biologically created illusion, it is a very dangerous sort of validation that often turns into a form of traumatic invalidation as reality asserts itself (I am an utter romantic, of course:))

**Sojourna:** Alaya - would you say however that loyalty may well validate and satisfy someone who finds satisfaction in giving (being loyal) not loving (being selfish?)

**Shingles:** yes, to love and be loved is good for both subjects involved, Loki

**Schopenhauer:** Sojourna--We commit out of a sense of duty to some ideal. Take, for instance a man who feels obliged to follow in the footsteps of his ancestor lawyers, even though he wants to be a mathematician. He has two choices here: follow unhappiness, or pursue what he really wants to do.

**Sojourna:** Ref - yes, so a dangerous illusion - not a functional one!

**Shingles:** that is the optimal state, that synchronicity that comes with and of love

**Starling:** to say I am not selfish I am altruistic, is to say Yes I a selfish and what \*I\* selfishly value, is others.

**Alaya:** when we have a work in RL, we can really find a good reciprocity level, by the type of exchange we engage to have and its may not have to do with self satisfaction but its very more mathematic ,,,

**Sojourna:** Schop - yes.

**Starling:** Schop, that's not an ideal, it's an idealization

**Alaya:** it's about how much

**Reflection:** yes, Soj, in the modern world, pretty destructive as the statistics demonstrate

**Renald:** Oswy, Starling, Shing... anyone else. I was speaking mostly in terms of attitude, first, not action so much, which I recognize is incomplete. But the attitude of love, of most kinds anyway, seems to me to be one of dependence on another for one's own sake. That is "I need you in order to be fully me."

**Sojourna:** Ref - you mean divorce stats or something worse?

**Starling:** yes, that's selfishness; it is also co dependence. =P

**Lokifluff:** I see a difference between self interest and selfishness though....

**Starling:** Loki, then you have to edit everything I said and replace "selfish" with "self interest"

**Lokifluff:** everything we do is self interest I would argue, but selfishness does not take into consideration the other

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**Shingles:** Not dependence necessarily, but affirmation. One is always fully themselves, but a good life-partner can help one not forget or be confused about that, Renald

**Lokifluff:** lol Starling

**Sojourna:** Ref - I would agree with what you say - I think that identification is a fundamental thing in romantic love - one identifies with the lover - sees themselves in the lover, and likes who they are when with the lover.

**Oswy:** Ren, so this is something like the creation of the 'we' that some philosophers talk about, ie: you become a unit of an item of mutual benefit.

**Alaya:** loyalty is what we learn from our reciprocity with our parent, its not as it is with fedelity

**Starling:** Loki, my default definition is not to be self contradictory.

**Lokifluff:** or sees something that they would like to be themselves in their lover... ie a lack in themselves

**Renald:** Starling, Shingles... I don't see any way around selfishness. I don't see it in itself as negative. Only something to incorporate in the mix.

**Schopenhauer:** Loki--There is a difference, but they are still connected. TO me, selfishness is behind self-interest.

**Reflection:** Soj, the divorce stats are just the tip of the ice berg, only the people who fall most deeply in love get married, on average, and of the 50% of stay together over a longer term maybe half are horribly unhappy, what this means is that the "pair-bonding" reflex of romantic love is inaccurate for the purposes of long term bonding about 90% of the time (roughly and romantically speaking :))

**Shingles:** that would be excellence and synchronicity you are describing, Oswy

**Sojourna:** Now that we have begun talking about selfishness I might just interject with the first 'context' to give us a specific example to target our thoughts on ---->

**Lokifluff:** I would agree Schopenhauer

**Shingles:** well, fine, I do agree then, Ren

**Sojourna:** Ref - I didn't imagine that only the people who fall most deeply in love get married!

**Starling:** Renald, I can't see it as something that needs incorporating, rather as the foundation for everything, without which one's vocabulary becomes diffused with qualifications like "I don't mean selfishness, I mean selfishness that doesn't harm yourself"

**Alaya:** its more about a mathematic calculation, one get what fit the proportion that are to be made fit, like if one go into a store to get shoes, loyalty is that the one that provide the shoes will be loyal and give you the size that suit you, even not a personal taste there, but rather a measurement

**Starling:** like I just had with Loki

**Sojourna:** OK, well, let's hold onto those understandings of romantic love and loyalty and let's move ahead to question 2 on the agenda today which to discuss the first of the two love dilemmas:

**Marya:** I think we all fear being called selfish too much - humans 'are' selfish, that is just how we are - I think that selfishness simply manifests itself in different ways. We should stop feeling shame at the idea of being called selfish, because we all are.

**Shingles:** precisely, Marya

**Schopenhauer:** Amen Marya.

**Starling:** nods

**Sojourna:** Marya - yep!

**Renald:** Then, Starling, I think we probably agree, and if I misunderstood something you said as disagreement, I'll let it go. :-)

**Reflection:** Soj, I think so, people put their money where their mouth is, as we say, and make a binding legal commitment

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## Sojourna: 1. THE MEDIAEVAL LOVE DILEMMA

In the legend of Tristan and Iseult, the two fall in love, but Iseult is married to King Mark who is Tristan's uncle. They have an adulterous affair that ends tragically.

Even though their love is the result of a love potion, which they take by mistake, they do fall in true love. Let's call the love between Tristan and Iseult "true and romantic love" and the love between Iseult and Mark "correct and loyal love."

Which type of love do you think should be pursued?

**Shingles:** love should be 'correct'? Yuck

**Lokifluff:** lol - agree with shingles

**Sojourna:** Maybe we can continue discussing selfishness-selflessness and other dichotomies such as sanity/madness reason/emotion

**Starling:** can "correctness" be untrue? If you define your "correctness" as falseness .. you're doomed

**Oswy:** Soj I think she has to go with Tristan and dump Mark

**Marya:** I think the consequences of one's actions should probably be taken into consideration ...

**Sojourna:** Shingles - yes the term is weird - it struck me as very strong and odd - it took it from Irving Singer's lectures on love at MIT - there's a link in the readings

**Starling:** I think she has to tell Mark, and Mark needs to release her

**Sojourna:** Oswy! Wow - why???

**Sojourna:** Starling lolol!!! Good one

**Renald:** Good one? Because that's impossible? Out of the question?

**Shingles:** I think that if that Romantic love bears with it a genuine and more profound love than just a passing infatuation then the romantic love should be pursued, if not the loyal 'love' (although I wonder if it is love) is the safer way to live

**Starling:** objectivists are all for honesty...except when we have affairs online, of course

**Oswy:** Soj. Loyalty cannot be the basis of a satisfactory long term relationship. It is better for her and Mark if they split.

**Lokifluff:** but is it not really the case that what the question is addressing is not what love is true or proper, but rather how to act in the face of it?

**Starling:** Loyalty compels us to ask loyalty ...to what?

**Reflection:** Shing, how do you tell the difference between genuine and profound romantic love and infatuation? Doesn't everybody who is deeply infatuated, think that they are profoundly in love?

**Shingles:** loyalty to the Universe perhaps, Starling?

**Sojourna:** Starling - ok - so if Iseult stays with Mark what is she loyal to?

**Oswy:** Staying together just out of loyalty can be very destructive and misery making.

**Starling:** She isn't loyal .. She's obedient to values which are not her own, she's false.

**Reflection:** Oswy, I assure you that loyalty is often the foundation for long and abiding relationships :))

**Starling:** She will destroy herself, and Mark, as a result of the bigger betrayal

**Alaya:** in the passion relation that Iseult had with Tristan, there is no loyalty possible, it really nothing about the realism that passion permits

**Renald:** Reflection, actually, I can usually tell the difference :-) But that may have taken some practice.

**Sojourna:** Starling - you also mean inauthentic right? She isn't doing what she identifies with - which is continue loving Tristan.

**Alaya:** passionate isn't meeting romance either

**Shingles:** I suppose time must be taken in order to be certain which of them it is, but given a certain time (different for each person) they will intuitively know in themselves, Reflection

**Starling:** yes

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**Oswy:** Ref but if you have the chance of romantic love isn't it right to take your chance and let your partner get that opportunity as well.

**Alaya:** people can even have passionate sex , with no romance

**Starling:** you cannot be loyal...as you are disloyal to your own values.

**Reflection:** hahahahahah Ren!!!!

**Starling:** that's like saying I am going to lie about everything, and also tell you the truth about how I feel. It's illogical.

**Shingles:** Interesting, I would say that if Tristan was her better life-partner than her Mark, her true loyalty lies to herself, Starling

**Alaya:** fake loyalty is about lying

**Sojourna:** what do you all think about the love potion? Does this mean that love is an illusion? I mentioned that I think there is a lot of magic and madness in falling in love - but is this legend saying that love is not true? So - what do you think? Romantic love a lie or a truth?

**Starling:** Shingles, I am saying that our loyalty is to ourselves first and always, and if we are untrue to ourselves we can be true to no other.

**Lokifluff:** all love is truth.... truth for that moment.... in that context...

**Shingles:** I totally agree, Starling

**Alaya:** romance is a passage, its not something that exist for long

**Reflection:** shingles, the time frame for romantic love is about six months on average, and I don't know of any research that has been able to separate that from what you are calling infatuation, it is all pretty much the same biologically. I think sometimes, mostly by dumb luck at the end of six months two people find that they are actually compatible and then something more than romantic love develops and this involves a deep and accurate intuition about the other as well as loyalty

**Oswy:** Soj The potion complicated things because they were duped into taking it so you could say that their expression of passion was false.

**Marya:** The ideal situation would be that she leaves Mark, and then learns in time how her love for Tristan turns into the same situation as she had with Mark - because in time she would hopefully realise that Tristan is as human as Mark was, and prone to being flawed - perhaps in a different way to Mark, but flawed nonetheless.

Once she has stopped interpreting everything in her own terms and recognises the reality of her situation.

Meaning once her brain stops making things up/filling in the gaps because reality provides that information instead. To my mind, it is at that point that the 'love' happens - if it survives the reality.

**Schopenhauer:** Alaya--I think they have a word for non-romantic sex: It's called F'ing.

**Shingles:** or ideally she could have an open relationship, or a polygamous one

**JenDix:** did we decide that trueness is better than correctness?

**Starling:** the ideal is she tells Mark she does not love him, and he has enough balls and self love to say, adios witch

**Sojourna:** Oswy - that is what I was worried about - do you think we can extend it to other situations? I mean many people tell those who have fallen in love that they have gone mad. (ie taken something, etc)

**Lokifluff:** depends who with Schopenhauer

**Oswy:** Ref I think you trajectory may be correct but romantic love can keep re-emerging amongst the complex mix of love later. At least I hope it does.

**Starling:** lol non-romantic love

**Shingles:** I think you are right, yet I think you're omitting something vital in your account, Reflection

**JenDix:** reflection, are you saying romantic love only lasts 6 months on average?

**Schopenhauer:** True Loki, but I think all sex boils down to F'ing; it is no more than a drive for pleasure. The love and children are a by-product.

**Alaya:** in the time of Tristan and Iesult marriage were arrange, so the loyalty was more about royalty ... I'm sorry to tell, it nothing about a personal voluntary feeling

**Shingles:** that's horrible if that is the case, Schopenhauer

# Second Philosophy

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**Oswy:** Soj When I felt romantically in love and got engaged six weeks later I felt I was in the grip of something. I didn't mind but I didn't feel in control. I was aware it was fundamental biological etc.

**Lokifluff:** not sure I agree... :-)

**Schopenhauer:** Well, I believe it to be the case.

**Starling:** If that were the case you could never have sex with somebody who wasn't hot.

**Renald:** All... I've had the deep misfortune to be born to parents who are romantically in love to this very day. So, I know it need not be limited, for all the good that does anyone.

**Sojourna:** Alaya - you are right - the mediaeval legend is strikingly different to what might be relevant to us today - so let's move onto the modern love dilemma.

**Shingles:** How does that case make you feel? (feel free not to answer) then Schopenhauer?

**Sojourna:** Oswy - yes out of control - just think the love potion is a real metaphor for all that.

**Reflection:** agreed Oswy, that in the context of an abiding love relationship, this does need to be continually recreated to most healthy and vibrant:))

**Alaya:** I don't think idealisation is only on one side, or on the side of romance or on the side of loyalty, illusion of idealism can be in both

**Magenta:** it's hard to be born to parents like that, isn't it Ren?

**Schopenhauer:** True. But "Hot" depends upon ones perception. What I find "Hot", one of my friends may think of as ugly

**Reflection:** yes, Jen, I'm suggesting there is an average time frame (although this is hugely different from couple to couple, of course)

**Renald** nods miserably.

**Starling:** Schop, and 20 years later will your overweight wife be hot still?

**Schopenhauer:** Shingles--Could you elaborate a bit?

**Alaya:** its not hard since I had some parent that also love themselves until one died

**Shingles:** upon what, sorry, Schop?

**Starling:** certain love....I LOVE that phrase

**Schopenhauer:** What you asked me.

**Reflection:** Ren, it isn't very likely that your parents are experiencing biologically, what it is that we are talking about when two people meet and fall in love, in fact because of the problems in reality testing involved with that state, it almost needs to dissipate to some extent

**Renald:** Ref, I'm afraid I don't understand your question. Can you restate it?

**Shingles:** If you believe this to be the case: [12:45] *Schopenhauer: True Loki, but I think all sex boils down to F'ing; it is no more than a drive for pleasure. The love and children are a by-product.*) Then how do you feel about that, Schopenhauer?

**Sojourna:** Ref - your time frame will have an impact on the way we need to think about the modern love dilemma....is it worth it etc? OK, well let's move on to question 3 on the agenda today, which is to discuss the second of the two love dilemmas:

## 2. THE MODERN LOVE DILEMMA

You are in a long term relationship, but the romantic love you felt in the beginning is lost. And, while you love and cherish your current partner, you have since met someone else who has inspired all the feelings of romantic love again and you desire to be with them, instead. But you are in conflict, because:

a) You love your current partner, but you are no longer romantically in love with him/her. Because of this, you feel you do not identify with your current partner, but truly feel you identify with the new person.

b) While you could remain loyal, and live reasonably well, your feelings of romantic love with the new person have made you believe that you could live even better if you chose to be with them, instead.

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c) Moreover, you feel that there is no room for further personal development in your current relationship. But you feel that with the new person you could bring out an even better self.

What do you do?

**Shingles:** I disagree, a love 'potion' connotes an artificiality, whereas I would say intuitively certain love is the most genuine thing in humanity, Sojourna

**Sojourna:** Shingles - great another romantic :))

**Alaya:** loyalty was there in an unconditional commitment, but an agreement that they wish both

**Starling:** Soj, you have told us we do not love the person you said we do love, just not romantically.

**Schopenhauer:** I say pursue pleasure and happiness, even though they may end up being a fluke.

**Oswy:** Soj For me the decisive factor is point C if there is no room for further development then it is better to split find love with another can give your partner the same chance.

**Sojourna:** Starling - yep love but not romantically in love

**Marya:** I think it depends on what your priorities are - and what the consequences are of your actions

**Oswy:** We are only here for a sexually active for a short time make use of it.

**Renald:** Marya... exactly.

**Starling:** Soj, your question defines "romantic love" as all those parts of love that love is...its an impossible question.

**Alaya:** revival of the passion, is something many have to do, if they have fall into boredom its too bad, another relation will be in the same direction if the "new" aspect only stimulate some feeling of relation, I would wonder of what they are

**Schopenhauer:** Shingles--I think that all of us are a by-product of our parents unconscious drive for pleasure i.e. sexual gratification.

**Starling:** I do not love, in any sense, that does not meet the requirements you say ONLY apply to "romantic love"

**Sojourna:** Yes - Oswy - the factor of how much time we have come into play here. In the survey that is - a number of people said that if there is time (no illness threatening life span etc) then one could be loyal - but if not then one should go for love.

**Reflection:** If, I understood Ren, you were suggesting that your parents had remained in a constant state of romantic infatuation, and I was suggesting that this was biologically quite unlikely (although I'm sure they are two love birds, nevertheless:))

**Oswy:** Soj It is not an impossible question. A relationship that has ceased to develop is a poor relationship and could be dangerous, better to split. I'm afraid I would not make much of a marriage guidance counsellor.

**Shingles:** to have a child, a birth or being a father is simply another sexual thrill? I think it is a level of desire far beyond the plainly sexual, Schopenhauer

**Schopenhauer:** One question I have is why do we have the urge to get married just because we are in "love" with someone?

**Starling:** I guess I am saying that this question empty's the term love off all the loving, and then calls all loving romantic love" only.

**Sojourna:** Starling - I'm thinking that romantic love is basically what I've summed up on the board behind me - taken from the survey responses. Not all love is like that I don't think.. i.e the relationship in the love dilemma might resemble friendship love

**Reflection:** Os, and Soj, I think the issues is whether "c" has been fully examined. People more often fall in love with others when there is stagnation in their primary relationship, and then when the affair becomes apparent, there is then often the will to work on the older relationship, which is then often found to have lots of potential which as been untapped

**Starling:** it sounds more like a passing acquaintance to me.

**Oswy:** Schop, It's a sign of commitment.

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**Alaya:** I'm sure that some are only stimulate by the newly thing in their life that seems to awake some stimulation,, and I'm not sure its link to love or anything, but passion excitement

**Schopenhauer:** Perhaps it is Shingles, but neither of us cold prove our point beyond a reasonable doubt.

**Shingles:** I guess because we want to invoke all Existence to witness your' love, hence the tradition of marrying in a Church, Schopenhauer

**Renald:** Ref, my parents have what people who are first in love rarely have, which is ongoing, fairly continuous access to each other. Some of the intensity that we associate with "infatuation" is I think largely driven by that. But we may be quibbling -- I know I do that a lot. :-)

**JenDix:** I think romantic love can happen with or without (the perceptions of) time and certainly without the possibility of children. But I tend to agree with Marya that there are other consequences involved in dissolving a primary relationship

**Sojourna:** Ref - ok yes

**Shingles:** then that'll do for me, Schop :)

**Schopenhauer:** A sign of commitment you say? Words are not good enough? "Romantic" acts are not good enough? Being there is not good enough Oswy?

**Sojourna:** Ref - but if one is caught in the madness of romantic love - it is difficult to overcome those passions and see the old relationship reasonably. Would you say?

**Shingles:** and perhaps you should hear this too: I guess because we want to invoke all Existence to witness your' love, hence the tradition of marrying in a Church, Oswy

**Schopenhauer:** I think marriage is just an archaic ideal; something many faith-heads cling to and non-faith-heads want for whatever reason. Perhaps to keep their partner in chains.

**Oswy:** Schop, I was not expecting to say OK we are married now I put my feet up and you get my dinner. It's one sign alongside all the other things you would want to do for your beloved.

**Renald:** hmm

**Schopenhauer:** Beloved??? HA!

**Shingles:** I disagree, I think if the marriage is open then where remain the chains?

**Reflection:** Schop, I think we have an innate impulse to solidify our pair bond because through evolutionary time, the sturdiness of this bond was strongly associated with survival for the couple (just not today)

**Schopenhauer:** Then if that is the case, I guess I hade better propose to my books.

**Oswy:** Schop, what's wrong with beloved? Also yes I agree Shingles about the public aspect of things.

**Starling:** good will hunting

**Sojourna:** may I also ask you to think about whether you would be justified to pursue the romantic love in the dilemma situation and why is it because of increased value and quality of life? Are you making an aesthetic and ethical judgement?

**Renald:** All... just because something isn't right for me, can it not be right for others?

**Reflection:** yes Soj, I think it is almost impossible to see the old relationship clearly, almost until you are on the point of losing it, then you see the values there once again

**Sojourna:** Ref 0 ok

**Schopenhauer:** Nothing is wrong with beloved Oswy. I was just being sarcastic.

**Starling:** Ref, I think you've lost it, and may only just have a chance to get it back after that

**Schopenhauer:** And I was just speculating about the chains Shingles.

**Sojourna:** does anyone agree with the Nussbaum quote? That love is an emotion based on reasoning about what is valuable in life? And hence as reasonable as it is emotional?

**Oswy:** Soj I speak with the experience of seeing one loyalty based relationship end in suicide and several others as misery for years for both partners. Soj, I agree there are health implications for love gone wrong.

**Starling:** Ayn Rand did

**Starling:** feelings are a response to thinking.

**Sojourna:** Oswy - that is interesting - yes an extreme example

**Sojourna:** Starling - yes, it sounds good to me

**Starling:** you hold a .357 in a baby's face and they'd go "oo shiney"

## Second Philosophy

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**Reflection:** yes, startling, that is often the case, although long standing pair bonds are extraordinarily resistant to breakage on the basis of affairs

**Renald:** Soj... it depends on what the limits of reasonable are... I find emotions themselves to have logical structure, so.

**Sojourna:** does anyone agree that falling in love is making a choice between one way of life and another, between one set of values and another set?

**Starling:** Ref. yeah...I think women are extraordinarily prone to forgiving rat bastards

**Shingles:** If one believes the arrangement of marriage to be chains, that one will make the chains for themselves. The woman I love I find invigorates me and I her, I know that's anecdotal, but we believe our love is mutually restorative and so we make that restoration for ourselves

**Oswy:** Soj, if Ref is right then a lot of people must be living in something like misery. Why don't they get out? Perhaps they are in modern times in increasing numbers?

**Reflection:** nope Soj, can't agree with the Nussbaum quote, romantic love is mostly not about rationality, I'm afraid (or pleased to say as the case may be;-))

**Sojourna:** Renald - logical structure to emotions I like it

**Starling:** Oswy, as the responsibility to children is replaced by the state, we do get out

**Oswy:** Shingles I am happy to be bound in golden chains that I helped to make. This is not a fetish!!!

**Starling:** just not MY mom.

**Renald:** Soj, the question I have that I never remember to chase down has to do with how aware someone has to be of the logic of their feeling/thinking/acting in order for it to qualify as "reasonable."

**Patrick:** Starling, I am not sure I agree with feelings are result of thinking. I think feeling can be primal and not require mental constructs to initiate them

**Reflection:** sounds wonderful Shingles!! Good for you! :))

**Sojourna:** Ref - ok - but what about making a choice? Or does that imply rationality? So for you romantic love is not a choice?

**Starling:** <-totally digs Shing's last remark

**Sojourna:** Renald - ah ok, emotional awareness ?

**Shingles:** my, I'm popular tonight

**Shingles:** ty Refl

**Starling:** Patrick, but how you form the feeling requires you to thin something about the event, and how you respond requires more thinking, the event and the feeling are bound in layers of thought

**Reflection:** right Soj, as the ancient Greeks said, just cupid with an arrow, and when you're shot, you're shot, so buckle up it's going to be a bumpy ride!

**Alaya:** I cant associate myself with that definition of love as a reasonable emotion, not at all, but according to my experience and those I had around me, its something that is deeper than reason even, its something that isn't firing as passion, so intensity isn't there as this, and nothing as dry as the commitment, of what people think of fidelity, but a hearted loyalty with a great deal of tenderness

**Renald:** Ah, Starling... would that it were so... except... on second thought, no. I'd rather have it both ways.

**Oswy:** Patrick. there has to be rationality in developing the love relationship. You do have to work at it and think about what you are doing.

**Starling:** like with the gun example Renald...a baby has no thinking about the .357 and so has no fear of it

**Sojourna:** OK , we are nearing the end of time so I pose a challenge to you all - decide what you would do in love dilemma modern and, in one or two sentences, write a justification of your reasons as if to convince a philosopher! Then post here :)

**Renald:** Starling... and loud noises? Sudden loss of equilibrium?

**Starling:** if you had no thinking about...women with curvy figures maybe...then you would not have The Feelings you have even if you had \*some\*kind\* of response to them

**Starling:** some for loud noises

**Schopenhauer:** As pleasure and happiness are my chief pursuits in this world, it would be crazy to let a chance at that pass through my fingertips.

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**Starling:** you'd duck ..or jump...but then what...would you giggle? or cry?

**Sojourna:** Schop - directed at Epicurus?

**Oswy:** Soj I have already stated my case. A relationship that can make no progressive development has ceased to be love in any meaningful way. It is dangerous and conducive to misery to continue. On the grounds of equal opportunity the partners should recognise genuine failure and seek to start again with other partners . no shame in that.

**Renald:** Well, I was thinking primarily about the ducking and jumping part.

**Schopenhauer:** As for the loyalty aspect, well why should I be loyal to something I no longer care for? Unlike many people, my loyalty stems from what I get from the object I am loyal to.

**Starling:** the duck or jump is a reaction...the giggle or crying is an emotion

**Renald:** hmm

**Schopenhauer:** In a sense Sojourna.

**Renald:** Oswy, I'm highly inclined to agree, as long as something like "deepening" can be considered progressive.

**Starling:** you do not automatically love or hate a loud noise, even if your CNS jumps because of one

**Patrick:** Oswy, that is true but which comes first the thought or the feeling. We know that animals can show evidence of anger or affection and they have little frontal cortex activity.

**Sojourna:** Oswy - yes. And which philosopher would you convince?

**Shingles:** I would approach the dilemma from the perspective of my fundamental beliefs, which are that I have a duty to myself to excel and that this is a reflection of the Universe, so I would, when the opportunity presented itself to join with a life-partner in greater synchronicity than my current one I believe that I should go for that new life-partner, Sojourna

**Sojourna:** Renald - interesting - when would it not be progressive?

**Reflection:** the problem Os, is that people often get habituated to each other and fail to see the potential in relationships. It is probably rarely the case that there is not potential in a long term relationship, it would not have started and persisted over a long period otherwise (especially as the selection factors, statistics are so daunting)

**Starling:** Oswy, yeah to me that, in the question, defines the old relationship as non-loving.

**Renald:** Soj, never, in my view. But I don't know how widely it's shared.

**Sojourna:** Shingles - nice, to Aristotle and Spinoza?

**Alaya:** everything that goes definitely goes down, so, is passion romance, as fire in the chimney when we put too much leaves in it, tenderness loyalty is more as a good stable fire, weel watch by both partner that are reciprocally wishing to keep a good warmth in the relation, teasing the fire once in a while that it will not extinguish not be too hot

**Oswy:** J S Mill Although he contradicted the advice I have given. He could have had many more years with his eventual partner if he hadn't been such a stuffed shirt. He should the considered the greatest good as applying to himself.

**Shingles:** I think Spinoza already knew it, Soj

**Sojourna:** Shingles - and I totally agree about pursuing self-excellence.

**Sojourna:** Shingles - yep for sure?

**Starling:** Renald, so when people are no longer loving, its because they have closed their eyes to the potential to grow together?

**Sojourna:** Oswy - I must read about those personal details....

**Reflection:** because of the biology of infatuation, Shingles, your ability to make such a judgement with validity is highly questionable, which is why it waffles around the way that it does in the real world (although you don't sound as though you are inclined to act on the statement which you just made, except as a hypothetical)

**Shingles:** Id like to kick Nietzsche in the pants for his comments about women, would that count?

**Renald:** Starling... if there is still potential, and they aren't pursuing it, then yes. But there can always be other factors.

**Sojourna:** Shingles - oh yeah!

## Second Philosophy

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**Schopenhauer:** What comment is that Shingles?

**Alaya:** after you'll try it Shingles you can make a good evaluation of it

**Starling:** Ref, isn't the key thing to ongoing love, to be able to maturely handle the love chemicals of infatuation?

**Oswy:** Soj He was in a love triangle for a long time and maintained for respectabilities sake a platonic relationship with his beloved until her married partner died.

**Sojourna:** Well, I'm going to officially end the discussion now, as time is up. I'd like to thank you all for coming, for taking part in the survey. If you haven't, the survey is still open, please see survey note card for information.

**Sojourna:** And, as usual, I look forward to continuing this discussion on our Facebook group discussion board.

**Oswy:** I think he should have been more decisive but it was mid Victorian UK at the time. More difficult to be unrespectable for a middle class civil servant.

