

## INTRODUCTION

During the spring of 2000 I attended a cockfight in Collinsville, Oklahoma. I tell the tale of that visit and reflect on its significance in the epilogue, but here the point regards the confusion and puzzlement it precipitated. I went to Collinsville as a citizen seeking information about an activity that many in the state wanted to ban. A referendum was scheduled for later that year, and I had never seen a fight. My hunch was that I would find it objectionable and yet tolerable. I assumed that I would vote against the ban in solidarity with the rural and Native peoples who opposed it. But I was mistaken. In fact, I found the fights horrific in their seductive violence and vile in their visible effects. I left Collinsville thinking that the proponents of the referendum were right. Cockfighting was intolerable; a ban would be best.

This judgment was unexpected and disorienting. It caught me off guard, and after a week I came to doubt it. Or rather, I came to doubt that I understood it well enough to maintain it. Did my conclusion that cockfighting was unbearable bear witness to my own intolerance? Intolerance is a vice. Its act wrongs other another person. It denies them a good they are due. (But what was that good and under what conditions was it due? I didn't know.) Did this mean that my refusal to honor this request for toleration was somehow unjust? More troubling still was another thought: was the solidarity I felt for my fellow citizens who led rural lives and claimed Native identities in fact false? Did my refusal to tolerate this violent and (to my mind) objectionable portion of their local traditions signal my own smooth hypocrisy? Was my claim to solidarity more apparent than real? And then the worst thought of all: was I being played? In the stories of tolerance that we tell, hardscrabble towns in the American Bible Belt are not its natural home, and yet toleration was precisely what the members of cockfight clubs across the state were asking from people like me, urban and suburban inhabitants of Tulsa and Oklahoma City. Was their request as much a semblance as my solidarity? Was it a mask that they would remove once they secured the tolerance they wanted but would never offer in return?

After a while I tried to revise my judgment, muster some tolerance, and so escape these discomforts, but this didn't work. The act was too difficult, its odd combination of objection and endurance, and besides it felt wrong. To my mind, cockfighting wasn't just objectionable, but intolerable. So I tried indifference. I tried not caring about cockfighting, about the tasks of citizenship, and about the solidarity I felt, whether real or imagined. But this didn't work either. Like Augustine so many centuries before, I had *seen* a cockfight. I had chosen to attend, and I had been captivated by its spectacle, its strange combination of violence and beauty.<sup>1</sup>

## INITIAL DISCOVERIES

The truth is, I didn't know how to tell the tale of that trip to Collinsville, to say what I had seen and give an account of its significance. So I did what I have been trained to do. I read around in the relevant literature, some of it scholarly, some of it not. My reading led to a course, the course to a handful of articles, and the articles to this book. It also led to three initial discoveries. First, I discovered that my discontent was widespread. Whatever I read, wherever I turned, there it was. Journalists, theologians, moral philosophers, hipster youth pastors, political theorists, popes, radical critics, college evangelists, political operatives, and scholars of religion—all could be found deploring the resort to toleration in response to the differences that divide us, resenting the praise this act so often receives, and resisting the thought that a virtue might be its cause.<sup>2</sup> The sources of their discontent turn out to be multiple, and yet as we shall see in chapter 1, criticism of tolerance and its act, whatever its source, typically functions as a medium of discontent with modernity. By these lights, toleration is a distinctively modern response to disagreement and difference, and its ills are variations on modernity's own. When it is endorsed nevertheless, the act must be unmasked as a swindle, as a cover for either domination or moral collapse. It must be replaced with some other response. A just political society will leave it behind. A community of hospitality and welcome will proceed without it.

1 *Libuit attendere*, says Augustine, when he saw two cocks fighting in a courtyard. He attended to them. He chose to do so, and it pleased him. *Ord.* I.8.25. For Burkean reflections on suffering that captures our attention, reflections designed to diminish our habit of moralizing our captivity see Bromwich, "How Moral Is Taste?"

2 Here's a representative list of the discontented, one of each. Niebuhr, *Beyond Tolerance*; Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness*, 121–126; Herman, "Pluralism and the Community of Moral Judgment"; Dobson, *Be Intolerant*; Brown, *Regulating Aversion*; Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance*; Žižek, *Violence*, 105–139 and "Tolerance as an Ideological Category"; McDowell and Hostetler, *New Tolerance*; GOP chairman Reince Preibus (Elbow, "Reince Preibus Doesn't Like the Word 'Tolerance'"); and William O'Meara, "Beyond Toleration."

Of course, I also discovered friends of toleration, those who endorse the act, praise its performance, and admire its prominence in modern lives and politics. Still, whatever I read, wherever I turned, there was very little talk of the virtue that perfects resort to this act, even among its friends. This was my second key discovery. Tolerance is infrequently theorized as a virtue, as a habitual perfection of action and attitude. Few make the effort; some even deny that tolerance is a virtue.<sup>3</sup> Instead, most scholars and critics, friends and foes alike, have subjected the *act* of toleration to scrutiny, the act of patiently enduring a person, action, or attitude that is thought to be objectionable in some way, and this has put the debate on precisely the wrong footing. As we shall see, an act of toleration can be good or bad, right or wrong, depending on the ends and circumstances of the act. Some objectionable differences should be patiently endured; others should not. But this means that those who care deeply about certain resorts to the act, who defend those resorts as right and required, and who, as a result, are inclined to declare the act itself essentially good will be accused of moral blindness by those who concentrate on examples of the act that fall short of the right. So too, those who feel nagged or coerced to endure what they consider intolerable and who, as a result, are inclined to declare the act itself essentially bad, will be counted among the intolerant by those who consider the act essentially just and good. So goes the contemporary debate, or at least a good portion of it: misguided judgments about the moral status of the act in general are used as proxies, as smokescreens, in debates over specific instances of the tolerable and the intolerable, over what should and should not be patiently endured, while the virtue that attends to this distinction is hardly considered.

Given the sources and motivations that have shaped the revival of virtue theory in recent years, this might seem understandable. That revival has, for the most part, looked to premodern accounts for inspiration, to the ancients and medievals. If toleration is, as most assume, a modern response to the moral and political challenges posed by diversity and difference, then we should not expect the revivalists to care about the virtue that causes right

3 The logic of these explicit denials will be considered in chapter 1. For examples, see Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, chap. 1; Hauerwas, "Hauerwas on 'Hauerwas and the Law'"; Heyd, "Is Toleration a Political Virtue?"; and MacIntyre, "Toleration and the Goods of Conflict," 153–154. To his credit, MacIntyre admits that *acts* of toleration can be just, but he does not consider whether these just acts require a distinct virtue that belongs to justice. He also insists the acts of *intolerance* can be *just*, and this odd sounding remark should have prompted him to ask about virtue and vice. In the current generation of moral philosophers, theologians, and political theorists, only a handful have: Compton-Sponville, *Small Treatise on the Great Virtues*, 157–172; Fiala, *Tolerance and the Ethical Life*; Forst, "Tolerance as a Virtue of Justice" and *Toleration in Conflict*, 502–517; Horton, "Toleration as a Virtue"; Newey, "Tolerance as a Virtue"; Oberdiek, *Tolerance*; Sabl, "Virtuous to Himself"; Tinder, *Tolerance and Community*; and Vainio, "Virtues and Vices of Tolerance."

resort to this act. They don't find it in the premodern sources they borrow and adapt; they don't even look. And why should they? After all, for many, the point of the revival is to locate alternatives to the moral discourses and practices of modernity, discourses and practices that toleration is thought to exemplify, that elicit our discontent, and that provoke the search for moral resources in a time before tolerance, before the eclipse of virtue.

Not surprisingly, most friends of toleration are willing to accept this story that pits act against virtue across the threshold of the modern. For them, a perfectionist account would only entangle toleration in the metaphysical complications and moral compromises of premodern virtue. Such an account would have to refer to ends given by nature and thus to a myth that naturalizes what is in fact contingent, presumably to the benefit of some and the detriment of others. It would have to speak of communal norms and tradition-bound lives and thus endorse an implicit patriarchy. It would accent the imitation of moral exemplars and thus threaten the individuality and special dignity of persons. And its account of desire, intention, and happiness would betray a disregard for duty and allow self-interest to infect even the most praiseworthy actions. Better then, to theorize the act not the virtue, toleration not tolerance, and thus avoid perfectionism's difficulties, or so these friends of toleration conclude.

With friends and foes of toleration largely united in their disregard for the virtue that perfects resort to the act, it's hard to presume otherwise. And the difficulty is compounded by the fact that most historians believe that toleration emerged in the modern period, not as a virtue was cultivated and praised, but only as self-interest took hold and swords were sheathed at the conclusion of the wars that followed the Protestant Reformation. But then there's this. In some circumstances, in response to some persons and objectionable differences, an act of toleration is clearly right and good. In some instances, its patient endurance is clearly required and failure to respond with this act is plainly unjust. Moreover, the conflicts of judgment and love, attitude and action, that afflict our various social and political relationships would seem to make right and regular resort to this act indispensable for their persistence and flourishing. No doubt, participation in this activity, this regular resort, can be difficult and devotion to its ends unstable, but once its special goodness is conceded, it's hard to avoid speaking of degrees of excellence, of better and worse, with respect to participation and devotion. And of course, once there is an aspiration to do better, perhaps even habitually so, then talk of the virtues that perfect participation in this activity, in its judgments and loves, will be hard to resist.

Third, and finally, I discovered that the confusion and discontent that surround toleration, the assumption that it appears only as modernity does, and the refusal to find its source and perfection in a moral virtue have made it nearly

impossible to see its relationship to love's endurance or consider the virtue that perfects this work of love, the virtue that the Apostle Paul calls forbearance.<sup>4</sup> Both the tolerant and the forbearing respond with patient endurance to at least some of the differences, disagreements, and moral imperfections that afflict their relationships and communities. For the tolerant, this act comes as right and due, for the forbearing as love's endurance. Given the identities and differences that unite and divide these virtues and acts, we might expect to find them treated together, as the siblings that they are, and yet this happens rarely and almost always to ill effect. Scholars who see their relationship and treat them together tend to be Christian theologians, and they tend to pit forbearance *against* tolerance. They draw a distinction between the two in order to mark the boundary between good and evil, sacred and secular, grace and nature, ancient wisdom and modern hypocrisy, real virtue and clever vice—vice that parades in virtue's garb. No one, as far as I can tell, has tried to regard them together, as sibling virtues, while simultaneously resisting the temptation to scapegoat tolerance in order to secure advantage for a certain interpretation of sin and grace, a certain account of secular modernity, or a certain position in contemporary debates about the tolerable and the intolerable. I discovered, in other words, that the confusions and resentments that confound contemporary attitudes toward tolerance have not only distorted Christian appropriation of this Pauline inheritance, but also prevented scholars and critics of all kinds, whether Christian or not, from reflecting on love's response to disagreement and difference.

## TASKS

My efforts in this book follow from these discoveries. First and most basically, I explicate and defend a perfectionist account of tolerance, the virtue that belongs to justice as one of its parts. There are many studies of toleration understood as an act or a set of practices or policies. Some accent historical emergence; others attend to theoretical justification. But we have very few historically informed, conceptually nuanced studies of tolerance, the associated virtue. My efforts supply just that, and in this respect they open up

4 Paul assigns the perfection to God and uses the word ἀνοχή (*anoché*) (Rom 2:4) to describe its act. He also locates an equivalent norm and activity in the community created by God's forbearance. Here he uses the words βαστάζειν (*bastazein*) (Rom 15:1) and ὑπομονή (*hupomone*) (Rom 15:4–5). The members of this community are to endure each other's differences, retain each other's company, and so bear each other's burdens. He implies that this activity recapitulates and so bears witness to divine perfection. It helps sustain the community that God's forbearance and Christ's sacrifice have created (Rom 15:1–6).

a fresh topic. For the most part, tolerance, the virtue, isn't what is discussed when toleration is, except occasionally by implication or as a result of impressive speech. And, as we shall see in chapter 1, on those few occasions when tolerance is discussed directly, it is often to discount the ideals it embodies and the sources of action it provides. Acts of toleration are needed, so the argument goes, but not by virtuous means, not by the perfection of habit. This book offers a reply to precisely this disregard of tolerance. For the friends of liberal societies and their regimes of toleration, interest in the effort should go without saying. Those societies will flourish, their regimes of toleration sustained, only as their inhabitants are equipped with the virtue (at least in some measure) and capable of cultivating it in others. As for the resentful foes of those regimes, they should be interested too, if only because an account of the virtue and its semblances clarifies what should and should not be resented in this area of our common life. And both should be interested in holding together coalitions of reformers and revolutionaries in the struggle to achieve justice, and this, even when their differences threaten to break them apart and undermine the struggle.<sup>5</sup>

In the pages that follow, I take up a number of tasks. I show how failure to count tolerance among the moral virtues goes a long way toward explaining the anxieties and discontents that swirl around resort to its act (chapter 1). I consider how tolerance, like justice, appears in all times and places as a concept employed (at least implicitly), as an act performed (at least sporadically), and as a seedbed of acquired virtue (chapter 2). I specify what an instance of acquired tolerance looks like: what matter it regards, what ends it intends, what hopes it can have, what passions accompany it, and what other virtues assist its act (chapter 3). And I identify the terms we will need, the vocabulary we must deploy, in order to speak of this virtue with clarity and precision (chapter 4). Since toleration's patient endurance is but one possible response to the problems of association posed by difference and disagreement, I consider the attitudes the tolerant will have toward these other possible responses—acceptance, indifference, exit, coercion, contest, and correction (also chapter 4). And I offer a novel account of the tolerance that distinguishes societies like our own—liberal, democratic, and pluralist (chapter 5). Finally, I consider the sibling relations that obtain between tolerance and forbearance, two habitual perfections of the will and its acts (chapter 6). Forbearance perfects our response to differences that are in some

5 In the chapters that follow, we will see how tolerance has limits, how its patient endurance comes to an end. In the struggle for justice, one such limit will regard partners. We may find ourselves among Leninists, anarchists, democratic republicans, pacifists, just warriors, black nationalists, deep ecologists, radical Protestants, traditionalist Catholics, and so on. However we identify ourselves, decisions will have to be made about which of these to tolerate as fellow travelers and which are too much trouble given the aims we share with the others.

way objectionable, but it abides within friendships and its patient endurance comes as friendship's love. It comes as love's endurance. It was the Apostle Paul who spoke most vividly and famously of a love that endures all things (1 Cor 13:7), and Christians will refer to a species of this act and its attendant virtue that come by God's grace and that abides within friendships animated by God's love. Others will not. They will refer to a love that endures within ordinary friendships and a virtue acquired by ordinary means. In this final chapter, I give an account of both kinds of forbearance, both the customarily acquired and the graciously given. I identify their similarities and differences, and I develop a vocabulary for speaking about their various sibling relations with tolerance.

I create this conceptual framework on appeal to assumptions we already make and commitments we already have. Most of us assume that differences can divide persons and communities—differences in moral and political commitment, in religious belief and practice, in activities loved and habits formed. So too, most of us make judgments about the significance of these differences and about the complications that some might pose to our social and political arrangements. And most of us have ideas about which differences are in fact objectionable, in what way and to whom, and about the various responses that might be offered in reply. Most of us are committed to offering responses that are just and due, and most of us hope to offer right responses with greater ease and consistency across a growing variety cases. I begin with these commitments and assumptions. Along the way, I make a number of specific judgments about the tolerable and the intolerable, and I offer reasons in defense of what I say. Still, for the most part, my purpose is not to distinguish the commitments, lives, and actions that deserve to be tolerated from those do not. Crucially, I do not assume that judgments about the tolerable and intolerable follow from a single principle. As far as I can tell, they don't. There appears to be no one substantive way to mark the distinction, no general rule that can be handed down by the theorist and applied by the people. As we shall see, the circumstances that must be considered before toleration's act of patient endurance can be offered as right and due are simply too many and the judgments that must be rendered too various for any one principle to capture them all. What's needed instead are persons who are attentive to those circumstances, who have identified the differences and disagreements that disrupt their political communities and social relationships, and who are disposed by habit to offer right responses in reply. What's needed, in other words, are tolerant persons, persons who have acquired the virtue in some measure, who understand that its principal act can be justly required not merely expedient, and who are committed to sustaining their social and political relationships despite the differences that divide them and in accord with virtue's norm. My task is to describe the contours of this virtue, its act, ends and circumstances, to spell out its sibling

relations with forbearance, and to consider how these virtues function in our households, friendships, citizens organizations, and political communities.

A number of benefits accrue from this shift in attention from toleration as act and policy to tolerance as virtue and sibling to forbearance. Four stand out. First, we will acquire a clearer, more precise sense of what these virtue concepts amount to and how they ought to be applied. This is urgently needed. Both have fallen into disrepair; tolerance in our public discourse, forbearance in our friendships, and both in those social and political relationships that require acts of both justice and love. The counsels of resentment would have us abandon both or replace one with the other. This book counts those counsels false. We would be foolish to relinquish these virtues, regard them as competitors, or resist referring to them when we speak of excellence in response to the differences that divide us. Better, I think, to concede the perfection they bring to persons and acts and the good they offer our communities. Better to learn how to use these virtue terms, adjust their criteria of application, and so speak more precisely about right response to disagreement and difference. This is the conceptual work that I take up in the chapters that follow.

Second, once we acquire a better understanding of how to apply these concepts, and once we dismiss the counsels of resentment that proceed without this wisdom, we should face one less obstacle on the way to a more honest and transparent debate about the disagreements and differences that unsettle our political lives and social relationships. That is, it should be harder to scapegoat tolerance as a means of opposing the patient endurance of some specific difference or as a way of shutting down debate over what can and cannot be tolerated. At the very least, those who know how to apply these concepts can oppose these tactics and encourage more ordinary means of debate. If my political society or religious community tolerates what I consider intolerable, and if I hope to convince my friends and fellow citizens to recast their judgments, then I will have to offer reasons that regard the concrete differences in dispute, reasons that offer new ways of distinguishing what is tolerable from what is not. And my success or failure in this effort will turn on the character of those reasons, on their power and authority in this particular setting, not on the outcome of a phantom debate about the moral status of tolerance.

Third, this effort should help us develop a chastened, more self-conscious account of modernity. If, as I shall argue, tolerance appears as concept, act, and seedbed of virtue in all times and places and in all kinds of social and political relationships, then we can no longer point to tolerance in order to mark the difference that modernity makes. The tolerance found in modernity's liberal societies might be distinct from other varieties found in other times and places, but the point is that there are other varieties. Historians have already begun to describe them and so encourage us to rethink the relation-

ship between tolerance and modernity, but theory has lagged behind history.<sup>6</sup> Locating tolerance among the virtues should help theory catch up.

Finally, by theorizing tolerance and forbearance together we will see how virtues that regard the same material object and generate the same material act can themselves be regarded as siblings, as similar yet distinct. Both tolerance and forbearance regard human actions in response to objectionable difference, both generate acts of patient endurance in reply, and it's this shared object and act that enables us to see their family resemblances and pair them across the divide between love and justice. So too, by theorizing them together we can see how a right response to the differences that threaten the peace and persistence of a social relationship will depend in large measure on the character of the relationship itself. Different social relationships require different responses, generate distinct demands, and elicit diverse hopes. Thus, the need for two distinct virtues. Moreover, by regarding tolerance and forbearance together and noting the biblical and theological terms that Christians have used for speaking about love's endurance we will acquire an example of how the actions and perfections of a particular religious community might stand in relation to those found in liberal democracies. Differences will come into focus, but only against the backdrop of a shared desire to cope with persistent disagreement, a shared interest in sustaining social and political relationships, and a shared concern to specify and coordinate the demands of love with those of justice. The hope is to complicate the distinction between secular and religious moral discourses and so identify resources for each on either side of the divide.

## SOURCES

Four sources inform this effort and contribute to its content. The thought that tolerance could be explicated in perfectionist terms comes from Stanley Cavell, who assumes that talk of virtue's perfection is required whenever we identify a special goodness in human action and whenever there is opportunity to do better or worse with respect to desire and performance.<sup>7</sup> It also comes from Steven Macedo, William Galston, and others who have

6 See, for example, Nederman, *Worlds of Difference*.

7 For Cavell, moral progress requires reflection on the activities a virtue is said to perfect and on the "unthoughtful philosophy" of those who claim to understand what perfection entails. Quite often the claim is one's own, and thus a certain kind of self-criticism may be required, a self-repudiation that might be revelatory. It might reveal genuine bewilderment about those same virtues and activities, and this might compel further reflection on them. It might elicit "exploratory responses," and this might yield conversion of self, claim, and practice. "Such ideas are implicit in Emerson's picture of finding ourselves on a series of stairs. Philosophy is here transfiguring, one could hastily say internalizing, the ancient idea of the

encouraged us to think that liberal democracies require a virtuous citizenry.<sup>8</sup> My effort differs from theirs in that it aims at a much more determinate conception of virtue, one that attends not only to matter, act, ends, and circumstances, but also to the tight connection between social location and normative demand and to the sibling relations that can obtain among virtues. Tolerance is important because of the quite specific virtue it is; because of the special goodness its patient endurance embodies and because of the crucial role this act plays in the various communities we love and activities we take up. But it is also important because it stands among a number of moral virtues that matter for those of us concerned with educating students, building teams, exercising citizenship, forming coalitions, and maintaining friendships. Here I'm thinking not only of cardinal virtues such as justice and courage, but also of faith, hope, perseverance, and honesty. Like tolerance, these latter virtues play a crucial role in sustaining these activities and perfecting our participation in them. Like tolerance, they are misunderstood and undertheorized. Our speech about them tends to be imprecise and so prone to distortion and misuse. My hope is that the determinate account of tolerance I provide and the vocabulary of virtue that I develop can be used as models for those who might work up these other virtues.

The thought that tolerance and forbearance should be regarded together comes from Ernst Kantorowicz, from his reading of the twelfth-century Norman Anonymus in his famous study, *The King's Two Bodies*.<sup>9</sup> In the political theology of the Norman Anonymus, a king, an ordinary human being, acquires authority to occupy his office only as the Holy Spirit makes him a *gemina persona*—one thing by nature, another by grace. His *persona mixta* “mirrors the duplication of natures in Christ,” and this duplication enables him to participate in Christ’s temporal rule.<sup>10</sup> The image helps us see how different virtues can nevertheless be siblings. It draws our attention to the fact that two formally distinct natures can be united by a common matter that each regards, and this fact can be used to reflect on the relations that obtain between virtues united in material object and yet specifically distinct, some as distinct as nature is from grace or as love is from justice.

The thought that tolerance and forbearance might be regarded as sibling virtues and that a vocabulary could be developed to bring clarity and precision to that regard comes from Thomas Aquinas. I solicit assistance from him in every chapter, and the assistance is largely conceptual. That is, I do not

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self as on a path, concentrating rather on the implicit features of taking steps, learning to walk away.” Cavell, *Little Did I Know*, 461, 499.

8 Macedo, *Liberal Virtues*; Galston, *Liberal Purposes*.

9 Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*.

10 *Ibid.*, 58.

explicate and defend an interpretation of Thomas's account of these virtues, and the reason is simple. He doesn't have an account to interpret. He does mention *acts* of toleration in his discussion of a proper response to Jewish rites and beliefs, and he does refer to *acts* of forbearance in his discussion of fraternal correction. But in neither case does he move beyond mere mentioning. He doesn't provide detailed reflection on these acts, on their matter, objects, and ends, and he says very little about their social settings, circumstances, and limits. He never considers their possible relations, and he does not theorize either of them as a virtue. So it's not *his* account of these matters that I develop. Rather, it's Aquinas's treatment of various topics—action and habit, natural law and acquired virtue, justice and charity—that I borrow and adapt in my perfectionist account of tolerance and its sibling, forbearance. At times, I do my best to get Thomas right in his own terms. At times, I extend his inquiries in ways that he does not but could have, perhaps even should have. And at times, I draw inferences from what he does say while assuming commitments he does not have. As I said, my goal is to rectify two virtue concepts that have fallen into disrepair, whose criteria of application are uncertain and confused. For this task, perhaps surprisingly, there is no better conversation partner than Aquinas.

The ironies here should not go unnoticed. Many of Thomas's modern champions are allied against toleration; they consider the act essentially bad.<sup>11</sup> While most of those who consider toleration essentially good would never dream that a medieval Christian theologian could best provide the conceptual resources we need in order to describe the act and identify the virtue that generates right resort to it. And yet it is precisely these conceptual resources that Aquinas provides. Along with Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, he is one of the great theorists of the virtues. In fact, he surpasses all others because he comes late enough in the history of virtue theory to have identified most of the relevant topics and problems, assess what others have proposed, and respond with gratitude, correction, and innovation. And, crucially for our purposes, the concrete concerns that motivated Thomas's theorizing about the virtues should prove helpful from the vantage point of modern efforts to theorize difference and endurance, correction and coercion, loyalty and exit. He was writing in order to instruct people who were charged with the spiritual care of parishioners and parishes, monks and monasteries—that is, with particular communities in which important differences in judgment and love were likely to cause problems of association and where members had to respond in accord with the norms of justice and love.

11 Not all. John Knasas finds an account of tolerance in Thomas's treatment of the natural law, in its defense of human dignity. On his rendering, tolerance is principle and act but not exactly virtue. See his *Thomism and Tolerance*. For a quite different coordination of natural law and tolerance, see chapter 2.

Those communities turn out to have quite a lot in common with our own universities, political coalitions, and social movements, as well as with contemporary parishes, congregations, and religious communities. And those problems of association turn out to be roughly our own. As I said, Thomas does not theorize tolerance or forbearance, but he does share our interest in responding well to disagreement and difference, he does think that patient endurance is quite often the right response, and he does provide the conceptual resources we need to identify the habitual sources of this act.

And finally, the thought that we need these conceptual resources if we hope to sustain the social and political relationships we care about and to work with others to rectify their imperfections comes from Albert Hirschman and his justly famous *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*.<sup>12</sup> In many ways, his book and mine are siblings. Both of us sort through the options that are available to participants in a relationship or organization that is in some way imperfect or dysfunctional. Both of us develop a vocabulary that accounts for those options and that identifies their reasons and circumstances. Both of us are interested in the reasons that warrant staying put in a deficient relationship or deteriorating organization and in the contestation and correction that can nevertheless come from those who do. But there are also formal differences. Most significantly, Hirschman does not provide a perfectionist account of these matters. He does not speak of virtue, tolerance or any other. Rather, it's the complications of judgment and desire that occupy his interest, judgment and desire in response to conflict and decay within an organization or relationship, not the possibility that perfection might come to these responses. Indeed he doubts that it can. The psychological and institutional mechanisms that conspire against "any stable and optimally effective mix" of right responses are simply too powerful, or so he thinks.<sup>13</sup> The complications of judgment and desire are simply too many and "the forces of decay" too persistent.<sup>14</sup> Fair enough. But it is one thing to doubt that an optimal mix of responses can be fixed in advance and applied like a rule. It is another to doubt that some particular mix is better than others in response to the deficiencies of some particular organization or relationship. And it is another thing still to doubt that this better mix can be known, desired, and rendered in act. As we shall see, it is precisely the complicated character of these responses that should encourage us to imagine degrees of perfection with respect to them and to consider the possibility that some of us will do better than others across a range of circumstances, some even habitually so.

12 Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*.

13 *Ibid.*, 125.

14 *Ibid.*, 124.

## SIBLING INQUIRIES

Tolerance is my principal concern, but, as I have said, I will also consider its sibling relations with forbearance. For this latter task, I make use of both secular and religious discourses and I assume that sibling relations obtain here as well, among these discourses. These different tasks and discourses hang together in one book, one *mixta libro*, for the same reason that tolerance and forbearance, acquired by ordinary means, belong to the same family as the forbearance that, by Christian confession, comes by grace alone. Despite their different aims and formal principles, they share a common material object: action in response to the objectionable differences that divide persons within a social or political relationship. These inquiries, like these virtues, share this object. It is the most basic matter about which each regards.

Christians have a long history of borrowing and adapting secular philosophical discourses for the purposes of explicating the faith they confess and the hopes and loves they have. One might say that Christian theology is nothing but this combination of secular wisdom and prophetic piety. So it will come as no surprise when the concepts explored and distinctions drawn in chapters 1 through 5 find their way into the discussion of gracious forbearance in chapter 6. Readers who are interested in this combination will want to work their way through all six chapters. But what about those readers who care about the material object of my inquiries but have no interest in the theological efforts of chapter 6? Should they pull up short and close the book before the end?

They may, of course, but then there's this. Christians are not the only people who need light shed on the relationships that obtain between the virtues that belong to justice and those that perfect our loves. If both virtues generate actions in response to the difficulties posed by difference and disagreement, then we need some way of hammering out a vocabulary for speaking of such matters. It so happens that Christians, because of their preoccupation with both love and justice and because of their attention to unity and difference within relationships, have already taken up the hard work of hammering out such a vocabulary. Secular readers might wish to learn from these efforts, to borrow successes and avoid missteps. Some will want to do this very selectively. In Aquinas's case, they will resist his account of virtue offered by grace, by divine action, but even here there may be something to learn. It might be, for all I know, that a thoroughly secular conception of grace and its virtues could be developed, and it may be that Aquinas's efforts could be naturalized to this effect. This is something I leave for others to explore.

The point is that secular readers may want to follow the inquiry to the end, and not out of ethnographic curiosity, or at least not only, but also to understand for themselves something about forbearance. This makes perfect sense, and not simply because tolerance comes into focus against the backdrop that forbearance provides, but also because forbearance and its act have a natural life. Indeed, as we shall see, the account of divine love and gracious forbearance developed in chapter 6 proceeds by analogy with these natural realities. But suppose we reverse the vectors. As I said, Christian theologians have a long history of borrowing and adapting secular philosophical sources, an appropriation made possible by the common material objects that so often unite these inquiries. But here the possibility that I am imagining cuts the other way: these shared material objects make theological resources candidates for borrowing and adapting by secular theorists. What purposes might motivate the borrowing and adapting, I cannot say in advance. Rather, I simply note that when moral philosophers and political theorists find something useful in the discourses of charity, for example, they should not overlook the theoretical resources that the theologians have already developed. Those resources may well leaven their efforts. An example makes the point.<sup>15</sup>

In the third and final section of *The Reasons of Love*, Harry Frankfurt considers the self's love for itself. In any kind of love, "the lover cares about the good of his beloved for its own sake." He wants to "protect and pursue the true interests of the person whom he loves," and in this case the beloved is himself and the interests are his own.<sup>16</sup> To love oneself, one must be devoted to the interests and projects one happens to have, and not for their instrumental pay off but for their own sake. The trouble of course is that this assumes wholehearted devotion to those interests and projects, and for most of us this assumption cannot be made. Most of us have hearts that are divided. Some of our projects and interests elicit ambivalence and self-doubt, not undivided devotion. Some of our loves generate second thoughts and hesitations, not reflective endorsement.<sup>17</sup> Frankfurt's response to this antinomy of self-love is to admit that wholeheartedness is an ideal, to concede that most of us fall short, and to encourage a certain lightheartedness when we do. "At least be sure to hang on to your sense of humor."<sup>18</sup>

15 Other examples include Nussbaum, *Political Emotions* and Rose, *Love's Work*. In the modern period, it was the Romantics who recognized the benefits of naturalizing the supernatural, of secularizing "inherited theological ideas and ways of thinking." I am suggesting that moral philosophers and political theorists would benefit from following their lead. See Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, 2.

16 Frankfurt, *Reasons of Love*, 85.

17 *Ibid.*, 91–95.

18 *Ibid.*, 100.

It's a compelling account, less its concluding advice. Ambivalence and self-doubt are not the only attitudes of a divided heart. Others are more serious. Projects and interests that cannot be endorsed by the better self we long to become may elicit contempt for the self that remains captive to them. The better self's critique signals a transformation hoped for but not yet achieved. In cases like these, despair and self-hatred can come, and it's unlikely that a sense of humor can stave off their arrival, not in every instance. What might? Well, again, there are theological resources that could be secularized, adapted, and endorsed. There is a long and rich history of theological reflection on self-love for an imperfect self, a love that originates in the gracious regard of another. Correction and forbearance are aspects of that love, offered by the self we hope to become to the self that remains committed to cares we despise. Both acts are geared to the divided and broken souls most of us have, and when offered and received, they bear witness to the first beginnings of self-transformation, of progress toward wholeness.

In this particular instance, secular theory could benefit from acquainting itself with theological resources precisely because it is already attentive to the place of love in our lives. For the most part, however, moral philosophers, political theorists, and historians have ignored love's response to the conflicts and differences that divide us. They have mostly attended to the act of toleration, and they have struggled to bring its moral substance into focus. The solution, I suggest, is to shift attention to the virtue that perfects resort to this act, to bring this virtue into focus along with its sibling, forbearance, and to learn from the theological discourses that describe love's endurance. This, in any event, is the solution I explore in the pages that follow.