

# Deep personal relationships and well-being: A response to Hooker

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## Abstract

This paper is a response to Brad Hooker's "Does having deep personal relationships constitute an element of well-being?" (2021). The paper begins with a discussion of the implications of disagreement about such issues. After raising some general questions for Hooker's account, the paper turns to the key elements in a deep personal relationship, according to Hooker: multi-faceted understanding, and strong affection. The issue of impartiality is discussed, and it is claimed that Hooker's account is consistent with morality's being impartial. Some possible interpretations of Hooker's overall project are offered, and the paper ends with a discussion of Hooker's suggestions that the affection in valuable personal relationships must be merited.

## KEYWORDS

friendship, Hooker, Brad, impartiality, partiality, well-being

## 1 | AN ANCIENT DEBATE

Brad Hooker and I agree that pleasure is an element of well-being, but differ on whether deep personal relationships (DPRs) constitute a further element in addition to pleasure. Our debate goes back a long way—much further than the four decades in which we have been discussing philosophy. One of the abiding characteristics of ancient ethics is the to-ing and fro-ing between hedonists, such as Democritus, the Cyrenaics, and the Epicureans, and "objective list theorists", the most famous and influential of whom were of course Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. In more recent times, hedonism was the dominant position from at least the time of Hobbes. Sidgwick was a major proponent of hedonism, but its popularity dropped dramatically after Sidgwick, partly perhaps because of the

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impact of Moore's *Principia*, alongside wider acceptance of the view that, despite the attempts of J.S. Mill and Sidgwick, hedonism remained the "philosophy of swine", unable to account for the non-derivative value to be found in art, knowledge, friendship, and other goods.

The very fact of continuous disagreement on the value of non-hedonic goods such as DPRs puts them, I believe, on a significantly weaker footing, at least as far as western philosophy is concerned. Few serious thinkers have argued that (innocent) pleasure is valueless or even bad, or that pain is valueless or even good. There have been attempts to do this; Aristotle and the Stoics, for example, can be understood as arguing that the only good is virtue (or virtuous activity), but even they often attempt to show that virtue is itself pleasurable, and their arguments are motivated primarily by a concern to demonstrate the worthlessness of vice than that of pleasure in itself. In a world of saints, I suspect that Socrates and his successors would not even have considered criticizing pleasure.

What are the implications of this continuing disagreement? Here I side with the Pyrrhonism expressed by Sidgwick in his discussion of how we might attain the "highest certainty" in ethics:

Since it is implied in the very notion of Truth that it is essentially the same for all minds, the denial by another of a proposition that I have affirmed has a tendency to impair my confidence in its validity.... And it will easily be seen that the absence of ... disagreement must remain an indispensable negative condition of the certainty of our beliefs. For if I find any of my judgments ... in direct conflict with a judgment of some other mind, there must be error somewhere: and *if I have no more reason to suspect error in the other mind than in my own, reflective comparison between the two judgments necessarily reduces me temporarily to a state of neutrality.*<sup>1</sup> And though the total result in my mind is not exactly suspense of judgment, but an alternation and conflict between positive affirmation by one act of thought and the neutrality that is the result of another, it is obviously something very different from scientific certitude. (Sidgwick, 1907, pp. 341–342; my italics)

It seems to me that, given the textual context and Sidgwick's tendency to hedge, we should read him as saying that reflective comparison *should* reduce me to a state of neutrality. He says that the state he finds himself in in such cases is "not exactly suspense of judgement", and this I read as a phenomenological claim: though he *believes* that his original judgement has no greater claim to truth than that of the other person, that original judgement still *appears* to him to be true. But no more credence should be placed in that appearance than in that of a bent stick in water.

In other words, given the scale of the disagreement about non-hedonic elements of well-being, I think we have to see it as one between epistemic peers, such that its participants can only reasonably suspend judgement on their respective positions. They can of course continue to articulate how things appear to them, in the form of arguments for these positions. In the case of DPRs, the main doubts I have about them as independent elements of well-being, many of which are addressed by Hooker in his paper, are: (a) they seem less ultimate than some other items on typical objective lists (Hooker's own account involves important roles for both pleasure, knowledge, and achievement (2021, p. 1 and *passim*) and it is not difficult to think of other further goods which may flow from DPRs, such as affirmation), which raises the question whether it would not be more parsimonious to understand them in terms of one or more of these other values; (b) they are open to debunking arguments based on evolutionary accounts of partiality.

Nevertheless, I have to confess that the power and elegance of Hooker's case, and in particular his elucidation of just what it is that might make DPRs valuable, has altered the way I see objective list theories and the debate between their proponents and hedonism. What his arguments show is that, despite the length of the debate on well-being, there remains a great deal of further discussion to be had. And though hedonism still appears to me correct, I now recognize that there is significantly more to be said on behalf of DPRs than I had thought. That is one of many things for which I am grateful to Brad Hooker.

<sup>1</sup>Sidgwick does not suggest that the mere fact of disagreement gives me a reason to suspect error in the other mind, but what he says is consistent with this position.

## 2 | WHICH PARTIES?

DPRs seem, on Hooker's view, to be personal in so far as they are between individual persons. There is a question here about whether one might have a DPR with a group of persons who constitute a collective entity, such as a doctor's practice, given that such an entity might be said to meet the epistemic and affective conditions Hooker sets for any such relationship to constitute well-being. It may be that one would not attribute well-being to the practice itself, but here again a question arises as to whether the conception of well-being in contemporary philosophy is excessively individualistic, given the way that we often speak of such collective or group entities and our relationships with them.

Another question is whether Hooker is using the "person" in "personal" in Locke's "forensic" sense, now common in much ethics and bioethics, to mean a "thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself" (Locke, 1975/1700, II.27.9). Could one have a DPR with a child, an intellectually disabled adult, or a non-human animal? The following passage might suggest that his view is more ecumenical (and hence, I would say, more plausible):

Two people's multi-faceted understanding of each other's personality and character is very typically gained through a shared history of activities together. At the limit, such shared activities might be merely conversations between the parties. But, of course, a more secure evidential base for beliefs about someone's personality and character would include very many observations of behaviour, since these might bear on the truth of what the person has asserted. Indeed, precisely because people can learn so much about one another from observing behaviour, a shared history of activities that generates a multi-faceted understanding of each other's personality and character might involve vanishingly little conversation, none of which is about especially meaningful topics. (Hooker, 2021, p. 2)

It depends how high one sets the bar for a "conversation", of course, but even in the case of non-humans it is common for people to talk to them, and for them to respond in some non-linguistic manner, with a sound or some form of behaviour.

## 3 | UNDERSTANDING AND AFFECTION: THE ELEMENTS OF DEEP PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Hooker is a pluralist about well-being, and also a pluralist about DPRs, in the sense that DPRs themselves can be understood as involving separate elements. The first is a multi-faceted understanding by each party of the other's personality and character (Hooker, 2021, pp. 2–3). Knowledge or understanding standardly appears on objective lists, so it could well be that Hooker would allow such understanding to increase a person's well-being even if were not also an element in DPR. If he would, a question arises about whether, when the understanding is an element in DPR, it contributes to well-being in two respects—as understanding, and as (part of) a DPR. This might be taken to be double-counting, but I think this would be a mistake. What matter here are the "good-making properties" of multi-faceted understanding (or perhaps "*good-for-making* properties"), and these will differ respectively in the cases of understanding and DPRs.

Several writers on DPRs have claimed that a shared history is a necessary condition for a relationship's counting as a DPR (see e.g., Kolodny, 2003, pp. 135–136, 162–163, 2010, pp. 182–184). Hooker does not insist on this, and he does not require it even for the development of multi-faceted understanding: you and I can acquire multi-faceted understanding, and this can lead to a DPR, even if we have never interacted directly at all, but have learned about one another's personality and character from books and reports about one another. In other words, the two of us can be in a DPR even if we never meet. But of course Hooker allows that this would be highly

unusual. Most often, multi-faceted understanding emerges from a shared history of joint activities. This shared history, however, has no value in itself, and contributes no value to the resulting DPR.

The second essential element of a DPR is that the parties have strong mutual affection (Hooker, 2021, pp. 3–7). The strength of this affection is presumably part of what constitutes the depth of the relationship, but that will also depend on the length of the relationship (Hooker, 2021, pp. 2–3, 17–18) and the degree of multi-faceted understanding. This raises some questions about how to understand the relation between mutual affection and multi-faceted understanding.

First, might mutual affection be valuable when multi-faceted understanding, including any “affective understanding”, is lacking? Might relationships which involve a good deal of affection, but are based on little multi-faceted understanding, contribute to well-being? Some people, for example, greatly value living in a small community, like a village, where they may be on warm and friendly terms with many others for many years, and they may claim that these relationships add value to their life, despite their being quite “shallow” and involving little or no multi-faceted understanding.

Second, is the value of DPRs an organic whole, so that the value of the combination of multi-faceted understanding with mutual affection is greater, perhaps significantly greater, than the sum of the value of multi-faceted understanding alone added to the value of mutual affection alone?

Third, does the depth of a DPR vary according to the degree of mutual understanding of personality and character? One might think this is a question about multi-faceted understanding rather than mutual affection. But the final section of the paper limits the affection that counts in a *valuable* DPR (a VDPR) to affection towards another person based on properties warranting that affection.<sup>2</sup> It might be thought, then, that the only aspects of a person's personality and character relevant to multi-faceted understanding are those warranting affection. But there is no evidence that Hooker accepts this rather narrow view. Rather, his view seems to be that knowledge of any aspects of personality and character are relevant. In most DPRs, multi-faceted understanding will involve knowledge of a huge number of aspects of a person's personality and character that are trivial or, though not trivial, on the face of it do not warrant affection. I might know all about your passion for jigsaw puzzles, for example, or the fact that you get anxious before travelling; about your education and career; or even about various immoral actions you have committed, or about vices you continue to possess.

So in Hooker's conception of DPRs, depth requires sufficient mutual understanding to bring that understanding above some threshold, even though that understanding will involve many properties which seem not to warrant affection. As I noted above, for multi-faceted understanding to contribute to a VDPR, it must, in the standard case (see n. 2 above), be that affection is based on properties of the other person that warrant affection—that is, one's love of a person will be grounded in love of the good in that person.<sup>3</sup> It seems, then, that two people could have a VDPR, but be ignorant of a great deal of each other's personality and character. As long as they know each other's affection-warranting qualities well, such that their multi-faceted understanding is above the threshold required for a DPR, and feel affection for each other based on those qualities, their relationship will be a VDPR.

Let me now turn to the conception of affection at work in mutual affection. Hooker begins his discussion of the affection he has in mind with a reference to Aristotle's account of *philia* in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2021, p. 4). The passage in question states that friends must have mutual “goodwill” (*eunoia*) to one another, and it is

<sup>2</sup>This is the standard case: see e.g., the discussion of affection as a fitting attitude (Hooker, 2021, pp. 12–14) and the stipulation at e.g., p. 19 that in a VDPR the qualities of the person for whom one feels affection must merit that affection. Both of these passages suggest that in a VDPR the affection for the other person is, at least in part, grounded on the qualities that merit affection. But in conversation Hooker allowed that there may be VDPRs in which I feel affection for someone for some quality that does not merit it (e.g., their beauty), but affection for that person is merited because they possess some other quality of which I am unaware (e.g., their kindness to non-human animals).

<sup>3</sup>Recall another radical element in Hooker's account of VDPRs: the lack of any requirement for face-to-face interaction. Both of these elements might be taken as a move towards a Platonic account of love of the kind advocated by Socrates in the *Symposium*. This account is at the very least more impersonal than an account which requires VDPRs to involve actual acquaintance and mere liking of the other person for any reason, not just for reasons grounded in the good. See sect. 6 below.

worth noting that such mutual goodwill can exist between two people even if they actually dislike one another. They may have a special respect or admiration for one another, perhaps, or be in the same family and strongly wish that all other members of the family do well. But I take it that, as in Aristotle's use of *philia*, Hooker's conception of strong affection necessarily involves mutual liking, and most probably strong liking (of which genus love would be a species). For Hooker, strong affection also necessarily involves "strong concern for the other's welfare", and this sounds very much like Aristotle's goodwill. But since, like Aristotle, Hooker does not identify strong affection with this strong concern, a question arises analogous to that which we saw in the case of relationships involving liking without multi-faceted understanding: could my well-being not be advanced through the doing well of another whom I do not like, but whose personality and character I know well and for whose well-being I have strong concern?

Strong concern itself has three elements (Hooker, 2021, p. 4). The attitudinal component consists in being pleased when things go well for the other, and displeased when they go badly. (I take it that 'being pleased' here is not equivalent merely to "thinking it a good thing that", but involves a feeling of pleasure; at Hooker, 2021, p. 9, for example, the pleasure in DPRs is contrasted with *emotional* pain.)<sup>4</sup> The motivational component involves being motivated to benefit and not to harm the other. The dispositional component again has sub-elements: the disposition to interpret what the other says and does favourably, and to behave at least sometimes in ways one believes will be beneficial to the other.

Note—in connection with the question asked at the end of the penultimate paragraph—that any of these elements of strong concern can be found in the absence of liking. The OED defines "to like" in the relevant sense as: "To feel an attraction to or a favourable regard or fondness for (a person or group of people)" (sense 8). The reference here to 'favourable regard' is too broad: it is a genus of which liking is a species, along with, say, respecting or admiring. But liking clearly does involve feeling attraction to someone and being fond of them, and these are not necessary conditions for strong, mutual concern.

The reference to benefiting in the account of strong concern raises the important question whether strong affection necessarily involves partiality in the sense of the parties' giving one another priority over others. Hooker rightly notes that it does not, because it is a contingent matter whether there are others around over whom the parties can give one another priority. But, he suggests, in our world strong affection will lead the parties in a DPR to give one another priority, at least in contexts where this is not forbidden. Hooker's example of a context in which it would be forbidden is a hiring decision. It is an interesting question whether, if one party in a VDPR unjustly favours the other in a hiring decision, that will decrease the contribution that this DPR might make to the well-being of the committee member or perhaps both of them. Someone attracted to the broadly Aristotelian idea that valuable friendship must involve virtue might think it will. Hooker goes on to claim, with a reference to John Cottingham, that outside such contexts "you are always allowed and sometimes required to give some degree of priority to those with whom you have deep relationships" (2021, p. 6). Cottingham's paper is about the "ethical credentials" of partiality, so I assume that Hooker's claim here is about the morality of partiality, rather than what is required for a DPR to exist or to contribute to well-being, and this interpretation is borne out by his account of the qualities that warrant affection, which include more than virtues (see below). Nevertheless, if the affection of the person employed for the employer was partly based on the latter's justice (up to that point), the unjust decision will presumably on Hooker's account lower the value of the VDPR to the employee, and perhaps even reduce it to zero for both parties, depending on the seriousness of the injustice and the nature of their relationship in general.

What if ethical theory is entirely impartial, and also requires impartiality in practice? As long as one does not hold the strong Aristotelian view I just mentioned, DPRs involving partiality may still advance the well-being of the non-virtuous parties involved. We might also wonder whether DPRs are possible for virtuous agents if ethics is impartial both theoretically and practically, and if so whether they might advance the well-being of the parties. Clearly they could not give one another priority over others, except in so far as there was some more ultimate impartial justification for this. But, as Hooker points out, the partiality in DPRs could be

<sup>4</sup>For a defence of a purely attitudinal account of pleasure, see Feldman, 2004, chs. 4–5.

construed dispositionally. Indeed we may understand the hiring committee in this way: I *wish* I could give you the job, and I *would*, were other things equal; but since they are not, it would be unjust to do so and I will not. Could a VDPR exist, then, between two parties who are impartial in all areas of their life? It seems that it could: two individuals could have multi-faceted understanding, like one another, and meet all the conditions for strong concern in mutual affection. That concern may itself be partial (so they are *more* pleased when things go well for the other than in the case of those with whom they are not involved in a DPR), and they will benefit one another (and are disposed to benefit one another) only when it is permitted by impartial morality, while also interpreting what the other party says and does favourably.

## 4 | THE NATURE OF HOOKER'S PROJECT

Let me now briefly consider the nature of Hooker's project—in particular, whether he is aiming to offer a definition, or complete account or specification, of what it is in human relationships that leads to their making a positive contribution, in themselves, to well-being. If his view is in this way comprehensive, then he may allow that certain personal relationships which do not meet the conditions he sets can contribute to well-being, but they will have to do so through their advancing some non-relationship-involving component of well-being, such as knowledge (especially, say, if it is general understanding of important aspects of human personality and character) or pleasure (especially, for instance, if one finds deep contentment in being part of a friendly community, or enjoys spending time with people one likes, even if one does not know them all that well).

If this is the right understanding of Hooker's project, then it is in line with those many attempts in the history of philosophy to define some important notion, such as, say, personal identity, knowledge, or freedom. One problem with such projects is that they can run into potential counter-examples, and indeed a good deal of philosophy consists in finding such counter-examples (take, as a rather hackneyed instance, Gettier on justified true belief). So it might be claimed that there can be VDPRs which do not involve all the elements Hooker include. I have already mentioned relationships which involve mutual affection but lack multi-faceted understanding, and relationships which involve multi-faceted understanding and strong concern, but lack mutual affection. It might even be claimed that there are DPRs which contribute to well-being without involving either multi-faceted understanding or mutual affection. Consider, for example, the relationship between two distance-chess players, who compete for some important international title against one another for many years. They interact and get to know one another to the point where their knowledge of the other person is just below the relevant threshold required for standard VDPRs. They neither like nor dislike one another, and not strongly concerned for each other. But each greatly respects and admires the other, recognizing their abilities and the work they have put in to improve over the decades, and also how competing with them has importantly affected their own development as a player.

There is another interpretation available of Hooker's project. Take the debate between those who claim that knowledge is merely justified true belief, and those who claim that it is justified true belief with some further feature, such as truth-tracking. This debate can be seen as a merely verbal dispute, which might be dissolved through allowing two concepts of knowledge, knowledge<sub>1</sub> and knowledge<sub>2</sub> (Chalmers, 2011). There is then nothing further to be discussed, except which concept we should use (we might of course choose to use both). If we understand Hooker's project as a form of "conceptual engineering" (see Burgess et al., 2020) we might end up with different concepts of personal relationship. But he would have an immediate answer to the question of why we should use only his concept (if his account of VDPRs exhausts the contribution made by human relationships to well-being), or at least give his concept priority (if his account is of those DPRs most central and significant in human well-being).

It could be, however, that we should understand Hooker's project neither as a traditional piece of analytic philosophy nor as one of conceptual engineering. For him to answer the question whether having deep personal relationships constitutes an element of well-being requires him only to give one *example* of a VDPR, and he could

then go on to allow that different kinds of DPR—such as that between the athletes, for example—as well as non-deep relationships—such as that between the villagers—can contribute to well-being. In other words, on this interpretation Hooker would be giving an account of *one* important kind, perhaps by far the most important kind, of human relationship.

## 5 | DEEP PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, WELL-BEING, AND HUMAN NATURE

As I suggested earlier, the debate on whether well-being consists in more than net pleasure alone has a long history. Hooker's main argument for the positive contribution of DPRs to well-being also has an impressive pedigree. In Plato's *Philebus*, for example, when Protarchus claims that all that matters in life is pleasure, Socrates asks him whether he would not prefer a life which also contained thought, intelligence, memory, and so on (21a-d). Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (1.7), insists that any account of well-being, or *eudaimonia*, must be “complete”, in the sense that nothing can be added to it. And later (X.3) he says Plato's argument about pleasure and wisdom proves that the good does not consist in pleasure alone: “the life of pleasure is more worthy of choice with the addition of intelligence than without it, and if the mixture is better, pleasure is not the good, because the good cannot become more worthy of choice by anything's being added to it”.

Hooker also uses what we might call a “more-is-better” argument:

[I]magine an agent whose life could have either of two possible futures. These alternative futures are as much as possible alike in terms of amounts of net pleasure, important knowledge, significant achievement, and autonomy. However, in one of these possible futures the agent's life contains deep personal relationships and in the other the agent's life does not contain deep personal relationships. If two possible futures contain the same amounts of net pleasure, important knowledge, significant achievement, and autonomy, then the life with deep personal relationships seems more beneficial to the agent. (2021, p. 9)

Hooker notes that, since DPRs involve other goods—in particular, pleasure, achievement, and knowledge, it could be argued that the future with DPRs is better because, and only because, it contains these other goods. To avoid any distortion here, he asks us to imagine that the value of any pleasure in the DPRs is counterbalanced by the disvalue of emotional pain through their deterioration or ending, and that any remaining net pleasure, as well as achievement and knowledge, is counterbalanced by pleasure, achievement and knowledge gained from sources other than DPRs.

It has to be admitted that this rather complicates the thought-experiment.<sup>5</sup> As I suggested above, DPRs seem to be bound up particularly closely with other goods in a way that pleasure is not: any life will be improved by the addition of some pleasure, and the value in question must be arising from the pleasure itself. In the case of DPRs, multi-faceted understanding is straightforwardly a kind of knowledge, and mutual affection has a large hedonic component—“liking” is closely related to “enjoying”, and as we saw the attitudinal component of strong affection is a felt pleasure. That leaves benefiting and being disposed to benefit the other and the disposition to interpret the other's actions and words favourably, which taken independently of DPRs seem to have little obvious non-instrumental *prudential* value, though of course they may have moral value (which if it contributes to well-being will do so under the heading of “virtue” rather than that of “DPRs”).

It may be that we tend to value DPRs because we are the kind of beings who can gain these other goods from them. Many human beings who lack DPRs are discontented, and frustrated at their lacking the closeness to and

<sup>5</sup>The example might be slightly less complicated if all the counter-balancing were interpersonal, involving extra non-friendship-related pleasure, knowledge, and achievement for the friendless person.

knowledge of others which they see others achieving. But imagine some race of intelligent beings who are entirely self-contained and egoistic. They are interested in acquiring knowledge about the world, and in their own achievements, but they neither like nor dislike one another, nor have any concern for one another. I accept that the lives of these beings seem to us highly unattractive. But imagine that they learn about us, and that our lives, though they contain less pleasure, knowledge, and achievement overall, do contain DPRs. If we tell them that our lives are as good as theirs, I think they would be puzzled, claiming that the non-DPR-related components of their well-being are clearly good and not to be compensated for by a mere shift from self- to other-concern. Consider, for example, how they would react if we offered some form of neurosurgery, proven to be without side-effects, which would lead to their having DPRs, but at the cost of a non-trivial amount of physical pain. This thought experiment, I suggest, should give us pause, and perhaps provides a Pyrrhonist argument of the kind I mentioned earlier for at least suspending judgement on the value of DPRs. A similar argument would be significantly less plausible in the case, for example, of a race of sentient beings who denied that pain and suffering is bad for those experiencing them (see Sinhababu, [n.d.](#)).

## 6 | AFFECTION AND WARRANT

DPRs involve mutual affection, and in an earlier paper I argued that affection is too contingent and arbitrary to justify the giving of moral priority to the person for whom one feels such affection. Hooker suggests that a related worry may be raised against the idea that affection, as a constituent of a VDPR, is a non-instrumentally valuable component of well-being. His response ([2021](#), pp. 12–13) is that not all affection is contingent and arbitrary: it may be a “fitting attitude” to have towards somebody grounded in qualities that warrant (though do not require) the affection in question.<sup>6</sup>

What kind of qualities might warrant affection? Hooker first discusses beauty, raising various problems with the suggestion that it can warrant affection ([2021](#), pp. 13–14): (i) beauty is a surface phenomenon; (ii) beautiful people are not responsible for their beauty; (iii) beauty is transitory; (iv) many people are very beautiful. Of these, it seems that the first is the real objection to beauty as a warrant for the kind of affection constituting a VDPR, since beauty is not a constituent of a person's personality and character. In other words, though one might merely *like* someone—be attracted to them, be fond of them—for their beauty, this kind of affection cannot be that required for mutual affection in a VDPR, since none of the components of strong concern—attitudinal, motivational, and dispositional—would be warranted. What does warrant the kind of affection found in MA are “endearing qualities”, such as abilities, achievements, and virtues. I take it that the abilities Hooker has in mind are in some way admirable or valuable. My ability to walk very long distances may not be a “surface phenomenon”, but it seems to belong in the same category as beauty, as not warranting affection. The implication here is that the multi-faceted understanding in VDPRs must be of valuable aspects of personality and character.

At this point it might seem that the epistemic content of multi-faceted understanding can be incorporated into mutual affection, and any value in the sheer understanding of another's personality and character be allocated to that of knowledge itself rather than VDPRs. The true value in VDPRs lies in their meeting the mutual affection condition, and (in the standard case) the only way for them to do that—for the affection to be warranted—is for that affection to be based on knowledge of the (valuable) aspects of the other person's personality and character. The knowledge here, then, as far as the value of DPRs is concerned, is instrumental or facilitative.

Let me end by returning to the issue of virtue and friendship, and noting how Hooker's view turns out to be non-Aristotelian in one central respect. Aristotle's view is that well-being, or *eudaimonia*, consists in, and only in, the exercise of the virtues. He appears to believe that friendship is itself a virtue, and one might have thought that this will allow vicious people, if they have friends, to have at least one good in their life. But this is not so, since the

<sup>6</sup>Remember the affection will be grounded in the properties that warrant it only in the standard, paradigmatic case. See n. 2 above.



only kind of friendship that is truly valuable is that between virtuous people. Hooker's view of VDPRs is broader than this, since he includes a person's admirable abilities and achievements among their endearing qualities. This seems to allow for the possibility that two talented vicious people might have a VDPR if each feels affection for the other because of their abilities and achievements (see Hooker, 2021, p. 12).

This view is much closer to common sense than Aristotle's view, and is also consistent with (though it does not imply) the view that virtue is itself a constituent of well-being (see Hooker, 1996). But one might wish to extend the net of VDPRs even wider, without giving up on Hooker's suggestion that affection for another must be warranted if it is to ground prudential value. As Hooker points out (2021, p. 12), the attitude of someone who claims to have affection for anything—whether it be a saucer of mud or another person—but can say *nothing* about what it is about that object that might warrant such affection might plausibly be said to unfitting. But we might expand the category of endearing qualities to include not only virtue, abilities, and achievements, but mere congeniality. This, it seems, would set the bar for a VDPR considerably lower. Imagine someone who says that they *just* like a saucer of mud (or even *just* loves someone). That might be enough to make their attitude fitting, even if it were not explicable, at least to the subject. In the same way, mutual affection alone might be sufficient for a VDPR, if that relationship involves enough interactions over time for it to count as deep. And, to return to the villagers, perhaps their affection for another is also sufficiently warranted for their relationships with one another to count as valuable personal relationships, if not VDPRs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An earlier version of this paper was presented at a conference in honour of Brad Hooker, convened in April 2021 by Luke Elson and Charlotte Newey. I am grateful to them for the invitation, and to Brad Hooker and other participants for very helpful comments and discussion. For further insightful comments, and discussion I thank Theron Pummer, Gopal Sreenivasan, and John Tasioulas.

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**How to cite this article:** Crisp, R. (2022). Deep personal relationships and well-being: A response to Hooker. *Ratio*, 00, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rati.12355>