

LOVE, SELF-CONSTITUTION, AND PRACTICAL NECESSITY

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation, *Love, Self-Constitution, and Practical Necessity*, offers an interpretation of love between people. Love is puzzling because it appears to involve essentially both rational and non-rational phenomena. We are accountable to those we love, so love seems to participate in forms of necessity, commitment, and expectation, which are associated with morality. But non-rational attitudes—forms of desire, attraction, and feeling—are also central to love. Consequently, love is not obviously based in rationality or inclination. In contrast to views that attempt to fit love into existing models of practical reasoning, I argue that love participates in a unique form of practical necessity, different from both moral and psychological necessity, yet bearing resemblances to each. Distinctive to this type of practical necessity is a direct appeal to another particular person that cannot be delivered in third-personal terms—that is, a non-moral yet normative type of expectation on another person. This type of expectation is predominant in loving relationships, but can also make better sense of the experiences of humor and beauty, as well as attitudes like forgiveness, gratitude, and agent-regret. I treat Immanuel Kant’s discussion of the experience of beauty in the *Critique of Judgment* and Christine Korsgaard’s work on self-constitution as fruitful starting points for this account of love. I conclude that our loving relationships enable us to have distinctive personal selves, and provide support for this account of love by offering a complementary theory of grief.

In Part One of the dissertation, I focus on two prominent approaches to love characteristic of the sentimentalist and rationalist traditions. I begin with the work of David Hume, which treats desire (understood as something like a simple impulse or craving) as the paradigmatic mental state, and emphasizes our personal and affective

dimensions. Hume has the valuable insight that loving someone affects our sense of ourselves. But Hume's view becomes unsatisfying when he claims that love is essentially enfeebling, implying that to love is to be passive toward and readily overcome by another person. While this indicates Hume's awareness that love involves being open and receptive to another person, the problem is that love is also a demanding attitude. Hume lacks the conceptual resources to offer a nuanced view of the self, in which we can—with one attitude—be both demanding of and vulnerable to another person. Hume's model of a desire-based deliberative process has recently been revived in Harry Frankfurt's discussions on love and rationality. Frankfurt, however, goes beyond Hume's picture of the self by introducing a notion of "identification," which he offers to make sense of our apparent ability to commit ourselves decisively to certain projects or people. I argue that active powers like identification and commitment cannot be accommodated within any basically Humean moral psychology. Such abilities, and with them the possibility of love, depend on something closer to a Kantian conception of rational agency.

I next focus on the work of Kant, who provides the substantial counterpart to Humean-inspired moral theories, but is not known for his insight into our emotional lives. In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant divides love into "practical love"—what we experience when we are morally motivated to help someone—and "pathological love"—what we experience when we feel fond of something. But in reality, we experience love neither as a mere preference for another person, nor as something that generates the kind of demands that would be binding on any rational creature. David Velleman attempts to remedy the deficiency of Kant's dichotomy. Velleman offers a Kantian theory in which he describes love and respect as two ends of a continuum of attitudes that it is morally

appropriate to have toward people. Velleman's view has the peculiar implication that everyone deserves the love of everyone else, and I argue that this is a fatal flaw.

Like Kant and Velleman, Korsgaard characterizes personal love as involving the treatment of other people as Kantian ends-in-themselves to a heightened degree.

Korsgaard, though, also contends that our individual identities depend upon our personal relationships, and I take this position seriously for the remainder of the dissertation.

Ultimately, however, characterizations of loving relations as subsets of moral relations can account for the authority of the demands of love, but not its particularity. The major conclusion of Part One is that any attempt to understand love primarily on a model of practical reasoning with which we are already familiar is doomed to fail. Our experience of love calls for a theory of a unique type of practical necessity.

In Part Two I take seriously the possibility that love is simultaneously inescapable (in something like the way morality is supposed to be), and yet ineluctably personal. In love, we experience an engagement with a person as essentially particular, rather than as an instance of a rational agent in general. To make sense of this direct attachment to an individual, I argue that love involves distinctive forms of expectation and disappointment. When those we love let us down, they hurt our feelings, which is not a response to a failed prediction, but nor is it a reaction to a moral insult or offense.

According to Peter Strawson and Stephen Darwall, second-personal moral reactive attitudes (such as resentment) always have third-personal analogues (such as indignation). In contrast, I argue that the type of hurt feelings associated with love is a second-personal reactive attitude that does not have a third-personal corollary. I take this as evidence that the expectations involved in love are not objective in the way that the moral is objective. Nor, however, is love a matter of mere preference. On my

interpretation, Kant introduces this different type of expectation in the *Critique of Judgment*. Whereas he characterizes moral judgments as universally communicable, judgments of beauty implicitly involve only second-personal address: I appeal to your direct experience with a particular object. This provides the conceptual space for an account of love according to which it involves a uniquely second-personal form of practical necessity.

I contend that the second-personal addresses we make in love are appeals to strengthen the intimacy implicit in the loving relationship, and I identify three interrelated dimensions of that intimacy. First, those we love have the standing to interpret us in a constitutive manner. We fine-tune and make determinate the character of our concerns and interests in part by accepting the interpretations provided by those we love. In that way, the people we love have the normative power to constitute who we are. Second, we share a perspective with those we love in a way that is not reducible to or derivative of our independent perspectives. Loving someone centrally involves the activity of forming concerns together, and we do this in a mode best understood on the model of playing a spontaneous game or improvising music. Finally, being loved enables us to see ourselves as distinctive and special, because the concern those who love us have for us does not track the objective merit of our characteristics. These dimensions of the intimacy that characterizes a loving relationship reveal what it is that we appeal for in love, and how we are hurt when our appeals are rebuffed. In broad terms, this dissertation advocates the recognition of a non-moral yet normative type of expectation, which is predominant in loving relationships. Humor and beauty, too, make more sense when understood in terms of this non-moral yet normative type of expectation, as they involve appeals to others that

are more than mere predictions of, but less than rational demands for, a certain kind of response. Introducing this alternative notion of expectation into the discourse of moral philosophy can shed light on other common attitudes that are clearly normative, but defy translation into objective, third-personal terms. Such attitudes include certain experiences of pride and shame, apology and forgiveness, the bestowing of mercy, gratitude, agent-regret, and perhaps a basic sense of trust we have in others.

Ultimately, I situate love in respect to grief, which demonstrates my theory's ability to make sense of related dimensions of our emotional lives. The people we love and grieve over give us a sense of who we are as distinctive, particular individuals, as the three interrelated dimensions of intimacy in loving relationships reveal. Consequently, grief is best understood as a type of practical disorientation—namely, a disorientation that involves the loss of the personal self. I present my account of grief against the type of account that would draw philosophical conclusions about the nature of love and grief from empirical psychological data alone. In particular, these data indicate that we recover quickly from the deaths of loved ones, and Dan Moller draws the philosophical conclusion that those we love fulfill certain roles in our lives and are replaceable. In contrast, I contend that while we should acknowledge the truth of the objective judgment, made in the third-person, that we will likely recover after the deaths of those we love, it does not follow that we must affirm such a claim from the internal perspective of one person who loves another. As a result, the case of love and grief supports a general claim concerning the proper work of moral philosophy, which is that the understanding of ourselves gained through empirical data is not a substitute for the normative conclusions that are revealed through first-personal reflections on our relationships.

To my parents

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PREFACE

Love is interesting not only for its dominant role in our lives, but also because the motivations that arise out of love can come into tension with what we think morality requires of us. Using one's influence to get friends or relatives into a better school or a good job is a familiar temptation. Cheating, lying, and deceiving present themselves as real options when we surmise that engaging in such behavior could benefit those we love. The partiality of love tests the impartiality required by objective moral theories.

Love for another person presents itself as a deeply personal concern, but also as authoritative and non-optional. Paradoxically, the necessity that accompanies love seems to combine the personal character of hypothetical imperatives with the inescapable quality of categorical imperatives, in Kant's familiar terms. Love is puzzling because it appears to involve essentially both rational and non-rational phenomena. We are accountable to those we love, so love seems to participate in forms of necessity, commitment, and expectation, which are associated with morality. But non-rational attitudes—forms of desire, attraction, and feeling—are also central to love.

Consequently, love is not obviously based in rationality or inclination. Many philosophers have tried to explain away this peculiarity. They have treated love as some complex combination of impersonal evaluative judgments and affective responses, or they have explicated it primarily in terms of one or the other. In contrast to such views, which attempt to fit love into existing models of practical reasoning, I suggest that we take seriously the possibility that love is exactly how it presents itself: at once inescapable and ineluctably personal. I argue that love has its own form of practical

necessity, different from both moral and psychological necessity, yet bearing resemblances to each. Distinctive to this type of practical necessity is a kind of direct appeal to another particular person that cannot be delivered in third-personal terms. I treat Immanuel Kant's discussion of the experience of beauty in the *Critique of Judgment* and Christine Korsgaard's work on self-constitution as fruitful starting points for this account of love. I argue that love involves a non-moral yet normative type of expectation, and is characterized by its own set of second-personal appeals and reactive attitudes. I conclude that our loving relationships enable us to have distinctive personal selves, and provide support for this account of love by offering a complementary theory of grief.

The experience of love need not, of course, be regarded as a unified phenomenon. Certainly the use of the term "love" is not uniform. We ordinarily speak of our love for any of a variety of objects, or places, or pets; we also refer to our love for God, small children, and other rational adults. Love gets classified in terms of the type of relationship it tracks, such as romantic, filial, parental, or friendly. We talk about falling in love. We might also experience impersonal varieties of it, such as a general love of humanity—the "love of one's neighbor."

My discussion of love applies primarily to the attitude we can have for family members, romantic partners, and close friends.¹ I focus, therefore, on inter-personal love. I treat those instances of the attitude as central cases of love, and work under the hypothesis that exploring those central cases will ultimately organize our understanding

¹ Of course, friendship is not a unified phenomenon either. I assume that we can love very close friends but do not love casual friends, who fall at the other end of the friendship spectrum.

of other common occasions of love. I concentrate on the type of attachment we experience to particular other people, and provide a characterization of the intimacy involved in personal loving relationships. As such, the aim of my project should be distinguished from the priority of accounting for the causes of love, or why we come to love certain people rather than others.

A tempting philosophical response to the worry over the tension between the claims of love and the claims of morality is to think of love as a rational evaluation of an object, that is, as an evaluation made in accordance with standards that we can all recognize and endorse. When love is subsumed under determinate, objective standards, we can discuss the rationality or irrationality of loving a specific person and acting in a certain way on that person's behalf. Robert Solomon's work on the emotions represents this approach in contemporary moral philosophy. According to Solomon, emotions are evaluative.² Each emotion necessarily involves and can be characterized by reference to particular types of "... judgments (and desires, intentions, and strategies)."³ On his view, our emotional responses are best understood as inarticulate rational judgments.

This general understanding of the emotions seems to account well for certain paradigmatic ones, such as fear and anger. Like Solomon, Martha Nussbaum provides a heavily cognitive account of our experience of the emotions. She characterizes emotions as "forms of judgment."⁴ Taking fear as an example, Nussbaum writes: "In order to have fear ... I must believe that bad events are impending; that they are not trivially, but

² Solomon attributes his view to himself in many writings, for instance, in *The Passions* and "Emotions and Choice."

³ Robert Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), p. 223. In-text citations "P" refer to *The Passions*.

⁴ "Emotions as Judgments of Value and Importance," in *Thinking About Feeling*, 185. In-text citations of this essay will refer to it as "EJ."

seriously bad; that I am not in a position to ward them off; that, on the other hand, my doom is not sealed, but there is still some uncertainty about what may befall” (EJ, 188). According to Nussbaum, if I am to experience fear, I must believe that the integrity of something that I care about is being threatened, but that there is the possibility of proper response—there is something to be done (EJ, 188, 192-3). Experiencing fear or anger likely involves recognizing salient features of a situation and properly responding to those features. Such a pattern of appropriate recognition and response appears crucial to having those emotions. And, based on certain criteria, we can judge instances of the emotion as rational or irrational. Our experience of emotions such as fear and anger can be misplaced: we can misunderstand aspects of a situation, or improperly respond to its features. Experiencing fear in response to a non-threat is irrational, as is being angry when one has not been wronged. We evaluate the experiences of fear and anger in terms of determinate, objective standards.

The cognitivist tradition recommends that we theorize about love on the same model of the emotions that provides a plausible account of fear and anger. Love gets analyzed in terms of value judgments we make about the objects of our love. On this view, love essentially involves recognizing certain features of an object (or a person) that ought to be valued, and following objective standards of proper and improper responses to those features. Solomon emphasizes that love, unlike many other emotions, involves primarily positive evaluations of the beloved’s attributes (P, 278). This type of account assumes that the loved person must possess qualities or attributes that we evaluate

positively.⁵ A necessary condition of our loving a particular person is that he or she has certain attributes, qualities, or virtues that we value independently of that person. In order for individual A to find individual B loveable, individual B must possess certain qualities or attributes that individual A values. Loving particular people involves loving them as instantiations of general types of individuals (P, 200). Love is fundamentally a response to objective standards and criteria.

Moreover, on Solomon's account, one ought to respond in certain ways when one loves another person. He writes, "... love is the insistence on mutual independence and autonomy, free from possessiveness but charged with desire; love is unqualified acceptance of the other's welfare and happiness as one's own" (P, 277). People who truly love both retain their autonomy and adopt each other's projects as though they were their own. They act to promote each other's happiness. And they are not jealous of the other's attentions, but are "charged with desire" for that person. Such is the proper mode of responding to the positive evaluations one has made of another's character.

Cognitivist accounts of love, which emphasize positive value judgments and objective standards of proper response, seem to ignore central experiences of love. Accounts such as Solomon's imply that those we love are substitutable: we can love anyone who instantiates the qualities we value. Consequently, views that focus on the cognitive aspects of love do not speak to our love for particular people as irreplaceable, a critical aspect of our ordinary concept of personal love.

Furthermore, in love, we experience ourselves as motivated to act without regard for the objective standards of an impartial value system or moral theory. In some cases,

⁵ Gabriele Taylor also provides such an account in her article "Love."

appeals to objective justifications for our special regard for another person distort or misrepresent our motivations. The “one thought too many” example, as presented by Bernard Williams, emphasizes just this point.⁶ In this imagined case, two people are drowning and there is only one potential rescuer.⁷ One of the drowning people is the wife of the potential rescuer, and he has merely enough time to save one person. The husband in this example chooses to rescue his wife at the cost of failing to save the other victim. Williams argues that the response of an impartial moral theorist to this case would be that “in situations of this kind it is permissible to save one’s wife” (PCM, 18). That is, before the adherent of impartial morality can see this action as something he must do, he must have some implicit thought about what one may do in that kind of circumstance. But Williams claims that we would “hope” that the man would rescue his wife simply because she is his wife, and not against the background of the consideration that it is an entirely permissible thing to do according to an impartialist morality, such as Kantian morality.

Williams claims that some concerns have a necessity for us as particular individuals, and do not pretend to universal validity. Harry Frankfurt supports the idea that, often, our relevant motivation has nothing to do with general claims about what people in a given type of circumstance ought to do. On Frankfurt’s analysis of Williams’s example: “The need of his beloved for help provides him with this reason, without requiring that he think of any additional considerations and without the interposition of any general rules” (RL, 37). The position of both Williams and Frankfurt

⁶ Williams adopted this example from Charles Fried. Williams presents his own version of it in “Persons, Character, and Morality” from *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 1-19.

⁷ It should be noted that this potential rescuer is not acting in an official capacity.

is that the universalizability of the husband's maxim is not relevant to why the husband acts as he does, and that what we want—and what an impartialist moral theory cannot provide—is an explanation of the husband's action in terms of *his* motive for acting. Williams believes the “one thought too many” example challenges impartialist moral theories in general, and Kantian morality in particular, to give a realistic account of how people assess situations in which the people involved have significant personal relations to each other.⁸

Kantian moral theorists insist that maxims be able to pass a test of universalizability. To pass that test maxims must be devoid of particulars: specific names, dates, times, etc. Descriptions of an intended action not formulated in general terms are, in principle, not universalizable. This feature of Kantian morality leads Williams to highlight its “indifference to any particular relations to particular persons” (PCM, 2). In contrast to his picture of Kantian morality, Williams emphasizes circumstances wherein it is precisely the particular relations that people bear to each other that give rise to the relevant practical reasons for their acting as they do. The point

⁸ The summer 2012 Olympics brought an example of such a choice. Misty May-Treanor and Kerri Walsh competed as a two-person beach volleyball team for years, including in the 2004 and 2008 Olympics. Each claims to love the other and see her as family; they characterize their relationship as extending far beyond being teammates. When May-Treanor decided to retire from the game, Walsh got a new partner, Nicole Branagh, with whom she was training to compete in the 2012 Olympics. But then May-Treanor had second thoughts about retiring and decided to reenter the game. May-Treanor asked Walsh if she wanted to partner up again, a move that would abandon Branagh at the last minute before the Olympic qualifiers. Such moves are all part of the game in beach volleyball, as partners do not sign contracts with each other. They simply unite and break-up as the individuals involved see fit. But of breaking her partnership with Branagh to reunite with May-Treanor, Walsh says: “I really care for Nicole and respect her so much, and I knew it would crush her. It didn't take me long to make the decision, but it was agonizing.” When questioned about how she could do such a thing to Branagh—abandon her at the last minute and thereby dash her hopes of going to the Olympics—Walsh said, “Because it's Misty. If it was anyone else, it wouldn't have been a second thought.” Walsh does not offer a general defense of her actions, because her claim is that she would not have acted that way for anyone else. (http://espn.go.com/olympics/summer/2012/story/_/id/8093669/2012-summer-olympics-misty-treanor-kerri-walsh-together-again-another-shot-gold on 7/30/2012.)

I take from Williams is that particular people have an importance to us that is not translatable into general terms. Their importance to us should not be subordinated to general moral concerns, because such subordination does a deep violence to the self.

I take the emphasis Williams and Frankfurt place on the personal, particular nature of love seriously, and begin the dissertation by examining an approach to love characteristic of the sentimentalist tradition in moral philosophy. In Chapter One, I focus first on the work of David Hume, which treats desire (understood as something like a simple impulse or craving) as the paradigmatic mental state, and emphasizes our personal and affective dimensions. As such, Hume can accommodate the particularity of our emotional attachments. Hume has the valuable insight that loving someone affects our sense of ourselves, whereas merely being fond of someone does not. But Hume's view becomes unsatisfying when he claims that love is essentially enfeebling, implying that to love is to be passive toward and readily overcome by another person. While this indicates Hume's awareness that love involves being open and receptive to another person, the problem is that love is also a demanding attitude. Hume lacks the conceptual resources to offer a nuanced view of the self, in which we can—with one attitude—be both demanding of and vulnerable to another person. Hume's model of a desire-based deliberative process has recently been revived in Harry Frankfurt's discussions on love and rationality. Frankfurt, however, goes beyond Hume's picture of the self by introducing a notion of "identification," which he offers to make sense of our apparent ability to commit ourselves decisively to certain projects or people. I argue that active powers like identification and commitment cannot be accommodated within any basically

Humean moral psychology. Such abilities, and with them the possibility of love, depend on something closer to a Kantian conception of rational agency.

I next focus on the work of Kant, who provides the substantial counterpart to Humean-inspired moral theories, but is not known for his insight into our emotional lives. I begin Chapter Two by examining Kant's discussion in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, where he divides love into "practical love"—what we experience when we are morally motivated to help someone—and "pathological love"—what we experience when we feel fond of something. In reality, we experience love neither as a mere preference for another person, nor as something that generates the kind of demands that would be binding on any rational creature. But Kant treats personal love as an amalgam of these two components. David Velleman attempts to remedy Kant's focus on impersonal moral concern. Velleman offers a Kantian theory in which he describes love and respect as two ends of a continuum of attitudes that it is morally appropriate to have toward people. Like Kant, Velleman revises our ordinary conception of love into a version of impersonal concern. Velleman's view has the peculiar implication that everyone deserves the love of everyone else, and I argue that this is a fatal flaw.

Like Kant and Velleman, Korsgaard characterizes personal love as involving the treatment of particular other people as Kantian ends-in-themselves to a heightened degree. Korsgaard, though, also contends that our particular practical identities depend upon our personal relationships. This argument concerning the way in which we constitute ourselves I take seriously for the remainder of the dissertation. Ultimately, however, Korsgaard treats the obligations entailed in loving relationships as subsets of moral obligations. Characterizations of loving relations as subsets of moral relations can

account for the authority of the demands of love, but this type of view cannot account for its particularity. I conclude that our experience of love calls for an account of a unique type of practical necessity. The major conclusion of the first half of the dissertation is that any attempt to understand love primarily on a model of practical reasoning with which we are already familiar is doomed to fail.

In the second half of the dissertation I take seriously the possibility that love is simultaneously inescapable (in something like the way morality is supposed to be), and yet ineluctably personal. In love, we experience an engagement with a person as essentially particular, rather than as an instance of a rational agent in general. To make sense of this direct attachment to a particular individual, I argue in Chapter Three that love involves its own distinctive forms of expectation and disappointment. When those we love let us down, they hurt our feelings in a way that is more than mere disappointment, but is less than insult or offense.

According to Peter Strawson and Stephen Darwall, second-personal reactive attitudes (such as resentment) always have third-personal analogues (such as indignation). In contrast, I argue that the type of hurt feelings associated with love is a second-personal reactive attitude that does not have a third-personal corollary. I take this as evidence that the expectations involved in love are not objective in the way that the moral is objective. Nor, however, is love a matter of mere preference. On my interpretation, Kant introduces this different type of expectation in the *Critique of Judgment*. Whereas he characterizes moral judgments as universally communicable, judgments of beauty implicitly involve only second-personal address: I appeal to your personal experience with a particular object. This provides the conceptual space for an

account of love according to which love involves a form of practical necessity that is uniquely second-personal.

With respect to judgments of beauty, our uniquely second-personal addresses appeal to other people to appreciate a beautiful object. This raises the question of what we appeal *for* in the context of a loving relationship (since loving relationships are not focused around objects external to the relationship). I contend that the appeals we make in love seek to strengthen the intimacy implicit in the loving relationship, and I identify three interrelated dimensions of the intimacy that characterizes loving relationships. First, those we love have the standing to interpret us in a constitutive manner; second, we share a perspective with those we love; and third, being loved enables us to see ourselves as distinctive and special. These dimensions of the intimacy in a loving relationship reveal what it is that we appeal for in love, and how we are hurt when the appeals are rebuffed.

In the fourth and final chapter of the dissertation I situate love in respect to grief. Paradigmatically, grief is our response to the loss of someone we love, and examining that loss can illuminate the nature of the relationship we had in the first place. On my account, grief is a type of practical disorientation—namely, a disorientation that involves the loss of the personal self. I argue that the people we love and grieve over give us a sense of who we are as distinctive, particular individuals. The three interrelated dimensions of intimacy that I argue for in Chapter Three also serve in Chapter Four as reasons why those we love and grieve over enable our sense of our personal selves.

I present my account of grief against the type of account that would draw philosophical conclusions about the nature of love and grief from empirical psychological

data alone. In particular, these data indicate that we recover quickly from the deaths of loved ones, and Dan Moller makes the philosophical conclusion that those we love fulfill certain roles in our lives and are replaceable. The larger philosophical significance of my argument against such an account is that loving relationships have irreducible first- and second-personal elements. In other words, the significance of our intimate relationships cannot be captured from the external point of view, which is the standpoint any science of the mind necessarily adopts. As a result, in the case of love there is a rightful asymmetry between judgments made from these two different standpoints.

This case of love and grief is illustrative of a more general claim concerning the proper work of moral philosophy, which is that the understanding of ourselves gained through empirical data is not a substitute for the normative conclusions arrived at through first-personal reflections on our relationships with other people. The asymmetry that exists between the first- and third-person perspectives in the case of love and grief extends to the domain of morality in general. Moral theorizing ought not be done from a purely third-person perspective, because practical reasoning has an essential first-personal component. My discussion of love and grief supports the broad conclusion that any understanding of ourselves that we can gain through a science of the mind will not capture our normative experience or the issues of significance in moral philosophy.

CHAPTER ONE

HUME AND FRANKFURT ON LOVE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The foundations of David Hume's philosophy are anti-rationalist and naturalistic, which creates the expectation that we will find in his theory an account of love that best captures our ordinary experiences. A commonplace of pre-philosophical thought is that our emotions arise involuntarily, and love is an especially passionate or illogical emotion. Consequently, Hume's interpretation of the mental states associated with love, which relies heavily on causal and mechanistic explanations, seems well-suited to discussions of the emotion.

Despite this, Hume's actual descriptions of love are not as intuitive as we might expect. They do not provide for a distinction between love and other forms of affection, such as caring about, being fond of, or liking. This distinction is an important one for an adequate theory of love to make. In reaction to this inadequacy found in Hume's descriptions of love when taken at face value, I offer a reconstructed Humean theory of love. I adopt Annette Baier's suggestion that love entails an involvement in another's life that is different in kind, and not just degree, from any involvement we have with someone we merely like. This allows us to sketch out a qualitative distinction between loving and liking someone, a distinction that Hume himself suggests by his claim that the experience of love excites pride.⁹ Pride, for Hume, is an experience that makes the idea

⁹ He makes this claim when he describes the relation between love and pride, and the mechanism that is central to that relation: "The Double Relation of Impressions and Ideas." I explain this point in section 1.3.

of the self more salient. Consequently, I argue, this relation between love and pride offers a plausible explanation for the type of involvement that attends love, because it means that loving someone affects our sense of ourselves.

Although this is a plausible account of a qualitative distinction between loving and other forms of affection, and provides a structural feature that accounts for our sense of a more complex involvement with those we love, it is unclear how the relation between love and pride can do this work, within Hume's own account. For Hume, the objects of love and pride are other selves and oneself, respectively. This is suspicious because it implies that Hume assumes the existence of selves. After his skeptical crisis at the end of Book I of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, it is puzzling that he would assume we can have an idea of the self in the context of the relation between love and pride. In response to this puzzle, I suggest that at the end of Book I of the *Treatise* Hume changes his focus from providing an epistemological or metaphysical account of the self, to offering in Book II a phenomenological, inter-personal account, grounded in the experiences of love and pride. I argue that for Hume the concept of the self is constructed out of the experience of these passions, and call this a "constructivist" account of the self. Love and pride participate in a psychological mechanism that enables us to have a conception of ourselves. The experience of love provides us with our fundamental self-conceptions because we transfer our mental attitudes about those we love to ourselves. This account of the foundations of our idea of the self further explains the sense of involvement with another person that attends love.

The constructivist method allows Hume to provide an account of the self. It implies that our conceptions of ourselves are dependent upon our attitudes toward those

we love, and means that Hume has the resources available to distinguish love from other forms of affection. There is, however, a problem: on the constructivist account I offer, Hume should say that our attitudes about others are reflexive—that they can be directed towards ourselves. On the proposed model, our attitudes toward certain other people and ourselves are essentially the same: the only difference is that these attitudes are directed to a different object. But instead of agreeing that love and pride are essentially the same, Hume argues for a failure of reflexivity, because he does not think that we can love ourselves. His idea that pride and love are distinct is surprising, but he goes out of his way to distinguish between them. He claims first that pride is not self-love, because love has motivational consequences, while pride does not; and second, that love is enfeebling, while pride is invigorating. I contend that the idea that pride does not have motivational consequences is difficult to square with our experience of the emotion. Hume's primary characterization of love as enfeebling, though, is compatible with, and even bolsters, the constructivist account of the self. If love is enfeebling, then we can understand why we are so impressionable that our attitudes about others are easily transferred onto ourselves. I suspect, however, that the description of love as enfeebling is inaccurate, because many of the attitudes that accompany love are self-assertive.

Hume's attempt to distinguish between pride and love indicates that he does not have the resources to describe accurately our experience of love. Hume tries to bring out the idea that we are receptive and vulnerable to those we love, but the only concepts available to him to describe this phenomenon prove inadequate. Because of his commitment to a causal, mechanistic description of our mental lives, Hume must describe the experience of loving someone in terms of either activity or passivity. To be active is

to exert force on another object; to be passive is to be the object acted upon. But love is not simply the experience of being either active or passive, nor is it an oscillation between the two.

Ultimately, Hume does not elaborate sufficiently on his claims that love has motivational consequences and is enfeebling to make sense of our ordinary concept of love. For that reason, I turn to Harry Frankfurt's account of love. Frankfurt conceives of the will in a fundamentally Humean way, as composed of different levels of desires, where those desires motivate us to action. For Frankfurt, love consists in our foundational level of desires—our ultimate concerns. He characterizes the objects of our love as our "final ends," which means that they organize and rank our other desires and interests. Loving something or someone involves being motivated to promote its interests. According to Frankfurt, the more fully we love someone, the more our interests will be identical. Indeed, self-love is the ideal form of love, on his view. As my arguments in Chapters Two and Three will demonstrate, Frankfurt's emphasis on promoting each other's interests fails to capture the mode of interaction that being in a reciprocal loving relationship involves. Moreover, Frankfurt's account presupposes notions of identification and commitment that are not easily accommodated on a fundamentally Humean moral psychology, as they are Kantian concepts of agential powers. Consequently, in Chapter Two I turn my focus to Kantian accounts of love.

1.2 HUME'S DESCRIPTIONS OF LOVE

In Book II of the *Treatise*, Hume introduces the topic of love with simple descriptive statements. He begins with a report of what causes us to love or hate another person:

The virtue, knowledge, wit, good sense, good humour of any person, produce love and esteem; as the opposite qualities, hatred and contempt. The same passions arise from bodily accomplishments, such as beauty, force, swiftness, dexterity; and from their contraries; as likewise from the external advantages and disadvantages of family, possessions, cloaths, nation and climate. (T, 330)¹⁰

According to Hume, love arises when we consistently find pleasing the qualities, whether intellectual or physical, of another person (as hatred arises when we regularly find the qualities of another displeasing).¹¹ He adds that in order to engender love or hatred these qualities must seem to us to be “constant and inherent” in their subject (T, 348). This initial description of love is too underdetermined, however, to differentiate it from other positive responses to the qualities or actions of another person. If we are interested in an account of what we normally mean by “love,” Hume’s use of the term is too expansive here to provide such an account. Surely not all pleasing sensations that are incited by another’s qualities produce love, so why do some and not others? Were it just a matter of being in close proximity to another’s good qualities over an extended period of time, then love would be what we feel for casual but long-term friends, or nice neighbors. Perhaps

¹⁰ In-text “T” citations refer to David Hume’s *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

¹¹ This interpretation is compatible with Annette Baier’s. She writes: “‘Love,’ in Hume’s wide sense, has esteem as one of its forms. To love someone, by Hume’s definition, is simply to find something attractive or ‘fine’ in that person. He distinguishes different sorts of love both by the *sort* of fine thing found (power, beauty, wit, good nature) and by the perceived social or biological relationship of the lover to the one in whom he finds ‘fine’ qualities. So we ‘respect’ those we consider our superiors, but feel other sorts of love for equals or for ‘weaker’ ones. Parental love is for those who depend upon us in ways we do not depend upon them” (“Unsafe Loves” in MP, p. 41).

in Hume's sense we do love friendly acquaintances, but that leaves open the question of how to characterize love in its narrower, more common sense.

The same problem arises when we look at another of Hume's descriptions: "Love may shew itself in the shape of *tenderness, friendship, intimacy, esteem, good-will*, and in many other appearances; which at the bottom are the same affections, and arise from the same causes, tho' with a small variation, which it is not necessary to give any particular account of" (T, 448). These phenomena are all manifestations of love, according to Hume.¹² Of course, they are all manifestations of merely liking or being fond of someone, too: I may feel tenderness toward my own child, or toward a injured child on the playground; I may be friends with my spouse, or friends with a colleague; I may be intimate with my best friends, or intimate with my neighbor while we gossip; I may have esteem for my parents, or for public figures; I may feel good-will toward my siblings, or toward the bag-boy at the grocery store.¹³ That these are all intelligible possibilities illustrates the fact that these attitudes are not unique to love, and therefore are not its distinguishing characteristics. Examining Hume's descriptions of love gets us no closer to a distinction between what we ordinarily mean by love and other forms of affection.

Contrary to the implications of these initial descriptions of love that Hume offers, I suspect the difference between loving and liking someone is qualitative, and a moral psychology should offer an account of that difference in kind. While we might use the

¹² Paul Russell interprets this aspect of Hume's theory similarly: "This variation in the kinds of feeling of love and hate that we experience is to be accounted for, Hume says, by the causes of these feelings. In particular, the beliefs which give rise to love and hate vary insofar as they range over different types of "subjects" (e.g. physical qualities, mental qualities, property) belonging to or related to the person who is the object of our love or hatred" (FMS, 91). (Russell references *Treatise* pp. 278-9, in particular.)

¹³ I am not assuming that we will all agree that we love persons who fall in the same categories in this breakdown, just that we will all agree it makes sense to love some of these people and to like others.

terms interchangeably—one might say “I love the bag-boy at the grocery store” just as readily as one would say “I love my sister”—love means something to us that other forms of affection do not. The term “love” is used equivocally. In paradigmatic cases, we have an ability to distinguish between liking and loving. We know, for instance, that were the bag-boy at the grocery store to die it would be sad, but were a beloved sister to die it would be devastating. A philosophical account of love should have the resources to track this distinction. An adequate moral psychology should mark the difference between love and other sorts of fond feelings.

To differentiate between what he calls “the passions,”¹⁴ Hume consistently appeals to phenomenology, and maintains that all of the passions have distinct phenomenological effects on us.¹⁵ Following Hume’s methodology, one might claim that loving and merely liking someone feel different. But we can concede this point and still seek further explanation for the fact that they feel different. Annette Baier, a proponent of Hume’s moral theory, offers insight into this puzzle when she discusses the distinction between loving and more casual relationships. She writes:

... [Love] is risky and unsafe precisely because one does not know, cannot know, just how one’s life will be affected by the strong sort of involvement in the life of another that it brings. ... It is not just that one takes on an extra set of joys and sorrows as one’s own—one does that if one has sympathy for a person over a period of time whether or not one loves her. When one loves, one’s occasions for joy, sorrow, and other emotions will become “geared” in a more complex way

¹⁴ I will explain Hume’s term “passion” in section 1.3.

¹⁵ Hume holds that both the direct and indirect passions are “simple and uniform impressions” (T, 277). He also claims that one of the qualities of the passions “... is their sensations, or the peculiar emotions they excite in the soul, and which constitute their very being and essence” (T, 286). For a scholar who agrees with this interpretation of Hume’s theory of the passions, see Paul Russell, *Freedom and Moral Sentiment: Hume’s Way of Naturalizing Responsibility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), chapter 6, especially p. 87.

than just sympathy to those of the loved person, and this may indeed affect the balance of joy over sorrow in one's life. (UL, 44)¹⁶

In both casual and loving relationships, Baier notes, we are affected by the experiences of another person. But, her phrase "'geared' in a more complex way" indicates her idea that love brings a kind of involvement in another's life that is absent when we merely like another person. Our responses are not merely sympathetic, in Hume's sense of the term. To "sympathize," on Hume's account, is to feel the reverberations of someone else's psychological experience and to have a similar experience oneself as a result. Hume describes sympathy as "the communication of passions" (T, 398). He explains:

We have a lively idea of every thing related to us. All human creatures are related to us by resemblance. Their persons, therefore, their interests, their passions, their pains and pleasures must strike upon us in a lively manner, and produce an emotion similar to the original one; since a lively idea is easily converted into an impression. (T, 369)

Due to the fact that I have a similar psychological make-up to other people, simply becoming aware of someone else's experience of a passion can give rise to that passion in me.

On Baier's view, our involvement with those we love includes the acceptance of risk and vulnerability, because when we love another person the manner in which we can be affected by the fortune of that person changes.¹⁷ Love is not merely heightened sympathy. Rather, it entails an amalgam of additional attitudes. Baier illustrates the complexity of the lover's reactive attitudes: "The loved person's indifference will hurt, her boredom will disappoint, her premature withdrawal will grieve one" (UL, 44). Love

¹⁶ In Annette Baier, "Unsafe Loves" in *Moral Prejudices: Essays on Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994). In-text citations of "UL" will refer to this essay.

¹⁷ J. David Velleman posits a similar view: "Love disarms our emotional defenses; it makes us vulnerable to the other" ("Love as a Moral Emotion" in *Self to Self*, p. 95).

involves an expectation of reciprocity, the desire to please, and grief or hurt upon abandonment. According to this description, love essentially involves vulnerability to another person.

We might wonder, then, whether Hume's theory can address the patterns of vulnerability and receptivity that accompany love. In fact, Hume's discussion of the relation between love and pride provides an account of the way love affects our sense of ourselves. Hume claims that our recognition of the good qualities of someone we associate closely with ourselves, such as a relative, causes us to experience not only love but also greater pride, which thereby makes our idea of ourselves more salient. Consequently, Hume's descriptions of the relation between love and pride might contain an account of what Baier characterizes as love's more complex emotional gearing. By the same token, it might provide a Humean distinction between loving and merely liking or being fond of someone.

1.3 THE RELATION BETWEEN LOVE AND PRIDE

Hume's claim that the experience of love induces the experience of pride might provide his moral psychology with the resources to distinguish love from other forms of affection. Pride and love are what Hume calls "indirect passions" (T, 276-7). On Hume's theory of the mind, passions ultimately derive from perceptions. Our perceptions are the fundamental building blocks of our mental activity, and they result in either impressions or ideas (T, 1). The difference between impressions and ideas is one of

degree:¹⁸ impressions are stronger or more vivid, whereas ideas can be understood as the mental after-images of impressions (T, 1-3).¹⁹ For example, if I see a house in front of me, I have an impression of it, which will dwindle into an idea of the house when I walk away. “Passions,” a significant Humean mental category, are psychological states derived from the interplay and combination of various impressions and ideas (T, 7-8). Passions are either “direct” or “indirect” (T, 276). The direct passions result from an immediate association of pleasure or pain with an idea or impression, and produce forms of desire or aversion. Joy is an example of a direct passion, and is something I might experience upon being pleased by each of a variety of different objects, including, for instance, houses. The life cycle of the indirect passions—which include love and pride—is more complicated than that of the direct passions, however (T, 276).

The indirect passions are more intricate psychological phenomena for two reasons. First, they have what Hume refers to as “objects.”²⁰ This means that there is an idea or impression (or an amalgam of ideas and impressions) that tends to attach itself to the experience of the passion, although this connection is accidental, not necessary. The object of the passion is distinct from the cause of the passion. When we experience pride, we feel pleasure that is directed—always and only—at the idea of ourselves, and when

¹⁸ “Impressions and ideas differ only in their strength” (T, 19); and, “The first circumstance, that strikes my eye, is the great resemblance betwixt our impressions and ideas in every other particular, except their degree of force and vivacity” (T, 2).

¹⁹ “After the most accurate examination, of which I am capable, I venture to affirm . . . that every simple idea has a simple impression, which resembles it; and every simple impression a correspondent idea” (T, 3). Hume thinks this is true of simple, as opposed to complex impressions and ideas. A complex impression is a bunch of impressions linked together by simultaneity, and ideas can have the same sort of complexity. Complex impressions do not necessarily have a corresponding complex idea, and vice versa (T, 3).

²⁰ The term “object” is Hume’s, but its use should be distinguished from cognitivist references to the “object of emotions.” By “object of a passion” Hume means the idea or impression that usually attends the experience of a particular passion. As a result, the object is not necessarily joined with the passion, as it would be on a cognitivist interpretation.

we experience love, we feel pleasure that is directed—always and only—at the idea of another person (T, 277, 286-7). But, although the objects of pride and love are the ideas of self and others, respectively, the causes of pride and love are other ideas or impressions (T, 278). This brings us to the second reason that the indirect passions are more complicated than the direct passions: their convoluted causal history.

Imagine that I take pride in my new house.²¹ To explain the cause of pride, and of indirect passions in general, Hume describes a psychological phenomenon he calls “the double relation between impressions and ideas” (T, 289). A “double relation” operates when we experience pride (or another indirect passion) because two psychological forces work in tandem to excite an additional passion from the experience of a different one. My pride in my house has a two-fold cause: an association between impressions and an association between ideas. For one thing, I take a disinterested joy in the house: I experience joy when presented with this beautiful object. But this joy phenomenologically resembles other passions in the pleasure-family, including pride. And, when joy (as a mental state) gets excited, that excitement reverberates throughout the pleasure-family (other, phenomenologically similar mental states). In other words, when we experience one passion, we have a propensity to experience additional passions that phenomenologically resemble the original one.²² The passions themselves Hume classifies as impressions. Consequently, he regards an association between impressions

²¹ At one point, Hume describes the experience of pride using the example of “a suit of fine cloaths” (T, 439).

²² Hume describes this phenomenon: “All resembling impressions are connected together, and no sooner one arises than the rest immediately follow. Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again, till the whole circle be compleated. In like manner our temper, when elevated by joy, naturally throws itself into love, generosity, pity, courage, pride, and the other resembling affections” (T, 283).

as part of the cause of an indirect passion like pride. In my example, the resemblance between the feelings of joy and pride contributes to the experience of pride. Indeed, Hume calls this type of association one of “resemblance,” because it hinges on feelings resembling each other (in this case, insofar as they are all pleasurable) (T, 283).

The other half of the two-fold cause that brings me from the experience of joy upon contemplating my house to taking pride in it is a psychological association between ideas, which can be an association of resemblance, causation, or contiguity (T, 11, 283).²³ In other words, the psychological association could be between ideas of objects that have similar qualities, or are near to each other, or are causally linked. Hume claims: “When one idea is present to the imagination, any other, united by these relations, naturally follows it, and enters with more facility by means of that introduction” (T, 283). When I contemplate my house, for instance, the idea of my house brings to mind the idea of myself. In particular, because I bear a causal relation to that house: I purchased it and became the owner of it. This is an association of ideas. Consequently, my pride in my house arises through a “double relation between impressions and ideas.” Together, these two psychological forces are the cause of indirect passions (T, 279).

In general, the mental association of certain objects with our idea of ourselves affects our pride. The degree of pleasure we take in ourselves fluctuates in response to whether we are pleased or displeased by objects that we associate with ourselves (T, 289).²⁴ The objects of our love are one type of object that we associate with ourselves. Love excites pride because love and pride phenomenologically resemble each other, and

²³ The way ideas can be associated is more diverse than the way impressions can be associated: “... ideas are associated by resemblance, contiguity, and causation; and impressions only by resemblance” (T, 283).

²⁴ Hume writes: “Any thing, that gives a pleasant sensation, and is related to self, excites the passion of pride, which is also agreeable, and has self for its object” (T, 288).

because their objects (the idea of the beloved and the idea of oneself) are related in a requisite way (T, 333). As a result, our responses to the good or bad qualities of someone we associate with ourselves (Hume says, for example, a son or a brother) are not only ones of love or hatred, but also ones of pride or humility (T, 338). Once pride has been excited, it “...turns our view to another idea, which is that of self,” which is to say that our heightened pride makes our idea of self more salient (T, 278).²⁵ Consequently, Hume’s position is that what we experience for another person is love if we associate that person closely enough with ourselves that we “turn our attention to ourself” (T, 278).

My suggestion is that this relation between love and pride—the way in which love causes us to turn our attention to ourselves—reveals how love is distinct from other fond feelings on Hume’s account. Furthermore, perhaps the relation between love and pride that Hume describes can account for Baier’s hypothesis that love entails a complex involvement in another’s life and is characterized by patterns of vulnerability. When we experience pride, Hume thinks, that experience calls to one’s attention the idea of oneself. If he is right that love excites pride, then that relation might explain the way in which love affects the self.

1.4 HUME’S CONCEPT OF THE SELF

I have proposed that we can derive an account of the distinction between love and other fond feelings, and of love’s complex involvement in another’s life, from Hume’s position that love excites pride. For that reason, we ought now to consider the

²⁵ Once we are caused to experience pride or humility, we “...immediately turn our attention to ourself...” (T, 278).

plausibility of the claim that love excites pride, and whether this psychological mechanism can account for our complex involvement in the lives of those we love. When we examine the relation between love and pride that Hume posits, one suspicious feature readily reveals itself. In the relation between love and pride our idea of the beloved is closely related to our idea of ourselves. That implies that this psychological mechanism presupposes that we have conceptions of the self and other selves. For Hume to assume that we have such conceptions is problematic, however, because just prior to his discussion of love and pride he casts doubt upon the possibility of our having ideas of ourselves. At the end of Book I of the *Treatise*, Hume concludes that the idea of the self is unfounded and comes to doubt its reality. Consequently, it is unclear why Hume avails himself of the idea of the self in his explanation of the passions of love and pride at the beginning of Book II. In response to this puzzle, I hypothesize that the structure of the *Treatise* indicates Hume's view that the contexts of love and pride are important to the development of our self-conceptions. I will present an interpretation of the role love and pride play in the development of our self-conceptions, on Hume's picture. On this type of account, the self is a practical, inter-personal construction.

As an empiricist, Hume is committed to the view that all knowledge arises from observation. Unlike the rationalist, he does not assume a self that is the locus of agential powers and activity. Additionally, Hume rejects the notions of substance and causation as empirically unfounded. At the end of Book I of the *Treatise*, he wonders whether an idea of the self can be assembled with just the resources that he allows. Hume believes anything we could mean by "the mind" would be a "succession of perceptions" (T, 260), and our awareness of "self" can only be an awareness of these perceptions (T, 252). To

have an idea of the self as a unified phenomenon, we would have to have an idea of all of these perceptions—the succession of perceptions. One means of deriving this idea would be having a perception of the succession of perceptions.²⁶ But having a perception of all of an individual's perceptions at once is impossible, because they do not all arise at once.

After encountering this initial difficulty in his attempt to explain how we might derive an idea of the self, Hume appeals to the mental processes of memory and imagination. Although it is not possible to derive an idea of the self from a single perception, perhaps the idea can be created via memory and imagination. Memory and imagination might establish the idea of the self because they recognize that certain perceptions bear causal relations to each other, which is a possible explanation for the belief that these perceptions constitute a single mind (T, 262). Hume cannot avail himself of this type of account, however, due to his judgment that our ordinary notion of causation is unfounded.²⁷ On his account, real connections between perceptions do not exist in the first place for memory or imagination to recognize.²⁸ Since this justification for the concept of the self relies upon causation being a real natural phenomenon, debunking causation undermines this approach to an account of the self (T, 265-6).

²⁶ Ainslie argues that what Hume needs but cannot get is an idea of the mind's simplicity, but I think that the relevant issue is unity, not simplicity. I am referring to Donald C. Ainslie's "Hume's Reflections on the Identity and Simplicity of Mind" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 62, No. 3. (May, 2001), pp. 557-578.

²⁷ He writes: "...all probable reasoning is nothing but a species of sensation. ... Objects have no discoverable connexion together; nor is it from any other principle but custom operating upon the imagination, that we can draw any inference from the appearance of one to the existence of another" (T, 103). Our reasoning about cause and effect is built on "custom and repetition" (T, 117). Also: "All ideas are deriv'd from, and represent impressions. We never have any impression, that contains any power or efficacy. We never therefore have any idea of power" (T, 161). As a definition of cause, Hume decides: "A cause is an object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it, that the idea of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other" (T, 170).

²⁸ This is in part because causal thinking presupposes the reality of substance, which Hume believes he has shown to be incoherent.

We might think that although memory and imagination do not hook onto any real causal links, they can nonetheless operate as though they do. While my memory might not find pre-existing causal relations between my perceptions, it can imagine them to be there. But this does not create a self that I can be confident in, because it does not create any real entity: memory and imagination cannot bind perceptions together in any substantial way. Not only do memory and imagination not hook onto pre-existing causal links between perceptions, they themselves do not have causal efficacy. Consequently, they cannot create a concept of the self. Hume realizes this when he reflects upon the idea of the self, and he is disturbed by it.

Hume is unable to provide epistemological or metaphysical justifications for the idea of the self, and he ends Book I of the *Treatise* in a skeptical and existential crisis.²⁹ He concludes that we can never have an idea of the self as a unified phenomenon,³⁰ and his own sense of self begins to dissolve.³¹ At this point in the *Treatise*, Hume is deeply and personally troubled by the position he finds himself in. Consequently, it may come as a surprise that in reaction he engages in ordinary, everyday activities. He reports: “I dine, I play a game of back-gammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends...” (T, 269). After becoming unsure about the reality of the self while searching for an epistemological or metaphysical justification, Hume turns his focus to, as he describes it, “... those several passions and inclinations, which actuate and govern me” (T, 271). He begins Book II, which concerns the passions, with a discussion of pride and humility

²⁹ He does not think it is possible to have an idea of the self. See Garrett chapter 8, especially page 164.

³⁰ He concludes that it is impossible to have an impression of it, and that its reality would rely on causation and substance being real phenomena (but he argues they are not).

³¹ There are differing interpretations of what exactly it is that Hume comes to doubt. Don Garrett lays out some prominent theories in chapter 8 of his *Cognition and Commitment in Hume's Philosophy*.

(whose object is the self), and of love and hate (whose objects are other selves).

Significantly, he attends to his relations with other people and the accompanying attitudes, which re-orient his sense of self.³² The structure of the *Treatise*, and in particular this abrupt transition between Books I and II, indicates that Hume regards the experiences of love and pride as critical in the development of our self-conceptions.³³

For Hume, the idea of the self arises in emotional, interpersonal contexts.

Hume is committed to the view that our self-conceptions are an internalization of our conceptions of those we love and their attitudes toward us.³⁴ This constructivist account of the self suits Hume well because it arises phenomenologically, and without direct appeal to the metaphysical and epistemological assumptions that he rejects. Pride and love are closely associated passions for Hume, which is clear from his claim that love always excites pride (T, 338). Insofar as love excites pride, the experience of love contributes to our idea of self, because it causes our attention to turn to ourselves. We thus associate the pleasing qualities of those we love with our idea of ourselves. The relation between love and pride indicates the social nature of the self, and the importance of others to its existence. This interpretation has significant explanatory power when we consider the otherwise puzzling fact that Hume assumes the reality of the self in the

³² Annette Baier provides a similar interpretation of the structure of the *Treatise*. See her *A Progress of Sentiments*, especially chapter 5.

³³ Although Hume discusses pride and humility and love and hatred as pairs, I focus on pride and love because I think that these are the primary concepts in the pairs. Some support for this view comes from Hume's claim that pride is our primary stance toward ourselves: "I have already observ'd, that the mind has a much stronger propensity to pride than to humility, and have endeavour'd, from the principles of human nature, to assign a cause for this phaenomenon. Whether my reasoning be receiv'd or not, the phaenomenon is undisputed, and appears in many instances" (T, 390).

³⁴ It is clear that Hume thinks that much of our understanding of the experiences of others is a projection of our own experiences. He writes: "All these relations [causation, contiguity, and resemblance], when united together, convey the impression or consciousness of our own person to the idea of the sentiments or passions of others, and makes us conceive them in the strongest and most lively manner" (T, 318).

contexts of his discussion of pride and love in Book II, immediately after concluding Book I in a skeptical crisis.

Furthermore, this account is congruent with Annette Baier's interpretation of Hume, which implies that the self is essentially a social, relational construction, and that our self-conceptions are the result of our emotional experiences with other people. Baier focuses on Hume's recognition that love and loving relationships are important for the psychological development of infants and children. Inspired by Hume, Baier argues that the paradigmatic loving relationships are those between mothers and their children, and that children learn their emotional reactions by sympathetically experiencing the emotional reactions of their mothers (UL, 44). It follows from this that if a small child's mother is upset, angry, or happy, she is too, and if her mother is pleased with or loves her, she feels the same way. Baier also emphasizes Hume's observation that our family's opinion of us and good-standing in the community are important to us, because they reflect on us and affect our own attitudes toward ourselves (UL, 41-2). We internalize the opinions of those we are close to, and also re-direct toward ourselves the attitudes we have for those closest to us.³⁵ We associate our ideas about those closest to us with the idea of ourselves. On my interpretation, it is Hume's view that the origin of our love and pride are the same, and that out of the experience of them grows our basic self-

³⁵ With regard to taking pride in our family's history and good-standing, Hume writes: "'Tis evident, that when any one boasts of the antiquity of his family, the subjects of his vanity are not merely the extent of time and number of ancestors, but also their riches and credit, which are suppos'd to reflect a luster on himself on account of his relation to them" (T, 308).

conception. The history that we inherit and our relations with those we love give us our basic sense of who we are.³⁶

This account of how the idea of ourselves develops does not address, however, questions regarding the initial content of my idea of myself or another person. When Hume refers to the self that is the object of pride, he defines it as "... that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness" (T, 277). We have seen that the work of relating these ideas and impressions cannot be done by causation, since causation is not real, on Hume's view. I suggest that we rely on others to help us to form an idea of ourselves. Being seen by others as unified phenomena is its own mechanism for tying together our ideas and impressions of ourselves, which might otherwise be disparate because they do not bear causal relations to each other. Our bodies would seem to be the seed objects that the attitudes of pride and love are initially directed toward. Under this hypothesis, we would transition from having the mere idea of a human body to having an idea of a self.

1.5 HUME'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN PRIDE AND LOVE

I have presented the possibility that Hume responds to his skeptical and existential crisis by assuming that our conceptions of the self develop out of our loving relations with others. This account provides Hume with a theory of love that satisfies the minimal

³⁶ After we have a working conception of the self up and running, pride maintains it. The frequent emphasis on the idea of the self, which is what pride induces, helps to maintain our sense of identity once we have the basic concept, which we derive from the regard we have for those we love. And, although as Baier notes, "[o]ne of the benefits of mutual love is the mutual sustaining of proper pride" (UL, 41), of course throughout one's life many objects, and not just beloved people, will cause one to experience pride. My claim is that this relation between love and pride is the primary one in the development of our self-conceptions.

constraint of distinguishing love from other fond feelings. Loving someone affects our pride, on his account. On this view, however, Hume ought to regard our attitudes about others as reflexive. That is, it should be the case that our attitudes about others can be directed toward ourselves. Because on the proposed account, our attitudes toward ourselves and others are essentially the same, where the only difference is that they are directed toward the self instead of the other. But instead of claiming that our attitudes toward others are reflexive, Hume maintains that we cannot love ourselves. He claims that the object of pride is always and only oneself, that the object of love is always and only another person (T, 277, 286-7), and that self-love is not proper love (T, 329).

Hume's belief that pride is not self-love cuts against the constructivist account I have attributed to him. We should wonder, then, why he maintains that the two are different attitudes. He asserts that the primary difference between love and pride is that love, unlike pride, is always followed by benevolence. I interpret this to mean that love has motivational consequences, while pride does not. That position is hard to make sense of, however, because experience tells us that pride can motivate us to act on our own behalf. For that reason, I turn my attention to Hume's other claim about the distinction between love and pride, which is that pride is invigorating while love is enfeebling. The idea that love is enfeebling is initially persuasive. Those we love have the power to make significant impressions on us.

It is curious, though, why Hume goes out of his way to distinguish between pride and love, after offering a theory that would lead us to believe they are essentially the same. I suspect that Hume attempts to contrast love with pride and calls it "enfeebling" because he has an intuition about the nature of love that his account does not sufficiently

explain, that is, that love involves receptiveness to another person and, more specifically, the patterns of vulnerability that Baier refers to. Baier posits that love brings with it a complex involvement in another's life, and opens us up to jealousy and grief. But this kind of involvement cannot be accounted for on the causal story that Hume tells. It is not simply the case that when my loved one is sad I feel sad too. The story of sympathetic responses that Hume has available to him is not adequate to the task of describing the experience of receptivity and vulnerability, which is why the distinctions he draws between love and pride are ultimately unmotivated on his account.

1.5.1 Love Has Motivational Consequences

Hume attempts to distinguish between love and pride, and claims that self-love is not proper love. This is a surprising claim, since love and pride are phenomenologically similar enough that it is easy and common to slide from the experience of love to the experience of pride. Not only are they phenomenologically similar, but their causes are the same, too, as we learn from his claim: "All those objects, which cause love, when plac'd on another person, are the causes of pride, when transfer'd to ourselves" (T, 391).³⁷ Even so, Hume maintains that the object of pride is always and only oneself, and the object of love is always and only another person. With regard to the possibility of loving oneself, Hume objects: "... when we talk of self-love, 'tis not in a proper sense, nor has the sensation it produces any thing in common with that tender emotion, which is excited by a friend or mistress" (T, 329). Given the ambiguity of the phrase "not in a proper sense," the only thing that Hume straightforwardly rules out in this statement is

³⁷ He also states: "...the same qualities that produce pride or humility, cause love or hatred" (T, 332).

that we can feel the same “tender emotion” for ourselves that we feel for a beloved, but that term is not transparent either.

When Hume calls love a “tender emotion,” he might be thinking of it as a warm, protective feeling that normal people do not feel for themselves. He might think that tenderness would change in character when self-directed, and evolve into self-pity or defensiveness. Even so, that should not mean that we cannot experience self-love on Hume’s own terms because the common manifestations of love, as he enumerates them, are “tenderness, friendship, intimacy, esteem, and good-will” (T, 448).³⁸ Even if we concede, therefore, that we cannot feel tenderly toward ourselves, we could conceivably feel one of these other ways. Perhaps, though, friendship, intimacy, and good-will do not even admit of being self-directed, if the relation with another is built into our ordinary understanding of these concepts, as it may be. Esteem is different, though: I can just as easily experience esteem for myself as esteem for another person. So esteem might be a form of love that can be self-directed. My point is that under the schema that Hume provides, tenderness is only one possible manifestation of love. Consequently, we should wonder why Hume resists the possibility of self-love in general, when love can take the form of esteem, for instance.

Textual evidence suggests that Hume’s appeal to the concept of “tenderness” indicates his view that love involves the desire to help the beloved. Hume sometimes pairs “love and tenderness” together, and contrasts them with “hatred and anger.”³⁹ The

³⁸ Also, he claims: “... esteem and contempt are to be considered as species of love and hatred...” (T, 357).

³⁹ See, for example, page 391 of the *Treatise*.

significance of this contrast is best understood in light of his claim that love is always followed by benevolence, and hatred by anger. He writes:

The passions of love and hatred are always followed by, or rather conjoin'd with benevolence and anger. 'Tis this conjunction, which chiefly distinguishes these affections from pride and humility. For pride and humility are pure emotions in the soul, unattended with any desire, and not immediately exciting us to action. But love and hatred are not completed within themselves, nor rest in that emotion, which they produce, but carry the mind to something farther. Love is always follow'd by a desire of the happiness of the person below'd, and an aversion to his misery: As hatred produces a desire of the misery and an aversion to the happiness of the person hated. (T, 367)

In this passage, Hume asserts that the conjunction of benevolence with love constitutes its primary difference from pride. Likewise, the conjunction of anger with hatred constitutes its primary difference from humility. Additionally, Hume equates the attitude of benevolence with the desire for the happiness of the other person. On his account, the consequence of love is a desire for the happiness of the other person, and the consequence of hate is a desire for the other's misery. This is another way of saying that love seeks to help and hate seeks to hurt, which means that these attitudes have motivational consequences. In contrast to love and hate, pride and humility, Hume believes, do not "excit[e] us to action." When we love we are motivated to act on behalf of the other person, but when we are proud we are not thereby motivated to act on our own behalf.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ This regard for the other person is well characterized by his depiction of friendship, which, he thinks, is the stable element in amorous love. Of it, he writes: "...friendship is a calm and sedate affection, conducted by reason and cemented by habit; springing from long acquaintance and mutual obligations..." ("Of Polygamy and Divorces" in *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987) p. 189). This attitude, which he describes in terms of friendship, is at the core of Hume's conception of love. The "long acquaintance and mutual obligations" imply that it is characterized by a stable and persistent interest in the welfare of the other, and desire to promote that welfare.

We might wonder if pride does indeed lack motivational consequences. Can we not desire to help ourselves just as easily as we can desire to help others, and can this desire not be conjoined with the experience of pride? In moments of pride we assert ourselves: we tell others about our merits, we defend ourselves against those who do not think as highly of us, and we test our limits. Imagine a student who is surprised by a low grade on an exam and attends the instructor's office hours to question it. If a complaint is well founded, the student is likely motivated to assert himself as a consequence of the experience of pride. A strong sense of self makes him think he deserves better and results in his making that claim on his own behalf. We are frequently motivated to help ourselves, and that motivation often results from the positive sense of ourselves that constitutes pride. As a result, Hume's claim that love has motivational consequences and pride does not is puzzling.

1.5.2 Love is Enfeebling

Hume draws a further distinction between love and pride when he claims that pride is invigorating while love is enfeebling. He writes:

... [T]he two agreeable [passions, love and pride], as well as the two painful passions [humility and hatred], have some differences, and even contrarieties, which distinguish them. Nothing invigorates and exalts the mind equally with pride and vanity; tho' at the same time love or tenderness is rather found to weaken and infeeble it. The same difference is observable betwixt the uneasy passions. Anger and hatred bestow a new force on all our thoughts and actions; while humility and shame deject and discourage us. ... Let us remember, that pride and hatred invigorate the soul; and love and humility infeeble it. (T, 391)

Here, too, Hume contrasts the effects that love, hatred, pride, and humility have on us.

Based upon his earlier contention that love and hatred have motivational consequences,

we might expect them to be the passions that invigorate us, but instead pride and hatred invigorate, while love and humility enfeeble. Given this new pairing, whatever Hume means by “invigorating” and “infeebling” should not be about motivation to act, or it would conflict with his earlier discussion. Nor should it concern how intensely we feel these passions, because love, hatred, pride, and humility are what Hume calls “violent passions” (T, 276), which means that they all have strong and distinct phenomenological feels.

Instead, Hume’s suggestion might be that when we feel love or humility, we are more inclined to let others dictate the terms of our interaction: we become complacent, and our sense of self diminishes or fades into the background. Hume might think that love is enfeebling because to love is to open oneself up to being affected by the other person. In contrast, by calling pride and hatred “invigorating,” Hume means that they are both distinctively spirited or self-assertive passions: they strengthen our sense of self. The experience of pride or hatred primes us to put our own mark on the world, and to prevail over others.

This interpretation of Hume’s idea that love is enfeebling while pride is invigorating is congruent with the proffered constructivist account of the self. Both accounts entail that when we love, others make their mark on us, and when we are proud we project our own qualities or traits onto others. To understand love as enfeebling is to think that when we experience love for another person, our perceptions of and attitudes about that other person take the foreground. We become more aware of them than we are of our own mental states. This, presumably, is what enables our attitudes about others to affect or even determine our attitudes about ourselves. When a brighter object is placed

next to a less illuminated one, its light is cast upon the darker object. So, too, are our attitudes about more vivid mental objects transferred onto associated, but less vivid objects. Hume's idea is that when we love someone, our significance wanes next to this brighter object, and we become primarily an object that is associated with that other person. As a result, our feelings toward the more vivid object are what matter, and they are redirected toward ourselves. The inverse is implied by the claim that pride is invigorating. This is to think that when we experience pride, our attitudes about ourselves are in the foreground and give content to our ideas about people with whom we are associated. On this account, when we experience love the other person contributes to our self-conception, and when we experience pride our ideas of ourselves bleed over into our ideas of others.

1.6 CRITIQUE OF HUME'S ABILITY TO ACCOUNT FOR LOVE

Hume has attempted to distinguish the passions of pride and love by claiming that pride is invigorating and love is enfeebling. On his view, our minds are an amalgam of various, causally-triggered mechanisms, and appealing to these mechanisms can adequately explain our emotional experiences. Everything—including our emotional responses—is appropriately described and explained in terms of activity or passivity. Either my mental states are forces acting on other objects, or they are acted upon. For this reason, Hume appeals to the language of “invigorating” and “enfeebling” to describe pride and love. Pride is the experience of being active, and love of being passive. Hume's use of the terms “invigorating” and “enfeebling” displays his commitment to

talking about our experience of the self in terms of our causal powers and liabilities.

Either we are causally efficacious, or we are weak and passive.

Of course, those we love affect us, we are open and receptive to them, and we feel their joys and sorrows. But this cannot be captured positing that we have sympathetic responses to those we love, that we experience the reverberations of their sadness, for instance. The mechanistic story that Hume tells does not explain our experience of the phenomena commonly associated with love, which are, as Baier indicates, more complex. The receptivity to another person is not what it is either to be in possession of a causal power or to lack it. Hume does not allow himself the conceptual resources to account for the kind of receptivity that he gestures at in his discussion of love.

Additionally, I suspect that the characterization of love as enfeebling, where that means essentially passive, is inaccurate. In love we make demands on others, we expect reciprocity, and we can be selfish, possessive, and jealous. When we love someone, we are not blank slates waiting to be imprinted by the beloved person. Instead, we want the other person to be interested in us and what we care about. We want the beloved person to love us back, for the people we are. This does not imply, though, that the experience of love is an oscillation between activity and passivity—that we are at one moment active, at the next passive, and then active again. Rather, we are always receptive to the other person in a way that is neither essentially active nor essentially passive.

Hume does not provide an account on which we can—with one attitude—be both demanding of and vulnerable to another person. In light of that deficiency, it is helpful to consider developments of Hume's basic position. Harry Frankfurt's discussions of love and rationality presuppose Hume's model of a desire-based deliberative process. But

whereas Hume does not elaborate on the motivational consequences of love, Frankfurt directly addresses the role of love in our practical deliberations.

1.7 FRANKFURT ON LOVE AND VOLITIONAL NECESSITY⁴¹

Frankfurt contends that love involves a distinctive kind of practical necessity, which he calls “volitional necessity.” The objects of our love serve as our final ends, and thereby structure the material of our wills. Insofar as Frankfurt presupposes a desire-based moral psychology, his account is essentially Humean. On Hume’s mechanistic picture, our various drives account for all motivation and action. But Frankfurt goes beyond Hume’s picture of the self by introducing a notion of “identification,” which he offers to make sense of our apparent ability to commit ourselves decisively to certain people or projects. Ultimately, the introduction of this notion indicates the need for Kantian elements of agency in order to make sense of our experience of love.

Frankfurt maintains that all of our desires are the raw materials of our wills, and they all have the potential to serve as our ends (or be the objects we pursue).⁴² But the full range of a person’s interests are too numerous and varied to all be pursued as ends. As a result, our wills must have a mechanism for prioritizing certain desires. Frankfurt claims that we evaluate our “given” desires—the desires that we happen to have—and promote the more important ones to a higher level. In other words, we endorse some of

⁴¹ Frankfurt’s work on the topics of love and caring spans many essays and years. I will assume that his position has evolved in the interest of refining and clarifying his views. For this reason, although I consult all of his work, I will regard his latest book, *The Reasons of Love*, to be the most accurate presentation of his views on love.

⁴² Frankfurt treats “desire” as equivalent to “want,” and I will use the term “desire” as a general term to encompass all those affective states that Frankfurt refers to when he mentions “desires,” “passions,” or “appetites.”

our desires, and dismiss or ignore others.⁴³ At the lower levels, Frankfurt distinguishes between “first- and second-order desires,” where first-order desires are all of our given desires, and second-order desires are those we initially endorse. The desires that we want to be effective he calls “second-order volitions” (FWCP, 16).⁴⁴ A volition amounts to a desire that a person wants to represent her will. The fact of a first-order desire’s promotion to a higher level does not automatically qualify it as a volition, though, because on this model of the will a desire might ascend up a never-ending ladder of levels. Since desires could, in principle, be promoted up an unending series of levels, there must be some other method by which a desire becomes effective and representative of a person’s will. Frankfurt argues that people need neither continue appealing to ever higher-order desires to determine their wills, nor arbitrarily conclude those appeals. Rather, this process ends, and a person’s volition is determined, “[w]hen a person identifies himself *decisively* with one of his first-order desires, [because] this commitment ‘resounds’ throughout the potentially endless array of higher orders” (FWCP, 21). Identifying with a desire means making a resounding commitment, which determines that that particular desire will be a constitutive part of one’s will. Consequently, the ranking of our desires is accomplished via the power we have to identify ourselves with certain ones (IW, 170).⁴⁵

⁴³ “Endorse” is Frankfurt’s term. See, for instance, “Identification and Wholeheartedness,” pages 170 and 175.

⁴⁴ Frankfurt, “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person” in *The Importance of What We Care About* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 11-25. In-text citations to this essay are referenced as FWCP.

⁴⁵ Frankfurt, “Identification and Wholeheartedness” in *The Importance of What We Care About* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 159-176. In-text citations to this essay are referenced as IW.

In *The Reasons of Love*, Frankfurt concludes that love ultimately structures our wills. He claims that the objects of one's love serve as that person's final ends. That is, what we love provides the framework in our wills for ranking and structuring our desires. Imagined in another way, what we love has a trickle-down effect among our other desires, and orders and prioritizes those comparatively minor interests. Frankfurt describes love as "a complex configuration of the will" (RL, 55 fn. 9). Love governs our practical reasoning, in the sense that it determines what we take to be reasons for acting (RL, 49-50). He claims that as individuals, "... the direction of our practical reasoning is in fact governed by the specific final ends that our love has defined for us" (RL, 49). What a person loves guides and informs the various decisions that a person makes, and the sorts of reasons to which he or she is most responsive. What we love determines what we see as relevant, and what reasons are salient for us. All of this is to say that what we love determines how we are motivated to act.

Insofar as what we love serves as our final ends, love plays a unique role in our practical reasoning. Frankfurt writes:

Loving someone or something essentially means or consists in, among other things, taking its interests as reasons for acting to serve those interests. Love is itself, for the lover, a source of reasons. It creates the reasons by which his acts of loving concern and devotion are inspired. (RL, 37)

Loving someone or something determines what reasons, as individuals, we pay attention to, and what sorts of ways we experience ourselves as having to act. The particular objects of our love give rise to the reasons that motivate us. More radically, Frankfurt emphasizes that the reasons that move us derive ultimately from the fact of our love, not from a recognition of any objective value those reasons might have. We are not moved

by the reasons of our love as a consequence of an objective evaluation of the merits of those reasons. I do not love the people I love—and thus act on their behalf—because I think they are more deserving than other people. I do not love them because I deem them especially valuable; rather, I value them especially because I love them (RL, 38-41).

But this order of valuing does not imply that our personal concerns are optional or contingent. Frankfurt introduces the concept of “volitional necessity” to describe his way of understanding the structure of our practical rationality and the nature of our personal concerns. A volitional necessity “... consists essentially in a limitation of the will” (RL, 46). Frankfurt claims that we have certain concerns that are neither moral (which he takes to mean universal, or grounded in objective values) nor merely contingent (which implies that they are optional or escapable). As a result, the necessity we are under in love (the volitional necessity) is both categorical and personal. Frankfurt illustrates this concept by reference to Martin Luther’s well-known declaration: “Here I stand, I can do no other” (CF, 80).⁴⁶ According to Frankfurt, the experience that Luther ascribes to himself is not one of rational necessity; Luther does not take himself to lack reasonable alternatives. Frankfurt explains:

I understand him to have meant to say about himself something like this: that he could not help being driven by the considerations supporting his stand; that even when he attempted to give countervailing weight to considerations tending to lead to a different stand, he found it impossible to do so; that whatever the objective logical or moral value of the considerations that moved him, he experienced them as irresistible. (CF, 80)

Although Luther was in a position, as a rational agent, to recognize that there were reasons both for and against his stance, he was not in a position, given his personal

⁴⁶ The discussion of the concept of volitional necessity that follows appears in Frankfurt’s “Concerning the Freedom and Limits of the Will” in *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 71-81. In-text citations to this essay are referenced as “CF.”

commitments, to adopt any stance but the one he had. Frankfurt claims that agents "... are subject to a kind of volitional necessity, in virtue of which there are conceivable acts of willing that they are unable to perform" (CF, 80).

Frankfurt conceives of this necessity as "volitional" in nature because, he argues, a person's most basic concerns provide structure to that person's will. The structure of a person's will essentially depends upon that person's particular foundational concerns. People can care so strongly about something that they identify with it, and that renders certain actions "effectively unavailable" to them (NI, 110-111).⁴⁷ These concerns "define the boundaries" of people's wills, and they necessarily limit what qualify as viable options for individuals (NI, 116). Consequently, for Frankfurt, the question of how one ought to live cannot be posed independently of the question of what that individual actually cares about (RL, 26). Impartial moral theories that would claim otherwise are misguided, on this account.

Frankfurt argues that the essential feature of any type of love is a concern for the welfare of the beloved. He writes: "Love is, most centrally, a disinterested concern for the existence of what is loved, and for what is good for it. The lover desires that his beloved flourish and not be harmed; and he does not desire this just for the sake of promoting some other goal" (RL, 42). More specifically, the lover "... is disinterestedly concerned to protect and to pursue the true interests of the person whom he loves" (RL, 85). Love consists in a desire to promote the interests of those we love (RL, 88-9). We demonstrate our love when we make a genuine effort to understand what is

⁴⁷ Frankfurt, "On the Necessity of Ideals" in *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 108-116, reference from p. 110. In-text citations to this essay are referenced as NI.

fundamentally important to our beloved (RL, 88). Working to promote the interests of our beloved involves, as much as possible, taking those interests up as our own. One of the purest instances of love, on Frankfurt's account, is "... the love of parents for their infants or small children..." because that type of love most essentially involves recognizing what is good for the object of love, and promoting the good of the beloved for its own sake (RL, 43).

It follows from this, Frankfurt argues, that the ideal form of love is self-love. The more closely our interests align with the interests of our beloved, the more wholehearted (and less ambivalent) our attachment to the beloved is. The more completely the lover takes on the interests of the beloved, the stronger the love is. Self-love is the purest kind of love, in part because it most easily meets this criterion. In self-love our interests necessarily align with the interests of our beloved. The person who loves himself most completely identifies with his beloved's interests (RL, 81). When one loves a different person, on the other hand, the interests of the two people diverge and can come into conflict, potentially creating a state of ambivalence in the lover (RL, 62). The perfect love is one in which the lover wholeheartedly shares all of the beloved's interests.

The stress Frankfurt places on promoting the interests of the beloved leads to an account that does not adequately address the types of commitment and identification at play in loving relationships. Kyla Ebels-Duggan resists Frankfurt's claim that the love parents have for young children ought to be regarded as one of the purest instances of love. Ebels-Duggan argues that this conception of love leaves no room for the type of meaningful interaction and reciprocity that we associate with normal, adult loving

relationships (AB, 145, 162).⁴⁸ She contends that understanding love as directed at promoting each other's interests misses a fundamental dimension of how we interact and the kind of intimacy that love involves. Love is not about maximizing each other's welfare, on her view. She writes: "Rather than contributing to each other's welfare, doing things for each other, I hold that love directs us to share in each other's ends, doing things with each other" (AB, 155-6). Love involves being committed in such a way that we engage the world together, and Frankfurt's account does not capture that significant dimension of love.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Love seems to involve being open to each other and identifying with each other in a way that goes beyond promoting each other's pre-existing interests. Indeed, both Hume and Frankfurt emphasize that our senses of self and our identities as individuals depend on our love for other people. An adequate theory of love ought to account for that dependence. Certainly we do bring our individual projects and interests into a relationship, as Frankfurt points out. But love would seem to involve a type of commitment to each other that does not primarily consist in taking up each other's pre-existing interests or promoting each other's independent welfare. Commitment and identification present themselves as central concepts in the experience of love, yet they are notions that are not readily accommodated on a basically Humean moral psychology. They are, in contrast, essential concepts in any Kantian moral psychology. For that

⁴⁸ Kyla Ebels-Duggan, "Against Beneficence: A Normative Account of Love" in *Ethics*, Vol. 119, No. 1 (October 2008), pp. 142-170. Cited in the text as AB.

reason, exploring Kantian accounts of love will provide a useful contrast to Hume and Frankfurt.

CHAPTER TWO

KANTIAN ACCOUNTS OF LOVE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The necessity that love involves cannot be purely psychological. As Frankfurt emphasizes, “identification” in the sense of being decisively committed to, seems integral to loving someone. Love is not adequately accounted for in terms of the psychological pulls of desires and inclinations. Nor does its necessity have the optional, escapable quality of a hypothetical imperative. For these reasons, Frankfurt introduces the concept of volitional necessity as a distinctive form of practical reasoning. But it is not clear how Frankfurt can accommodate a notion like volitional necessity on a basically Humean moral psychology. Kantian accounts are better situated to make sense of the experience of a non-optional, categorical necessity.

In this chapter I consider the possibility that love involves the necessity of a categorical imperative, in Kant’s familiar language. On impartialist moral accounts, including the Kantian account, morality demands that we promote certain ends and permits us to pursue other interests. A special type of rational necessity attends our moral obligations. Moral obligations generate an inescapable necessity. In Kant’s term, they are categorical. We are committed to the ends of morality by an inescapable practical necessity. Other types of practical necessity have an optional quality to them.

Our personal interests, which are not required by morality, participate in different kinds of practical necessity. Hypothetical imperatives involve a rational necessity,

because insofar as we want a certain end, we are committed to the means to that end. If I decide to build model airplanes, that decision commits me to pursuing the means to building them. With this type of personal interest, we are under a rational necessity to pursue the means to the ends we affirm, but only insofar as we remain committed to those particular ends. And, on the Kantian picture, our commitments to any non-moral ends are contingent in the sense that they are not categorical. If our personal interest in a non-moral end wanes (and it would not be imprudent to abandon it⁴⁹), we are no longer under any rational necessity to pursue it.⁵⁰

Extremely salient inclinations can give rise to a psychological necessity. This is the experience of being psychologically compelled by a compulsion or intense desire. It is not the experience of a rational necessity. Rather, to experience a psychological necessity is to have a desire that one feels great pressure to act from or satisfy. A strong urge to eat ice cream could be the experience of a psychological necessity. Despite the psychological salience of such urges, their necessity is optional or escapable insofar as we are rational creatures who can reflect upon the merits of inclinations and thereby distance ourselves from them. Consequently, both the rational necessity of hypothetical imperatives and the psychological necessity of intense desires are essentially optional or escapable. Only the necessity of moral obligations is inescapable, according to impartialist moral theories like Kantian morality.

The rational necessities of categorical and hypothetical imperatives, and the psychological necessity of strong inclinations, are all forms of practical necessity. We

⁴⁹ Prudential considerations also involve rational necessity, but they are not central to my discussion here.

⁵⁰ Exceptions to that would be if we made contracts or created expectations around that end that others have come to rely on, but at that point we are in moral territory.

might wonder, then, what type of practical necessity love involves. The difficulty in classifying the necessity of love is that it presents itself as having the inescapable quality of a moral necessity paired with the ineluctably personal quality of a hypothetical imperative or psychological necessity. Indeed, Frankfurt argues that the necessity of love is inescapable yet deeply personal, and introduces the category of “volitional necessity” precisely because he deems the standard categories of practical necessity unable to accommodate our experiences in love.

Perhaps, however, contrary to Frankfurt’s position, love participates in the same non-contingent, inescapable type of practical necessity as does the moral. Kant’s account of love, and J. David Velleman’s and Christine Korsgaard’s contemporary developments of it, present that possibility. Ultimately, I argue that each of these accounts sacrifices the personal, particular quality of love in favor of treating the obligations involved in love as forms of moral obligation. I conclude that we must conceive of love as participating in its own form of practical necessity, which is the position I develop in the following chapter.

2.2 KANT ON PRACTICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL LOVE

Kantian morality is often characterized as unable to account adequately for the significance to us of our personal concerns. Kant’s ethical theory appears to present a strict dichotomy between reason and inclination, under which only what reason recommends garners moral approbation. In fact, as Kant claims in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, inclinations are so cumbersome and unruly that we would be rid

of them altogether, if only that were possible (GW, 4:454).⁵¹ What are commonly interpreted as a person's most fundamental concerns must apparently, therefore, be categorized in one of these two ways. Under this dichotomy, either love is recommended and guided by the norms of morality, or it qualifies as a mere inclination. In fact, Kant's direct discussion of love in the *Metaphysics of Morals* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* treats it as a combination of familiar moral concerns and certain inclinations or feelings. For Kant, love as we ordinarily understand it amounts to an amalgam of what he terms "practical love"—what we experience when we are morally motivated to help someone—and "pathological love"—what we experience when we feel fond of something.⁵²

Kant considers the attitude of love in the context of interpreting the meaning of the familiar command that one ought to "love one's neighbor." To make sense of this requirement, Kant distinguishes between pathological and practical love. Pathological love is an affective response that is not under our voluntary control. It is, as Kant understands it, experiencing "pleasure in the perfection of others" or taking "delight" in them (MM, 6:449; 6:402). But this fond feeling "... cannot be commanded, for it is not within the power of any human being to love someone merely on command" (2nd C, 5:83). Kant claims, "*Love is a matter of feeling, not of willing, and I cannot love because*

⁵¹ "There is no one—not even the most hardened scoundrel, if only he is otherwise accustomed to use reason—who, when one sets before him examples of honesty of purpose, of steadfastness in following good maxims, of sympathy and general benevolence (even combined with great sacrifices of advantage and comfort), does not wish that he might also be so disposed. He cannot indeed bring this about in himself, though only because of his inclinations and impulses; yet at the same time he wishes to be free from such inclinations, which are burdensome to himself" (GW, 4:454).

⁵² Kant discusses the distinction between practical and pathological love in: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Ak. 4:399, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Mary Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Ak. 5:83, and *Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Ak. 6:449-50.

I *will* to, still less because I *ought* to (I cannot be constrained to love); so a *duty to love* is an absurdity” (MM, Ak, 6:401). We cannot be under an obligation to have a positive affective response to another person. Consequently, pathological love cannot be required of us in the way that moral duties can be required. It is, rather, a pleasurable feeling that we happen to have in response to certain people.

Love can only be required of us when it is understood as the duty of beneficence. Kant refers to this duty as “practical love.” Practical love “... is a duty of all human beings toward one another, whether or not one finds them worthy of love” (MM, 6:450-1). We have a duty of beneficence to all other people in general, regardless of our affective response to them as particular people (MM, AK, 6:393). Practical love amounts to “... the duty to make others’ *ends* my own (provided only that these are not immoral)” (MM, 6:450). This duty falls to us simply in virtue of our rational recognition of the value of the humanity in other people. It is grounded in the fundamental Kantian moral duty to treat others as ends-in-themselves. To be the recipient of practical love is to be “helped in case of need” (MM, Ak, 6:393). Practical love is “the love of human beings (philanthropy)”; it is “not the love that is delight in them” (MM, 6:450). Kant emphasizes that practical love is not an affective response to particular other people. He writes, “In this context ... **love** is not to be understood as *feeling* ... (since others cannot put one under obligation to have feelings)” (MM, Ak, 6:449). While pathological love is a response to particular other people, practical love is a general moral attitude properly adopted toward all people.

With regard to the requirement to love one’s neighbor, Kant concludes that “... to love one’s neighbor means to practice all duties toward him *gladly*” (2nd C, 5:83).

Loving one's neighbor means, consequently, acting on the duty of practical love, infused with some feeling—taking some pleasure in the performance of that duty. Enjoying the performance of one's duty of beneficence is an attitude to strive for. The instruction to love one's neighbor picks out the combination of our duty of beneficence and the aspiration to perform it gladly.

The two senses of love that Kant elucidates appear to correspond to his original ethical categories of reason and inclination. Practical love is a moral duty prescribed by reason and pathological love is an inclination not under the direct control of the will. Love of one's neighbor, ideally, involves practical love infused with feelings of pleasure in doing one's duty. But those feelings of pleasure track an impersonal duty to value the humanity of others. Loving one's neighbor is an impersonal, general form of love, and is not what we mean when we refer to our love for particular people. As such, the partiality that we associate with love seems to be regarded as a mere inclination on Kant's account. Kant does, however, address our personal motivations to pay special attention to certain people. He claims that we are permitted to focus our general duty of beneficence on people we are especially fond of. Kant argues, "... in acting I can, without violating the universality of the maxim [of beneficence], vary the degree greatly in accordance with the different objects of my love (one of whom concerns me more closely than another)" (MM, Ak, 6:452). Consequently, on Kant's view, we are allowed to pay special moral attention to those in whom we take a personal interest. We can make the happiness of the people we are especially fond of (for whom we feel affective love) *more* of our end than we make the happiness of everyone else. This is the intersection of practical and

pathological love. As a result, Kant seems to interpret our ordinary conception of love as an amalgam of general, impersonal moral duty and personal, affective responses.

I suspect that the partiality of love is not adequately characterized as a fond feeling for another person. For one thing, all too often we do not especially enjoy the company or qualities of those we love. Personal love is not obviously reducible to fond feelings, as we notice if we call to mind difficult relatives, whom Velleman illustrates as the “meddlesome aunt, cranky grandfather, smothering parent, or overcompetitive sibling” (LM, 86).⁵³ Emphasizing fond feelings as a distinguishing characteristic of love overlooks these common cases.

More significantly, though, any such feeling has an optional, escapable quality that does not sit well with the way we experience our obligations to those we love. On such accounts, our attachment to those we love is seen to depend on the ways that they please us. If we characterize love primarily in terms of our preferences, then the focus is on the ways that we are gratified, and the people we love are seen as placeholders for a general good in our lives. On that way of thinking, the people we love are replaceable or substitutable with other people who can gratify us as well. Harry Frankfurt emphasizes, however, that “[t]he significance to the lover of what he loves is not that his beloved is an instance or exemplar. Its importance to him is not generic; it is ineluctably particular” (RL, 44). Those we love should not be conceived of as instances of a type. On that way of thinking, having those we love die or leave us will be a great loss for us until suitable replacements come along. When a substitution is made, the initial loss will cease to

⁵³ J. David Velleman, “Love as a Moral Emotion” in *Self to Self* pp. 70-109. “Love as a Moral Emotion” is referenced as LM. He adopts these examples from Iris Murdoch.

count as a significant one. But as the death of a beloved child makes evident, the loss of particular people registers as profound for the rest of one's life. A loved child is not replaceable, however many other children one has, or however much one loves one's other children. The objects of our love strike us as irreplaceable particulars, which is an intuition I, along with Frankfurt, take seriously. Kant's position that the partiality of love is best represented as an inclination—a fond feeling—renders his account unsatisfying. It is helpful, therefore, to explore accounts of the partiality of love as developed by contemporary Kantians. Velleman and Korsgaard provide two such accounts.

2.3 VELLEMAN ON LOVE AS A MORAL EMOTION

The type of view that Kant promotes, according to which love is a composition of general moral duties and a psychological or evaluative response to certain people, loses sight of the particularity that seems inherent to love. Velleman claims that love is a response to the intrinsic value of a person as a person. This approach, he thinks, makes the most sense of our love of people as individuals.⁵⁴ The difficulty with Velleman's account is that it implies that everyone deserves the love of everyone else. As such, it revises our ordinary notion of love into an impersonal form of love.

In "Love as a Moral Emotion," Velleman claims that when Kantians attempt to theorize about love, they face the challenge of how to reconcile the apparent partiality of love with the impartiality required by Kantian morality. "...[F]avoring someone in

⁵⁴ Velleman clarifies that he is not using "love" in all of its wide scope of uses: "When I say that love is a moral emotion, what I have in mind is the love between close adult friends and relations—including spouses and other life-partners, insofar as their love has outgrown the effects of overvaluation and transference" (LM, 84). By asserting that this is his paradigm, Velleman intends to point out that his view is not meant to encompass anything like infatuation.

particular seems like the very essence of love,” he writes, and yet this characteristic appears to conflict with the Kantian requirement that our maxims be universalizable (LM, 70). A maxim, as Velleman understands it, is a principle that “... state[s] the connection between reasons and action” (VC, 124).⁵⁵ Formulating maxims involves providing descriptions of what we intend to do, and why we intend to do it. In Velleman’s understanding, to imagine the universalization of a maxim is to imagine that whatever the maxim specifies could be held by anyone in similar circumstances. The requirement that maxims be universalizable amounts to the requirement “that [a person] act for reasons of a type that he could regard as valid for anyone in similar circumstances” (LM, 72).⁵⁶ Generally speaking, the form of our reasoning procedures concerning practical matters must be valid for all people, just as the inference procedures utilized in theoretical reasoning are valid for all rational creatures (VC, 125).⁵⁷ This is the impartiality that Kant’s moral theory requires, on Velleman’s interpretation.

If love is inherently about particular attachments to specific people, and Kantian morality requires abstracting away from particular situations and relationships when determining how to act, then the two seem incompatible. Velleman’s solution to this apparent conflict is to re-characterize the partiality involved in love: “[t]he way to bring love into convergence with morality is not to stop thinking of morality as impartial but to rethink the partiality of love” (LM, 74). Velleman emphasizes that Kantian morality is

⁵⁵ J. David Velleman, “The Voice of Conscience” in *Self to Self* pp. 110-128. “The Voice of Conscience” is referenced as VC.

⁵⁶ “Universalizing [a] maxim is ... a matter of regarding the maxim itself as what anyone would think, or would think that anyone would think, and so on” (VC, 122).

⁵⁷ Velleman writes: “The validity of a practical inference, like the validity of modus ponens, must hold for—and be common knowledge among—all thinkers” (VC, 125).

grounded in an attitude of respect for people.⁵⁸ And, he argues that just as respect is a response to the value of persons, so love is a response to that value.⁵⁹ He concludes that love is a natural extension of the basic moral attitude of respect for all people. According to Kant, all persons deserve respect in virtue of their possessing rational wills, and according to Velleman, love is the most heightened form of that respect (LM, 81). He explains: “I regard respect and love as the required minimum and optional maximum responses to one and the same value [the value of persons]” (LM, 101).⁶⁰ Love and respect are, therefore, depicted as two ends of a continuum that represents appropriate responses to the value of moral subjects. Love is an especially vivid instance of a moral relation. Velleman’s view, then, is that love and respect are moral relations, and are two modes of the same type of valuation.⁶¹ Consequently, he reconciles love and respect by characterizing love as subsumed under morality, in the sense that it is a type of moral concern. Love is a special form of moral concern. In this way, Velleman attempts to assimilate the imperatives love gives rise to into the category of moral imperatives. This method offers a way of easing any apparent tension between love and morality.

As a result, on Velleman’s view the seeming partiality of love is not an inherent quality of it. Love is an appropriate attitude for everyone to have toward everyone else. The reason it is acceptable for us to love only certain people, despite being required to respect all people, is due to our empirical limitations: “[w]e are constitutionally limited in

⁵⁸ “...reverence for the law, which has struck so many as making Kantian ethics impersonal, is in fact an attitude toward the person, since the law that commands respect is the ideal of a rational will, which lies at the heart of personhood” (LM, 81).

⁵⁹ He writes: “I am inclined to say that love is likewise [like reverence] the awareness of a value inhering in its object...” (LM, 94).

⁶⁰ Also: “According to my hypothesis, the value to which we respond in loving a person is the same as that to which we respond in respecting him—namely, the value of his rational nature, or personhood” (LM, 106).

⁶¹ Velleman claims that being loved “...entails being valued on the basis of our personhood” (LM, 101).

the number of people we can love...” (LM, 107). We can only manage to have loving relationships with a limited number of people. Our existing relationships “... exhaus[t] the attention that we might have devoted to finding and appreciating the value in others” (LM, 107). We do not love everyone because to do so is impossible as a matter of practice—we do not have the time, energy, or attention that such a task would require. Not only do our empirical circumstances limit our time and energy, but our human condition yields “... imperfect expressions of personhood, and we are imperfect interpreters” (LM, 107). Sometimes, we simply do not see the value in other people the way we ought to see it. The particularity we normally associate so closely with the attitude of love is therefore a mere consequence of our empirical limitations.

Velleman emphasizes that this position does not imply that the people we love are replaceable with other, equally deserving people. The Kantian notion that persons have dignity, and not a price, can account for the fact that although everyone may deserve our love, the objects of our love are not substitutable (LM, 101-103). Someone’s dignity as a person is what makes that person irreplaceable “in principle” and not simply “in practice” (LM, 104). So although everyone deserves our love, Velleman concludes, the actual, particular people we love are no less special or deserving as a consequence.

Velleman’s argument that love is a heightened form of respect entails the position that all people inherently deserve to be loved by everyone. He contends that love, like respect, is a response to a value that all people possess simply by virtue of their personhood. This value makes everyone “eligible to be loved” (LM, 107). Our empirical circumstances make it hard for us to appreciate maximally the intrinsic value of all people. For that reason, we are only required to respect, and not to love, every other

person. In opposition to Velleman, I contend that our concept of personal love should remain distinct from our concept of respect. Personal love should not be interpreted as a matter of desert. Generally speaking, if I deserve something from you, then I can demand it from you. If you fail to provide me with something that I deserve and have demanded, then you owe me a justification of your shortcoming. For comparison, consider Kant's position that "[e]very human being has a legitimate claim to respect from his fellow human beings and is *in turn* bound to respect every other" (MM, Ak 6:462). On Velleman's view, I have a legitimate claim to your love insofar as the very same value that entitles me to your respect entitles me to your love. Unlike my claim to your respect, however, my claim to your love can be outweighed by other considerations, such as the empirical limitations you are under. That is the sense in which love is the "optional maximum" response to the value that respect is the "required minimum" response to. Although various factors can outweigh my claim to your love, nothing can outweigh my claim to your respect.

Imagine, then, that you and I are casual acquaintances and I present you with this argument: in principle, I deserve your love because I possess the inherent value that your love would demonstrate a proper appreciation of. If you are unable to love me, I, at the very least, deserve an account of what prevents you from loving me. On Velleman's view, it seems that the right kind of justification for you to offer me in such a circumstance would appeal to your empirical constraints: you cannot love everyone because your human nature is limited and impedes your doing so. Love requires a level of attentiveness to another person which you are unable to give to everyone. Following Velleman, you could offer me reasons along these lines to explain why you do not love

me. I suspect, though, that in matters of personal love, this is the wrong kind of response to grant to what was already the wrong kind of demand. Offering such a justification to me after I have demanded your love mistakenly validates a misplaced demand. The right kind of response would call into question my presumption that I deserve your love in the first place. Consequently, ignoring my argument would be an appropriate response on your part. Whether you dismiss me or respond explicitly, the proper point to be made is that personal love is not about desert. I deserve your basic respect, but I do not deserve your personal love.

My claim that love is not primarily about desert does not imply that desert is never a consideration relevant to love. Love can be sensitive to matters of desert, especially in negative or pathological cases. When people fall below a moral threshold, then arguments *against* loving them become germane. Perhaps the abusive spouse does not deserve to be loved by his wife, but that does not entail that the non-abusive spouse does deserve to be loved by his wife. Although a discussion of desert can put rational pressure on pathological love, that is not evidence that healthy love is fundamentally a matter of merit.

Conflating love with respect is a serious distortion of our ordinary idea of love. Velleman's view admits of the conceptual, though not empirical, possibility that one could love many persons, even every person. Insofar as we are concerned with our common conception of love, under which love is importantly particular, this is not an appropriate description of the phenomenon. Revising the idea of personal love such that it collapses into a form of impersonal love renders our ordinary concept of love vacuous. Velleman claims that love is not "in conflict with the spirit of morality" because love is a

form of moral respect (LM, 75). But if morality tells us everyone deserves everyone else's respect and we believe it is the case that not everyone deserves everyone's love, then it would appear that the two attitudes are qualitatively different. Consequently, as an account of personal love, Velleman's development of a Kantian position is fatally flawed. Personal love is not governed by the same standards of desert as moral respect.

Between the approaches of Kant and Velleman, our love of particular people appears either to be optional or to participate in the rationality of the moral. Either love is characterized as having the contingency of a personal inclination, or as a consideration that any person in our situation should be responsive to. Consequently, on these theories love either has the necessity of a hypothetical imperative or a categorical one, but neither account does justice to our experience of love.

2.4 KORSGAARD'S KINGDOMS OF TWO

Neither Kant nor Velleman provides an account of the non-optional but deeply personal quality of love. For that reason, it is useful to consider Korsgaard's prominent development of basic Kantian commitments. Like Kant and Velleman, Korsgaard characterizes personal, loving relationships as involving the treatment of each other as ends to a special degree. But, Korsgaard seems committed to two conflicting positions with regard to our personal relationships. On the one hand, she argues that personal relationships are a subset of moral relationships, as Kant and Velleman maintain. On the other hand, however, she claims that personal relationships can put us under non-moral, yet unconditional obligations. Consequently, Korsgaard's work suggests that loving relationships involve a type of obligation that is not reducible to moral obligation. Yet,

her conception of reasons seems to preclude this possibility. I conclude that our experience of love calls for an account of a type of practical necessity that is distinct from moral necessity.

Read in one way, Korsgaard provides an account of personal relationships according to which they are heightened instances of moral relationships.⁶² She writes,

...personal relationships are structurally just like moral ones, except that they normally involve more fully realized forms of reciprocity. Friends do not merely refrain from making one another unhappy, but actively pursue each other's interests, for example. The virtues called upon by personal relationships are the same as those called upon by moral ones: charity and respect. (SN, 128)⁶³

Moral relationships require us to be ends for each other, but personal relationships involve being ends for each other to an even greater degree. Korsgaard claims that the more fully realized form of reciprocity that we find in personal relationships "... leads to what Kant called 'a unity of will,' for the two parties must, at least in the areas their personal relationship is concerned with, deliberate as one" (SN, 127). Personal relationships involve not only taking one another's ends seriously, but also deliberating together about what ends to set. Not only do we pay special attention to the ends of those we love, but we also deliberate and form ends together. In both marriage and friendship, Korsgaard writes, "the exchange produces something new, a shared object, *our* happiness, which we now pursue together, and make decisions about together, as the object of our unified wills" (SC, 188-9).

⁶² Though Korsgaard speaks in terms of "personal" relationships rather than "loving" ones as I do, it is clear she has in mind intimate personal relationships and relationships of love. As a result, her discussion of personal relationships applies to my discussion of loving relationships.

⁶³ Korsgaard, Christine M., *The Sources of Normativity* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996). Cited in-text as SN.

Following Korsgaard, Kyla Ebels-Duggan explains this point in terms of “shared ends.” On her view, love requires that we adopt each other’s ends and take on ends together, thereby “sharing ends.”⁶⁴ For the process of sharing ends to work, each partner, when deliberating individually about actions that would affect both partners, must take him or herself to be setting only “provisional” ends. The provisional ends become actual ends for the couple together if both people decide to pursue the end together. Ebels-Duggan outlines two norms that guide this process of sharing ends in loving interactions (AB, 167). First, you must regard your partner’s interest in pursuing a certain end as a good reason for you to pursue that end with her: “by choosing, your partner gives you reason to act toward the accomplishment of his ends, in preference to other worthwhile goals” (AB, 162). This means that partners ought to ratify and adopt the other’s provisional ends, barring special reasons not to (AB, 157). Not only should your partner’s interest in a certain end be good reason for you to adopt that end as well, but your default assumption should be that the end selected by your partner is good. This is the second norm that guides the process of sharing ends. This assumption of goodness is the manifestation of a basic attitude of respect for your partner’s authority as a rational human being and an equal: “you acknowledge [your partner’s] authority in judgment by presuming that his ends are well chosen” (AB, 162). (Of course, you might sometimes conclude that your partner is wrong about the merits of a certain end (AB, 159).)

⁶⁴ Ebels-Duggan writes: “... I hold that love directs us to share in each other’s ends, doing things with each other” (AB, 155-6); and: “sharing ends is what I claim that love directs us to [do] in reciprocal adult relationships” (AB, 162) [*sic.*]. On her view, loving relationships are appropriately characterized by the activity of sharing ends.

Ebels-Duggan's expansion of Korsgaard's point depicts loving relationships as heightened versions of moral relationships in general. Kant's morality instructs us to treat other people as "ends in themselves." This requires us to respect other people as having authority over their own lives. Having such an attitude of respect involves taking the ends other people set seriously, and promoting them where we can. As on Velleman's account, Ebels-Duggan characterizes the difference between love and respect as one of degree. For the partner we love, we take her interests and ends *more* seriously than we do the ends of the casual acquaintance, with whom our interactions are guided by the norms of respect rather than love.

In virtue of the special attention we pay to the ends of those we love, and the way in which we deliberate together about shared ends, Korsgaard characterizes personal relationships as "Kingdoms of Two." All people have membership in the general moral community—we are "Citizens of the Kingdom of Ends." But we also belong to "smaller and more local communities," based on the specific sorts of things that we value and care about (SN, 127). Personal relationships qualify as Kingdoms of Two because they are composed of two people "... who are committed to being in a special degree ends for one another" (SN, 127). As a result, not only are we all members of the general moral community, but we are also, as individuals, members of specific Kingdoms of Two insofar as we are involved in personal, loving relationships.

Given our membership in these two types of Kingdoms, Korsgaard must address the possibility of divided loyalties. That is, positing these two types of Kingdoms requires Korsgaard to explain the significance of having personal concerns and values, and the interplay between those and moral concerns. Korsgaard's introduction of the

concept of a “practical identity” is a way of explaining what it means to have membership in both types of Kingdoms. On her account, we each have particular practical identities, constituted by our individual values and personal relationships. But these individual values and relationships presuppose and commit us to a general moral identity.

A practical identity is a way of understanding oneself as a being capable of self-reflection, deliberation and choice. It is “... a description under which you value yourself, a description under which you find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth taking” (SN, 101). Endorsing a practical identity amounts to reflecting on and affirming certain of our commitments. Describing a practical identity is a means of interpreting and justifying those commitments. One might, for instance, identify as a professor, a sister, a Catholic, and so on. Our affirmation of certain commitments—our identifying in a certain way—is manifested in our actions and attitudes. Our different identities guide our deliberations and actions because they yield a variety of reasons and obligations to which we are attentive (SN, 101).⁶⁵ This is the sense in which they are “practical” identities: they are descriptions and reflective endorsements of our fundamental commitments, which determine the types of reasons we find salient, and thereby guide our practical reasoning.

Korsgaard argues that our most basic practical identity is our human identity, to which we are all deeply committed. In taking up any practical identity, we implicitly identify with a more abstract human one. And the human identity has essential moral content: “... our identity as moral beings—as people who value themselves as human

⁶⁵ Korsgaard writes: “All of these identities give rise to reasons and obligations” (SN, 101).

beings—stands behind our more particular practical identities” (SN, 121). Since the human identity is the necessary backdrop to any other identity, and the human identity inherently involves having a moral identity, those two identities are inescapable for all people. That is, being responsive to reasons and obligations implicitly commits one to a basic moral identity. As a result, “... if we take anything to have value, then we must acknowledge that we have moral obligations” (SN, 92).

Korsgaard claims that we must be committed to some specific conception of our own individual practical identities, because these conceptions give us reasons to act. As a result, without such a conception, “... you will lose your grip on yourself as having any reason to do one thing rather than another—and with it, your grip on yourself as having any reason to live and act at all” (SN, 121). But, although we must be guided by *some* conception of a practical identity, “...most of the self-conceptions that govern us are contingent” (SN, 120). Examples of these contingent aspects of our practical identities include the families we happen to be born into, the profession we happen to choose, being citizens of a certain country or members of a certain religion, the person we fall in love with, the friends we have, or being the “mother of some particular children” (SN, 120). All such aspects of our practical identities are contingent. What is not contingent is our moral identity.⁶⁶

The particular, contingent aspects of our practical identities give rise to most of the reasons that we act on in the normal course of our lives. But, ultimately, the value of

⁶⁶ That is, our moral identities are not contingent if we are to continue to value ourselves and our lives at all (SN, 121). Korsgaard points out that she is not addressing a true skeptic at this point in her argument (SN, 92).

having any particular identity derives from the fact that moral beings need those particular practical identities.

In this way all value depends on the value of humanity; other forms of practical identity matter in part because humanity requires them. Moral identity and the obligations it carries with it are therefore inescapable and pervasive. Not every form of practical identity is contingent or relative after all: moral identity is necessary. (SN, 122)

The only essential, inescapable aspect of our practical identities is our moral identity. Any other given component of our self-conception—including our commitments to the individuals we love—are fundamentally contingent, on Korsgaard's view. Being contingent means being something "... which you have constructed or chosen for yourself, or could conceivably reject" (SN, 123). As Korsgaard characterizes her argument: "the value of our contingent forms of identity depends on the value of our human identity, which gives us reason for having those contingent forms of identity" (SC, 211).⁶⁷ Moreover, "... your contingent practical identities are normative for you only insofar as they are endorsable from the point of view of your human identity" (SC, 212). In order to generate reasons for us, our particular practical identities must be moral. Only one's moral identity is "inescapable," and it "exerts a kind of governing role over the other kinds" (SN, 130). This implies that one cannot reflectively endorse a particular practical identity that is inconsistent with the moral identity (SN, 130).⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Korsgaard, Christine M., *Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). Cited in-text as SC.

⁶⁸ Ebels-Duggan denies the possibility that we can be under immoral obligations in our personal relationships. She claims that it is illegitimate for those we love to ask us to entertain seriously immoral ends. On her account of shared ends, a partner's "provisional adoption of an impermissible end simply can't generate reasons for you" (AB, 161-2). Much like the requirements of moral respect, the major exception to love's instruction that we share ends arises when we consider immoral ends.

In light of Korsgaard's position that one's particular practical identities must be consistent with one's inescapable moral identity, her view would seem to be that personal obligations are entirely subsumed under moral obligations. In other words, Korsgaard does not seem to allow that the obligations we are under in a Kingdom of Two can conflict with our obligations as members of the Kingdom of Ends. The Kingdom of Ends plays a governing role, and determines what is permissible in Kingdoms of Two. Consequently, it seems that Kingdoms of Two are smaller kingdoms located within the Kingdom of Ends, and that we cannot have obligations in personal relationships that exist outside the domain of general moral obligations.

Surprisingly, though, Korsgaard emphasizes that personal relationships provide us with obligations that do not fall under the canopy of moral obligations. She calls attention to the problem of characterizing all personal relationships as forms of the more general moral relation between people. Personal relationships, she argues,

... are independent sources of obligation, like moral obligations in their structure but not completely subsumed under them. And the thought of oneself as a certain person's friend or lover or parent or child can be a particularly deep form of practical identity. There is no obvious reason why your relationship to humanity at large should always matter more to you than your relationship to some particular person; no general reason why the laws of the Kingdom of Ends should have more force than the laws of a Kingdom of Two. I believe that this is why personal relationships can be the source of some particularly intractable conflicts with morality. (SN, 128)

Korsgaard claims that personal relationships give rise to obligations that are similar in structure to moral obligations, but are not further moral obligations. The suggestion that personal relationships involve a set of obligations independent from morality suggests that we operate under a type of practical necessity in love that is not a moral necessity. It suggests that we are accountable and obligated to those we love in significant, non-moral

ways, and that our personal obligations can be both inescapable and non-moral. Of course, that implies that these personal obligations can come into conflict with moral obligations. Consequently, Korsgaard's view seems to be that it is possible to have a normatively private Kingdom of Two that is not a precinct of the larger Kingdom of Ends.

Despite her emphasis on the "contingency" of all forms of our practical identity with the exception of the moral identity, Korsgaard also implies that the contingent aspects of our practical identities can give rise to unconditional obligations. She writes:

Moral identity does not swamp other forms of identity: no one is simply a moral agent and nothing more. Bernard Williams is right when he says that if morality demanded that of us, it would be incoherent. But it would be wrong to conclude that therefore either moral obligation, or our other obligations, can't be unconditional. (SN, 126)

As a result, Korsgaard seems to think that we can have both moral obligations and other obligations that are unconditional, because the two are not mutually exclusive. She suggests that our other, contingent practical identities can involve unconditional obligations:

It is the conceptions of ourselves that are most important to us that give rise to unconditional obligations. For to violate them is to lose your integrity and so your identity, and to no longer be who you are. That is, it is to no longer be able to think of yourself under the description under which you value yourself and find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking. It is to be for all practical purposes dead or worse than dead. When an action cannot be performed without loss of some fundamental part of one's identity, and an agent could just as well be dead, then the obligation not to do it is unconditional and complete. (SN, 102)

This statement presents a view under which non-moral practical identities might be inescapable for particular people. If an identity is important enough to us, then we will experience the obligations that attend it as inescapable.

The difficulty in interpreting Korsgaard's position as allowing for unconditional, yet non-moral, personal obligations is that on her account, all practical reasons are inherently sharable and public. That means that even if you and I are in a personal relationship, all other people can, in principle, participate in the reasoning process that you and I engage in and obligate each other in terms of. Consequently, the failure of you or me to live up to our obligations to each other in the context of our relationship is subject to the criticism and evaluation of all other people. That is, if our reasons belong to everyone, then everyone has the standing to hold us to the obligations of our relationship. But being held to public standards by the general moral community is to be under a moral obligation. As a result, given her conception of a reason, it would seem that Korsgaard is committed to thinking that our personal obligations are a subset of moral obligation. To make this point clearer, it will help to discuss Korsgaard's account of reasons.

Korsgaard distinguishes between "private" and "public" reasons. This distinction has also been treated as the distinction between agent-neutral and agent-relative reasons, as well as the difference between subjective and objective reasons (RS, 275-6).⁶⁹ A private reason would be a type of reason that has normative force for one person alone. But Korsgaard denies the possibility of private reasons, and argues that all reasons are public reasons, which means that they have normative force for all people (RS, 277). Despite arguing for the public nature of all reasons, Korsgaard distinguishes her position from a realist account of the objectivity of reasons. For the realist, Korsgaard explains,

⁶⁹ Christine M. Korsgaard, "The Reasons We Can Share," in *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), pp. 275-310. Cited in-text as RS.

“[r]easons are public because they are derived from or refer to certain objective features of the public world, namely, objective values” (SN, 135). According to the realist, there are values in the world that exist apart from the activity of valuing. On Korsgaard’s account, our activity of valuing constructs values. For Korsgaard, values, like the reasons that are grounded in them, are properly understood as inter-subjective phenomena. She writes, “[o]ur individual, subjective interests become intersubjective values when, because of the attitude we take towards one another, we come to share each other’s ends” (RS, 278-9). The objective nature of reasons is constructed by our sharing of them: “[t]he public nature of reasons is indeed created by the reciprocal exchange, the sharing, of the reasons of individuals” (SN, 135). To claim that reasons are essentially public means that they are “inherently sharable” (SN, 135).⁷⁰

Reasons that have normative force for only one person do not exist (SN, 106, fn. 17). Anything that counts as a reason or value for one of us counts as such a thing for all of us. Values and reasons are “objective” in that sense, on Korsgaard’s view. Reasons do not begin as private entities and transform into public ones, because “[t]o act on a reason is already, essentially, to act on a consideration whose normative force may be shared with others” (SN, 136). The publicity of reasons is always in their nature; they are inherently other-directed. Korsgaard writes, “To say that you have a reason is to say something relational, something which implies the existence of another, at least another self. It announces that you have a claim on that other, or acknowledges her claim on you” (RS, 301). This relational dimension is implicit in all reasons, which is why “... the only reasons that are possible are the reasons we can share” (RS, 301).

⁷⁰ “... it is the nature of our reasons that they are public and sharable” (SN, 136).

Even those aspects of our practical identities that might strike us as generating private reasons in fact involve public reasons, Korsgaard argues. I cannot take the reasons that accompany any practical identity as private—as having normative force for only me. All of my reasons, in principle, can move others as they move me. Korsgaard claims that “... to have a personal project or ambition is not to desire a special object that you think is good for you privately, but rather to want to stand in a special relationship to something you think is good publicly” (SC, 211). She imagines, more specifically, that “I want to write a good book on Kant’s ethics,” and contends that when that is the case, “part of the reason is that I think such a book would be a good thing” (RS, 287). All of my personal concerns amount to desires to stand in a special relation to a non-personal concern. What my personal project really comes to, in this case, is the thought that someone should write a good book on Kant’s ethics, and “I want to *be the someone* who writes that book” (RS, 287). I think there is an objective reason for someone to write a good book on Kant—a book good enough to be required reading—and I want to be that someone. I do not have an agent-relative reason; I have an agent-relative motive to stand in a special relation to an agent-neutral, objective value (RS, 287-8). As a result, the aspect of my goal that is personal is my desire to be related to this objectively good thing in a special way (RS, 288).

Korsgaard provides an analogous account if my concern is with a person. My special concern for a person consists in my thought that someone ought to treat this person in a certain way, and my interest in being that someone. Thus, our reasons to act in our personal relationships have a form analogous to our reasons to write a good book on Kant:

Although I may not suppose that the happiness of my loved ones is objectively more important than that of anyone else, I certainly do suppose that their happiness is objectively good. The structure of reasons arising from love is similar to that of reasons of ambition. I think that someone should make my darling happy, and I want very much to *be that someone*. And others may have good reason to encourage me in this. But if I try to prevent someone else from making my darling happy or if I suppose that my darling's happiness has no value unless it is produced by me, that is no longer an expression of love. Again, it is a very familiar perversion of it. (RS, 288).

Consequently, Korsgaard's idea seems to be that the obligations we are under in a loving relationship are the same obligations anyone would be under in the same relationship.

Simply take me out of the equation and substitute someone else in. This implies that we instantiate certain roles in loving relationships. As such, others could in principle instantiate those roles (and indeed, might in practice instantiate them better than we can).

2.5 CONCLUSION

The Kantian accounts surveyed in this chapter emphasize that loving relationships involve additional moral obligations to other people. But as Korsgaard suggests, we should worry that such accounts omit an important dimension of loving relationships, and that they involve obligations that do not fall under the purview of the moral. Korsgaard conceives of moral obligations as "obligations to humanity as such" (SN, 91). Other people can obligate me simply by addressing reasons to me (SN, 135). In claiming that moral and personal obligations have similar structures, Korsgaard highlights the way these obligations arise. In personal relationships, just as in moral ones, I can be obligated by virtue of being addressed by a certain person. In the next chapter, I develop a theory of the type of personal address that obligates us in loving relationships.

None of the accounts of Kant, Velleman, or Korsgaard satisfactorily accommodates the peculiar sort of necessity that we experience in love. This necessity does not seem to be that of a categorical imperative. A categorical imperative is binding simply in virtue of our rationality, and would obligate anyone in a similar situation. But we experience love as an intensely personal, direct attachment to a particular other person, not as something that generates the kind of demands that would apply to any rational creature. In the next chapter, I contend that love involves a set of expectations and a type of necessity different in kind from moral necessity.

CHAPTER THREE

HOW WE HURT THE ONES WE LOVE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As Frankfurt and Velleman both emphasize, the necessity that we experience in love ought not be reduced to the optional character of a hypothetical imperative. Yet it seems equally mistaken to follow Velleman's suggestion to describe the personal obligations that love generates as on a continuum with moral obligations. These personal responsibilities are not merely localized versions of the general set of moral responsibilities. Love is, however, importantly similar to morality. In loving relationships, like moral ones, we hold each other to normative standards. These intimate, personal relationships involve placing various demands, expectations, and obligations on each other, much the way moral relations do. Like morality, love involves the ability of people to make claims on others, as Korsgaard suggests. And, holding each other to standards seems to give rise to the necessity that we experience in love, just as our power to hold each other accountable binds us on familiar objective accounts of morality.⁷¹

But while this similarity makes it tempting to conceive of loving relationships in moral terms, moral language mischaracterizes our experience. The personal nature of love gives us reason to resist subsuming it under the terms of an objective morality. We

⁷¹ Consider Christine Korsgaard's and Stephen Darwall's accounts, for instance. In chapter 4 of *The Sources of Normativity*, Korsgaard argues that reasons are relational: "The normative demands of meaning and reason are not demands that are made on us by objects, but are demands that we make on ourselves and each other" (p. 138). See also Korsgaard's "The Reasons We Can Share" in *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*, and Darwall's *The Second-Person Standpoint*.

can see the difference between the ways we are personally and morally obligated when considering the second-personal attitudes that arise in both types of interaction. When those we love disappoint our expectations, they hurt our feelings. By “hurt feelings” I do not refer to wounded pride or humiliation in general. My hypothesis is that we have an attitude of hurt feelings in response to a type of rejection by loved ones in particular. This type of response is not properly characterized as a form of moral resentment. The reaction of hurt feelings suggests that love involves a unique type of expectation on another person, which is neither a moral demand nor a mere prediction of that person’s behavior. And this unique type of expectation accounts for the different kind of necessity that we are under in loving relationships.

To make my case, I first consider examples that illustrate the thesis that we experience a necessity in love that is not grounded in moral obligation. The subsequent section (section three), explores the type of disappointment to which we are susceptible in love, with the aim of distinguishing it from the resentment that we feel when we are morally wronged. I argue that having our feelings hurt by someone we love is a reaction to a serious yet non-moral offense. Section four contrasts hurt feelings with resentment. Resentment is the appropriate response to being morally wronged. When one person is morally wronged, the moral community has the standing to take offense—to be indignant—in response to that moral wrong. Section five distinguishes hurt feelings from resentment by showing that hurt feelings license no attitude comparable to indignation. The moral community has no standing to participate in distinctively loving interactions, such as when we react to each other with hurt feelings. As a result, I contend that the expectations in love involve a uniquely second-personal form of address, which does not

support third-party participation, as second-personal addresses do in the case of the moral. In section six, I argue that this uniquely second-personal form of address is operative in Kant's account of judgments of beauty. Kant presents moral judgments as, in principle, universally communicable. Judgments of beauty, in contrast, implicitly involve only second-personal address, because they cannot be offered in objective, third-personal terms. This leads me to conclude that a Kantian moral psychology has the right resources for an account of love that is mindful of the serious appeal we make in love for something that we cannot rationally demand. Sections seven through nine explore what the uniquely second-personal addresses operative in loving relationships appeal for. That is, we make appeals to each other in love, which take the form of uniquely second-personal addresses, and I contend that these appeals seek to strengthen the intimacy of the loving relationship. I argue that this intimacy has three interrelated dimensions: those we love have the standing to interpret us in a constitutive manner; we share a perspective with those we love; and being loved enables us to see ourselves as distinctive and special. These dimensions of intimacy reveal what we appeal for in loving relationships, and the ways in which we are hurt upon the rejection of our appeals.

3.2 EXPECTATIONS AND NECESSITY IN LOVE

In this section, I argue that we experience a necessity in love that is not grounded in moral obligation. To motivate this idea, I start by considering a series of examples that support the hypothesis that loving relations involve their own type of necessity, a kind of necessity distinct from that of morality. The first set of cases I consider, borrowed from Bernard Williams and Susan Wolf, lead us to suspect that sometimes moral motivation is

simply irrelevant. The second type of case I discuss, an example adapted from Kyla Ebels-Duggan, bolsters the thought that we can experience a kind of necessity or obligation, and let down the people we love, even when we have done nothing morally wrong. As a result, even in situations where morality recommends no specific choice, we can still act under a necessity. There are ways of getting it right and ways of getting it wrong—ways of meeting or failing to meet the expectations in these intimate relationships without doing anything morally wrong. When we experience a necessity in such cases, therefore, we are not experiencing a moral necessity.

Consider the possibility that sometimes we act simply out of our love for another person. This is the crux of the issue in the “one thought too many” example, as presented by Williams.⁷² Recall that in this imagined case there are two drowning people and only one potential rescuer. One of the drowning people is the wife of the potential rescuer, and there is only enough time to save one person. The husband in this example chooses to rescue his wife and fails to save the other victim.

An impartial moral theorist would respond to this case, Williams thinks, by claiming that “in situations of this kind it is permissible to save one’s wife” (PCM, 18). But Williams claims that we would “hope” that the man would rescue his wife simply because she is his wife, and not against the background of an implicit consideration about what one may do in such circumstances. Arguably, Kantian morality does permit people to prioritize the welfare of those they have personal relationships with, other things being

⁷² “Persons, Character, and Morality” from *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 1-19. In-text citations are to PCM.

equal.⁷³ Williams contends, however, that the consideration that saving one's wife is permissible "... provides the agent with one thought too many: it might have been hoped by some (for instance, by his wife) that his motivating thought, fully spelled out, would be the thought that it was his wife, not that it was his wife and that in situations of this kind it is permissible to save one's wife" (PCM, 18). We would hope—and his wife would hope—that the man need only see that she is drowning in order to act on his wife's behalf.⁷⁴

In fact, we might think that Williams's description of the drowning person as the man's "wife" is misleading, since his point seems to be that the relevant motivation for the husband's decision is his devotion to that particular, irreplaceable person.⁷⁵ Though Williams's refers to this person as the man's "wife," he emphasizes that "the consideration that it was his wife" is not so much a typical justification, but rather is "an explanation which should silence comment" (PCM, 18). As a technical distinction, justifications are offered in moral terms, and explanations in non-moral terms. Given the range of moral and legal obligations that go along with being a spouse, "the consideration that it was his wife" is a familiar sort of justification, in many contexts. So how are we to understand the claim that in this context, the consideration that it was his wife is "an

⁷³ I will refrain from offering a defense of that conclusion here, since its falsity would only strengthen the case I am making.

⁷⁴ A number of Kantians—for instance, Henry Allison, Marcia Baron, and Barbara Herman—have pointed out that Kantian morality does not require people to arrive reflectively at such a conclusion in exigent circumstances. The test of universalizability need merely be operative in the background of our deliberations. So, one need not actually have the "one thought too many" that Williams describes in this case; one must only be able to provide such a justification if called upon. That type of response, however, does not address the point that I focus on here. The issue that concerns me does not hinge on the debate over whether the thought needs to be reflectively called to mind before the agent acts.

⁷⁵ The general institution of marriage seems to be exactly the sort of thing Williams does not want us to appeal to in defense of the man's action. This is evident from his claim that it would be permissible to save "one's wife" under impartial morality, and his emphasis that this should not be what is relevant to the man. Harry Frankfurt makes a similar point about Williams's example in *The Reasons of Love*, p. 36, fn. 2.

explanation [that] should silence comment”? If we understand the example primarily as applied to spousal relations, then the reason Williams eschews the term “justification” in favor of “explanation” is unclear.

To consider the significance of the distinction between a justification and an explanation in this context, it is helpful to imagine the aftermath of the emotionally-fraught rescue. Perhaps the woman turns to her husband and says, “You saved me! Why did you save me?” Were the husband to respond, “Of course I saved you: that’s what husbands do for wives,” the relationship would strike us as more contractual and less loving than we probably assumed it to be. Referring to the explicit or implicit terms of a contract has the character of a moral justification, which anyone might comment or weigh in on. In contrast, the reply, “Of course I saved you: I love you,” would not invite a general discussion of the point the husband is making. Could we ask the husband to defend his action further, after he points to his love for his wife? Referring to the fact of one’s love has the character of a non-moral explanation in the sense that it disinclines debate over the merits of the decision. The point I take from Williams’s example is that sometimes references to moral considerations are distorted depictions of why we choose and act as we do. Sometimes we act out of personal, private motivations, which—when presented to third-parties—are closer to non-moral explanations of our behavior than moral justifications of it. In this example, the husband who acts out of love for his wife displays a personal motivation. As such, it does not have the public, justificatory quality that moral motivations do.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Part of my project in this chapter is to push against the assumed dichotomy between non-moral explanation and moral justification.

Two examples from Susan Wolf also reveal that sometimes moral motivations simply do not strike us as our reasons for acting. Wolf contends that acting out of love is not reducible to acting out of moral duty. She reports acting out of love “[w]hen I visit my brother in the hospital, or help my friend move . . .,” for instance (MIL, 4).⁷⁷ From the first-person perspective, Wolf does not take herself to be acting out of moral obligation. In fact, she claims that she does not “believe [her]self duty-bound to perform those acts . . .” (4). She does not believe that impartial morality requires her to perform those specific acts.

Even in situations where moral reasons are clearly relevant, those moral reasons may simply not rise to the level of obligation. This introduces the second point these examples bring out, which is that even in morally indeterminate contexts, we can still find ourselves acting under a kind of necessity. Perhaps an adult sibling is duty-bound to visit her siblings sometimes, but is she obligated to visit every time a sibling needs company? Similarly, a genuine friend must sometimes help her friends, but is she morally bound to assist her friends as often as she does, or at a particular time when she does? Morality does not specify when and how much we are to help our beloved siblings and friends. But it seems there are particular times when we know that we *have* to visit our brother in the hospital, or help our friend with a specific task. We can be obligated on certain occasions, even when our moral reasons to visit or help have not risen to the level of moral obligation.

⁷⁷ MIL references are to Wolf, Susan, *Meaning in Life and Why It Matters* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

An example adapted from Kyla Ebels-Duggan illustrates the kind of necessity we can experience even in circumstances that have an indeterminate moral quality. Ebels-Duggan asks us to imagine "... someone who decides to take her aging parents into her home to care for them," and claims "... if we spell out the background against which the choice is made in enough detail, I think that we can make it plausible that doing so is the reasonable thing to do" (AB, 154, fn. 22). Alternatively, I suspect that we could spell out the background conditions in such a way that a person's taking her parents into her home to care for them is one among several reasonable options. Perhaps this person's (financial and other) situation is such that she can (1) find in-home care for her parents so that they are able to remain in their own home, (2) help her parents move into a desirable retirement facility, (3) make arrangements for her parents to live with another family member, or (4) take her parents into her own home. We can plausibly imagine a circumstance in which these choices all present themselves as good options, and are thus all reasonable to consider. It seems to me that one could confront an array of reasonable options w , x , y , and z , and still think, "I have no real option but to do z ." Consequently, even when morality leaves indeterminate how we are to treat our loved ones in a particular circumstance, we can experience the choice as determined. This is a type of necessity that we experience in love.

Frankfurt emphasizes that love must have its own type of necessity, precisely because we experience a kind of practical necessity that is both ineluctably personal and non-contingent (as the examples above indicate). On Frankfurt's view, the necessities of love

... move us, as feelings and desires do; but the motivations that love engenders are not merely adventitious or (to use Kant's term) heteronomous. Rather, like the universal laws of pure reason, they express something that belongs to our most intimate and most fundamental nature. Unlike the necessities of reason, however, those of love are not impersonal. They are constituted by and embedded in structures of the will through which the specific identity of the individual is most particularly defined. (RL, 48)

The necessities of love are expressions of our fundamental, individual natures, on Frankfurt's view. As such, they are both categorical and personal. The difficulty with Frankfurt's defense of his notion of volitional necessity is its situation in a moral psychology that does not adequately account for the kind of commitment and identification that love seems to involve. Yet, his diagnosis that love involves a unique type of practical necessity speaks to common experiences of love.

3.3 DISAPPOINTMENT IN LOVE

As we consider what sorts of standards and expectations are in play in the context of loving relationships in the interest of elucidating what type of necessity love involves, it helps to characterize our reactions when those we love disappoint us. Here, and in the subsequent two sections, I aim to distinguish our response to disappointment in loving relationships from our response to moral wrongs. When we are morally wronged, we experience the reactive attitude of resentment. But when someone we love disappoints us, our feelings are hurt. That is not to say that resentment and hurt feelings cannot be occasioned by the same action. My point, rather, is that hurt feelings is its own reactive attitude, and not a form of resentment. An example of gift-giving gone wrong and the case of the elderly parents reveal that one can be hurt even when a loved one has behaved in a reasonable or moral way (in a way that does not warrant resentment). Similarly, the

examples from Williams and Wolf will show that acting from a moral motivation can itself be a powerful source of hurt. As such, all of these examples should lead us to suspect that hurt feelings can be appropriate even when resentment is not, thereby distinguishing the two attitudes. In the next section, I will argue that hurt feelings are not a moral reactive attitude, because they do not share a feature that paradigmatic moral reactive attitudes, like resentment, possess.

The process of gift-giving is a type of situation in which we face a variety of reasonable options. Implicit in many loving relationships is the understanding that gifts are to be exchanged on certain occasions. But exactly what to get each other is left more open. Any one of a wide range of gifts satisfies the general moral expectation of reciprocity. Yet the experience of receiving a bad gift is familiar, and bad gifts do not always raise the question of how much time, money, or attention were invested in their selection.

In the following story, Oliver is disappointed by the gift his partner, Erica, gives him:⁷⁸

... [Erica] had given [Oliver]⁷⁹ a pair of very ordinary Finnish wellington boots for his birthday. He tried to beam with delight but the expression of disbelief stayed on his face for too long and she saw there was something wrong. ...

‘Aren’t you pleased?’

‘I think they’re great,’ [Oliver] said, knowing that he hadn’t answered the question. She knew it too. ‘No, seriously,’ he added....

‘You’re not pleased with them,’ [Erica] said morosely.

⁷⁸ From Arnaldur Indridason, *Jar City*, trans. Bernard Scudder (New York: Picador, 2004), pp. 127-8.

⁷⁹ I have renamed the characters in this story for purposes of presentation.

‘Sure I am,’ he said, still at a total loss because he couldn’t stop thinking about the [250 dollar⁸⁰] wristwatch he’d given her for her birthday, bought after a week of explorations all over town.... He’d applied all his detective skills to find the right watch, found it in the end and she was ecstatic, her joy and delight were genuine.

Then he was sitting in front of her with his smile frozen on his face and tried to pretend to be overjoyed, but he simply couldn’t do it for all his life was worth.

Though it is clear that Oliver has been disappointed by Erica’s gift of the wellington boots, the sense in which she has failed to meet his expectations is less clear.

In one sense, to expect something of someone is to predict that that person will act in a certain way, perhaps in light of evidence about that person’s psychological dispositions or behavioral history. If I know that you often share extra food with me and you brought brownies for a snack today, I might predict that you will give me one of your brownies. If I make this prediction, and I happened to want a brownie, I will likely be disappointed in the event that you do not end up offering me one. But the mere fact of a failed prediction and an unmet desire are not morally significant. Perhaps Oliver’s disappointment is like this. Maybe Oliver thought that he would receive a nicer gift because he generally receives more expensive or luxurious presents from Erica. (Indeed, the relationship between them is such, Oliver recalls, that they occasionally “gave each other little presents” to show affection).⁸¹ Consequently, perhaps the wellington boots did simply not meet Oliver’s predictions and preferences.

Alternatively, we might think that Oliver is actually entitled to a certain type of present from Erica. In some contexts, I expect you to act in a particular way precisely because I have a moral claim on you. For instance, I expect you not to steal my lunch

⁸⁰ In the original version of this story, the price is given in Icelandic Krona. I have converted the figure to American dollars for purposes of this presentation. According to exchangerates.org.uk, 1 USD = 119.033 ISK on January 12, 2011. Precisely, then, 30,000 ISK is 252.031 USD.

⁸¹ *Jar City*, p. 127.

from the common refrigerator at work. That type of expectation is tied up with your being under a real moral obligation. I do not merely *predict* that you will not steal what is mine. Rather, I *demand* of you that you do not take what is mine without permission. Moral expectations are at play in many of our interactions, and we might think that our intimate relationships involve even more of these moral expectations than do our interactions with strangers. Personal relationships certainly do involve the establishment of implicit and explicit reciprocal practices, which results in having additional moral claims on another person. So, when Erica fails to match the type of present that Oliver has given her, he might fault her for not living up to her end of their arrangement. This is to think of the expectations involved in gift-giving as a set of moral demands.

Oliver's disappointment in Erica's gift seems to have more significance than a mistaken prediction. Based on the story, it is unclear that Erica invested the time and effort into searching out a gift for him that he invested into looking for hers. So, perhaps Erica can be faulted for lack of proper reciprocity. Maybe Oliver set a standard for what would count as appropriate practices for gift-giving in the context of their relationship, and Erica failed to meet those conditions.

It strikes me, however, that an analysis focused on reciprocity misses a significant dimension to Oliver's reaction. Presumably, Erica's motivation in meeting the conditions of reciprocity would matter to Oliver. Oliver's hope might be that such an initiative in searching out a gift would come as spontaneously and naturally to Erica as it does to Oliver. If that initiative did not come spontaneously to Erica, it would make sense for Oliver to be hurt by that, irrespective of whether her behavior meets the conditions of

reciprocity. Consequently, it seems that we can satisfy the moral demands on us, and still disappoint the person we love.

In further defense of the point that one can satisfy moral conditions and yet be hurtful, take the example in which a person has multiple reasonable options to choose among as she considers how to care for her elderly parents. If someone is faced with a selection of apparently reasonable options, then it is a reasonable practice to consider and weigh each option. A hallmark of good moral reasoning is giving due consideration to a variety of permissible and recommended courses of action. But we can imagine someone's parents being deeply hurt if she even considers options other than taking them into her home, for instance. The tension between what is reasonable to consider and what one can appropriately consider in the context of a particular loving relationship should strike us as odd if loving relationships are a subgroup of moral relations. But if loving relationships are guided by some of their own standards, we can make better sense of the apparent fact that one can do the reasonable thing and still be hurtful.

Beyond that point, acting from a moral motivation can itself be a powerful source of hurt feelings. Take Williams's case, in which the husband saves the drowning wife. Imagine that after the rescue the wife—overcome with emotion—says, “You saved me! Why did you save me?” And the husband responds, “Of course I saved you: that's what husbands do for wives.” I suspect the wife would be deeply hurt if her husband's reason for saving her was that he thought it was the right thing to do, morally speaking.

Relatedly, imagine that Wolf, contrary to her report, visits her brother in the hospital or helps her friend move because she feels duty-bound to do those things. On many occasions, we have no interest in the people we love visiting us or helping us

because they recognize it as the generous, selfless, or dutiful thing to do. When you show up to visit or help me, I want you to want to be there. I want you to need to be there with me, in the same way that I need your presence or your assistance. In these examples, a moral motivation simply seems like the wrong kind of consideration to act on. But if doing something because it is moral can be a source of hurt, then hurt feelings cannot be a form of moral offense.

In this section I have argued that we can have our feelings hurt even when those we love behave in morally acceptable ways, and that acting from a moral motivation can itself be a source of hurt feelings. Both of these points should be taken as evidence that the phenomenon of hurt feelings is not reducible to resentment (our reaction to moral offenses). As these examples demonstrate, feelings can be hurt even when moral demands have been satisfied. In the next two sections, I build the case for a third point: that the attitude of hurt feelings—disappointment in love—has a significant structural difference from resentment. Namely, where resentment is appropriate, the third-personal attitude of indignation is also appropriate, but hurt feelings involve no such third-personal analogue. To develop that argument, a discussion of resentment is first warranted.

3.4 RESENTMENT AND THE REACTIVE ATTITUDES

In “Freedom and Resentment,” Peter Strawson discusses resentment as a member of a class of attitudes that he terms “personal reactive attitudes.” Resentment is Strawson’s primary example of a personal reactive attitude, but other attitudes he highlights as belonging to this class are gratitude, forgiveness, love, anger, and hurt

feelings (FR, 75, 79).⁸² Paradigmatic occasions for resentment, according to Strawson, involve someone demonstrating a “contemptuous disregard of my existence” or displaying a “malevolent wish to injure me” (FR, 76). In general, the personal reactive attitudes are responses that we have to “... the quality of others’ wills towards us, as manifested in their behavior: to their good or ill will or indifference or lack of concern,” and we address these attitudes directly to the people whose treatment we are responding to (FR, 83). Someone’s behavior might harm or benefit me, but whether or not I respond to that person with resentment or gratitude, for instance, depends on the sort of general attitude I regard as operative in the background. If someone steps on my hand, I react with resentment if I think that the harm was conferred with a malevolent spirit and not merely accidentally (though it is a harm to me either way) (FR, 76).⁸³

Not only do we experience *personal* reactive attitudes, but we also experience their analogues: impersonal (or vicarious) reactive attitudes and self-reactive attitudes.⁸⁴ The three forms of reactive attitude are usefully understood in terms of three major shifts in perspective. The personal reactive attitudes are experienced in the second-person: in that perspective, I direct resentment, for instance, from me to you. From the third-person perspective (the perspective of the person standing outside of the encounter), one experiences the impersonal analogues of the personal reactive attitudes. For instance,

⁸² “FR” references are to “Freedom and Resentment,” from *Free Will*, 2nd Edition, ed. Gary Watson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 72-93.

⁸³ Occasions for resentment are “situations in which one person is offended or injured by the action of another and in which—in the absence of special considerations—the offended person might naturally or normally be expected to feel resentment” (77). The special considerations Strawson refers to are excusing conditions: (1) cases in which the agent was ignorant of relevant features of a situation; (2) cases involving the agent acting in the context of an abnormal situation (such as being under post-hypnotic suggestion); or (3) cases involving an underdeveloped agent (e.g., if the actor is a child or developmentally challenged) (77-9).

⁸⁴ Strawson writes: “In general, though within varying limits, we demand of others for others, as well as of ourselves for others, something of the regard which we demand of others for ourselves” (85).

indignation is the vicarious form of resentment. And in the first-person perspective, I experience the self-reactive attitudes, such as guilt. The self-reactive attitudes reflect the demand we make on ourselves on behalf of other people, to treat them with a certain regard (FR, 84). If I offend against another person by displaying ill will toward him, I as the offender ought to experience guilt or remorse (FR, 84-85).

The *impersonal* reactive attitudes are the vicarious analogues of personal reactive attitudes, and are “demands on others for others” (FR, 84). Indignation serves as Strawson’s main example of an impersonal reactive attitude, though all attitudes of this class are grounded in “... the demand for the manifestation of a reasonable degree of goodwill or regard, on the part of others, not simply towards oneself, but towards all those on whose behalf moral indignation may be felt ...” (FR, 84). Strawson adds that moral indignation can be felt on the behalf of (at least) all people (FR, 84). In the presence of any offense, the offended person appropriately directs resentment at the offender, and all other people appropriately direct indignation at the offender. Our indignation reflects the same basic demand implicit in the offended party’s resentment: the demand that all people treat all other people with a certain regard. Indignation involves recognizing the appropriateness of a person’s resentment in a given situation, and taking up a form of that resentment oneself. In that sense, indignation, and the other members of the class of impersonal reactive attitudes, are vicarious.

Strawson claims that there is a “logical” relation between the three general forms reactive attitude take (FR, 84). This means that indignation and guilt are always appropriate where resentment is appropriate. Beyond that logical connection, though, Strawson claims there is a “human” relation between the three forms of attitude. He

argues there is something wrong with the person who can experience a reactive attitude like resentment, but not experience the third- or first-personal analogues.⁸⁵ Failure to be susceptible to the range of parallel attitudes makes us something other than normal moral agents. On Strawson's view, no well-functioning person can experience resentment, anger, gratitude, forgiveness, love or hurt feelings without being disposed to experience their first- and third-personal corollaries.

Stephen Darwall agrees with Strawson that we have a host of attitudes that are responses to the presumed good or ill will of another person. But Darwall emphasizes the role of "second-personal address" in his interpretation of the reactive attitudes.⁸⁶ In Darwall's understanding, Strawson's reactive attitudes are essentially forms of moral address made in the second-person (from one person directly to another). Consequently, the reactive attitudes have communicative functions: they are ways of demanding, protesting and challenging, or affirming and assenting. For example, if you wrong me, I hold you responsible to me, with a protest such as, "You can't do that to me" (SPS, 68). My resentment addresses such a challenge to you.

The moral demand that resentment expresses is enforced by us, the moral community. In the face of an offense, the moral community directs indignation to the

⁸⁵ This person would "appear as an abnormal case of moral egocentricity, as a kind of moral solipsist" (85). Strawson writes:

In general, though within varying limits, we demand of others for others, as well as of ourselves for others, something of the regard which we demand of others for ourselves. Can we imagine, besides that of the moral solipsist, any other case of one or two of these three types of attitude being fully developed, but quite unaccompanied by any trace, however slight, of the remaining two or one? If we can, then we imagine something far below or far above the level of our common humanity—a moral idiot or a saint. (85)

Strawson's thought is that in situations where we would experience resentment, for instance, we ought to experience guilt in the first-person or indignation in the third-person.

⁸⁶ See Darwall, Stephen, *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006), chapter 4. Hereafter referenced as "SPS."

offender. Darwall emphasizes that even indignation—the reactive attitude people are susceptible to in the third-person perspective—has an essentially second-personal nature. Even the demand expressed in indignation is pressed in the second-person: *we* (standing outside of the interaction) challenge *your* treatment of someone. Thus, like resentment, indignation is a form of second-personal address. Resentment is an address a wronged person makes to the wrongdoer; indignation is an address the members of the moral community make to the wrongdoer (SPS, 67). Consequently, on Darwall’s view, as on Strawson’s, indignation is appropriate on just those occasions when resentment is appropriate. If I rightfully experience resentment, then I have the backing of the moral community, who rightfully experience indignation.

For my purposes, the important point on which Strawson and Darwall agree is that where it is (morally) appropriate for me to experience a personal reactive attitude on my own behalf, it will also be appropriate for other people (members of the moral community) to experience some version of that reactive attitude on my behalf. This general claim is in line with what qualifies as having a practical reason, on Korsgaard’s account. Recall that on her view, all reasons are public, which means that their “normative force can extend across the boundaries between people” (SC, 191).⁸⁷ That is, any given reason has normative implications for everyone: I must see it as a reason for me to act in the same way that it is a reason for you to act. If I do not see the reason as having normative implications for me, then I disregard it altogether (do not see it as a “reason” at all), or I treat the “reason” as having merely predictive value for me (it helps

⁸⁷ SC references are to Korsgaard, Christine, *Self-Constitution: Agency, Identity, and Integrity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

me to anticipate how you will act) (SC, 193). As a result, on Korsgaard's account, if you are indeed pressing a legitimate demand when you resent someone's treatment of you, then the normativity of that demand speaks to every person, not simply to you, the offended party.

3.5 HURT FEELINGS

Resentment properly involves the backing of the moral community. The connection between resentment, indignation, and guilt that Strawson describes speaks to our ordinary experiences. But the attitude of hurt feelings does not obviously belong in the same category with resentment. If hurt feelings is a personal reactive attitude of the same kind as resentment, then hurt feelings, too, should properly involve the backing of the moral community. But which attitude is it appropriate for strangers to adopt when I direct the reactive attitude of hurt feelings toward someone with whom I am in an intimate relationship? What emotional response should strangers direct to my loved one as a corollary to my attitude of hurt feelings? I contend that there is nothing comparable to indignation for strangers to experience when we have our feelings hurt by those we love.

It is certainly possible for our friends and family to wrong us and make resentment appropriate. On such occasions, it is also proper for third parties to direct indignation toward our loved ones. If a beloved friend morally wrongs me, strangers ought to be indignant. That indignation reflects a moral demand, which anyone appropriately presses on behalf of any other person. But it is also possible for friends and family to treat us in ways that make us feel hurt without morally wronging us. Imagine

that I go to visit my friend for the weekend. She does everything she has committed to doing in terms of hosting me: she picks me up at the airport, shows me the sights, and makes sure I have a place to sleep and food to eat. In this regard, she fulfills all the obligations she has to me. Yet she seems distracted during my visit, and I get the impression that she could take me or leave me. I took for granted that she would pay a certain attention to me, and I am hurt when she fails to do this.

The attitude that I have in reaction to this behavior is not one of blame or resentment; I do not hold her morally accountable for this failure. To interpret my response as one of resentment would be a mischaracterization. This becomes clear if we imagine how I might express my disappointment to my friend. I do not use the language of blame, the way I would if she had failed to provide me with a place to sleep. In that case I would remind her that we had discussed how I was coming to visit, and that she had agreed to host me. If, however, my friend fails to provide me with her attention, I do not reference moral terms to describe my reaction. When she is not concerned with me in the special way that I had expected, my only recourse is to tell her that I thought we cared about each other, and that when I came to visit I was confident she would pay special attention to me. I do not resent her; I am hurt by her.

Of course, we might think that my friend owed me her attention, and that reciprocity in friendship dictates that she be attentive when I visit. That may be what reciprocity demands, but my sense is that from the first-person perspective, that is not what matters. Indeed, if my friend were to apologize for her behavior in moral terms and reference reciprocity, the conversation would leave me unsatisfied. As earlier demonstrated, sometimes we do not want our friends to act out of duty or generosity.

The primary point of this section is that in such a situation—when my friend hurts my feelings by not paying the right kind of attention to me—strangers do not have a reaction analogous to indignation available to them. That is not to say that my response to my loved one is unintelligible to a stranger. I could explain the series of events, and the stranger could understand that I would get my feelings hurt when my friend does not show concern for me. But the strangers themselves do not appropriately address a reactive attitude to my friend. Indeed, if a stranger were to get angry at my loved one, the stranger would be overstepping her bounds by inserting herself into an intimate relation that does not involve her. It is offensive if strangers attempt to participate in intimate conflicts. I suggest, therefore, that no reactive attitude comparable to indignation is available to third-parties in situations that involve hurt feelings.

Reconsidering the examples from earlier reveals the same lack of a third-party analogue to hurt feelings. If the husband saves his wife because it is the moral thing to do, we might think that it is sad or unfortunate that their marriage is not a more loving one, but we do not direct a reactive attitude to the husband upon learning that information about them. The same goes if I visit my brother in the hospital because I am duty-bound to do so. And, strangers might be indignant if a person shows no regard for her parents' welfare as they age, but they cannot upbraid someone for choosing from one among other reasonable options.

Moral reactive attitudes, like resentment, have derivative third-personal components in the sense that third-parties can make second-personal addresses in those situations. There is a role for third-parties to adopt: anyone can make a moral demand on behalf of anyone else. But when we experience hurt feelings, there is no role for third-

parties to adopt. R. Jay Wallace notices a similar problem with Strawson's categorization of hurt feelings as a reactive attitude like resentment. Wallace contends that love and hurt feelings, while clearly interpersonal attitudes, are not typical reactive attitudes, because they do not involve expectations on others the way that the paradigmatic reactive attitude of resentment does.⁸⁸ The difficulty with Wallace's position is that love and hurt feelings *do* seem to involve centrally some type of standard or expectation, as I have argued. I suspect that the type of expectation that arises in love, is disappointed when feelings are hurt, and accounts for the necessity that we experience in love, is something that Kant's work in the *Critique of Judgment* begins to explain.

3.6 EXPECTATIONS IN REFLECTIVE JUDGMENTS

In the third *Critique* Kant argues that we have an attitude that is not grounded in a rational judgment, but neither is it expressive of a mere preference. Through his discussion of beauty in the third *Critique*, Kant carves out the conceptual space for the kind of expectation that we have in love. Kant takes judgments of the beautiful to be one prominent instance of "reflective judgments." His discussion of judgments of the beautiful serves to illuminate the characteristics of reflective judgments in general. Kant depicts reflective judgments as a power of thinking that mediates between intuition and the understanding. Such a judgment is like both reason and feeling, but is not quite either one. Reflective judgments are an intermediary type of judgment, between judgments of the good and judgments of the agreeable. For that reason, it will help to discuss first

⁸⁸ See R. Jay Wallace, *Responsibility and the Moral Sentiments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 18-33.

what judgments of the good and of the agreeable are for Kant, before delving into reflective judgments.

According to Kant, the “good” is that “which pleases by means of reason alone” (CJ, 5:207).⁸⁹ We judge an object to be good when we believe it is valuable not just for us in particular, but for any rational creature: “... the good... is valid for every rational being in general” (CJ, 5:210). Having such a belief involves demanding from others that they make the same judgment about a given object that we make. If they do not respond to the object as we respond, then we rightfully believe that they have failed to appreciate something that rationality requires them to recognize. Judgments of the good are thus, in principle, universally communicable. Nothing about the content of these judgments restricts any rational agent from making or understanding them.

Whereas judgments of the good are objective, and demand the assent of all rational beings, judgments of the agreeable are subjective. A judgment of the agreeable concerns the way in which an object pleases us, as particular, sensible creatures. When we judge an object to be pleasurable, implicit in the judgment is the recognition that the experience depends upon what is distinctive about us as individuals, which need not be shared or sharable. The judgment is about our experience of the object and how it gratifies us, not about the object itself. Indeed, calling these “judgments” is perhaps misleading, as making them does not depend upon our having rational natures. Nonrational, sensible creatures also find objects agreeable to them, in the same way we do: “Agreeableness is also valid for nonrational animals...” (CJ, 5:210). Since judgments

⁸⁹ “CJ” citations refer to *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

of the agreeable concern our gratification by an object, which is a subjective reaction depending upon our physiological constitution, we cannot demand that others experience the object in the same way. But, given that our gratification is dependent upon our having the sensibilities that we do, we can anticipate that others with similar physiologies are likely to have comparable experiences. However, unlike in judgments of the good, no normative stance toward others is presupposed in judgments of the agreeable. That means that while we might predict or hope that others will experience the same object in the same way, such an attitude is not implicit in the judgment of the agreeable.

Judgments of the beautiful are instances of reflective judgments, which are an intermediary type of judgment, as they depend upon the combination of our sensible and rational natures. These responses are both about the object and the subject: there is something about the beautiful object, *and* something about us *qua* human beings that makes us experience the object the way that we do. When we judge the beautiful, implicit in that judgment is an expectation that others will make the same judgment.

Kant explains:

When we call something beautiful, the pleasure that we feel is expected of everyone else in the judgment of taste as necessary, just as if it were to be regarded as a property of the object that is determined in it in accordance with concepts; but beauty is nothing by itself, without relation to the feeling of the subject. (CJ, 5:218)⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Kant also writes: “For since it is not grounded in any inclination of the subject (nor in any other underlying interest), but rather the person making the judgment feels himself completely free with regard to the satisfaction that he devotes to the object, he cannot discover as grounds of the satisfaction any private conditions, pertaining to his subject alone, and must therefore regard it as grounded in those that he can also presuppose in everyone else; consequently he must believe himself to have grounds for expecting a similar pleasure in everyone. Hence he will speak of the beautiful as if beauty were a property of the object and the judgment logical (constituting a cognition of the object through concepts of it), although it is only aesthetic and contains merely a relation of the representation of the object to the subject, because it still has the similarity with logical judgment that its validity for everyone can be presupposed” (CJ, 5:211). And: “... if one then calls the object beautiful, one believes oneself to have a universal voice, and lays claim to the consent of everyone...” (CJ, 5:216).

When we experience the beautiful, we expect that others who encounter the particular object will find it beautiful. This sort of expectation is neither a prediction nor a rational demand. The range of creatures we address these judgments to are those rational beings who also have sensible natures, which is a category that includes other human beings: "...beauty is valid only for human beings, i.e., animal but also rational beings, but not merely the latter (e.g., spirits), rather as beings who are at the same time animal..." (CJ, 5:210).

Judgments of beauty cannot be translated into the objective terms of rules or concepts. Kant emphasizes that judgments of the beautiful are not objectively universally valid in the way that judgments of the good are. He writes, "If one judges objects merely in accordance with concepts, then all representation of beauty is lost. Thus there can also be no rule in accordance with which someone could be compelled to acknowledge something as beautiful" (CJ, 5:215-16). When we judge in accordance with concepts, as we do when we make judgments of the good, we are in possession of a rule, by reference to which we can rationally demand that others judge as we do. In contrast, although we expect people to make the same aesthetic judgments that we make, we cannot demand it because making these judgments is not a matter of making a correct inference. Judgments of beauty must be made through direct personal encounters with the object involved.

In addition to being wrong in rationally demanding that others make a judgment of beauty, we are also mistaken if the expectation we have on others to judge the way we

do is too weak. A judgment of beauty differs from a judgment that something is pleasing to oneself. Kant writes:

Many things may have charm and agreeableness for ... [a person], no one will be bothered about that; but if he pronounces that something is beautiful, then he expects the very same satisfaction of others: he judges not merely for himself, but for everyone, and speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things. (CJ, 5:212)

To make a judgment of this kind is to make a “rightful claim to the assent of everyone” (CJ, 5: 213). Kant’s claim that the person who makes a judgment of beauty “judges not merely for himself, but for everyone” indicates his idea that these judgments are not merely subjective like judgments of the agreeable, but rather have a kind of universality. When we make a judgment of beauty, we make an implicit appeal to others to have the same type of encounter with that particular object. In Kant’s words, these judgments “must be combined with a claim to subjective universality” (CJ, 5:212).

In my interpretation, the expectations in judgments of beauty are essentially second-personal addresses, without derivative third-personal claims. In other words, when *I* appeal to *you* to respond to the phenomenon as I do, third-parties who are not directly engaged with or encountering the phenomenon cannot participate in the experience I appeal to you to have. When I make a judgment of beauty, I appeal to you—all of you, as individuals—to make the same judgment. I appeal to you directly, and I do not employ concepts or rules that will rationally compel your agreement.⁹¹

⁹¹ In the experience of the beautiful, I expect others to have the same experience and make the same judgment, not to assent to the idea that the given object has the requisite properties to make it beautiful. Assenting to that idea would be a logical judgment. As Cohen and Guyer explain with regard to judgments of beauty: “One’s apprehension of *x* as beautiful is not the detection of some property in *x* by means of a procedure for recognition” (Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer, eds., *Essays in Kant’s Aesthetics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 11). Kant’s view is that if an aesthetic judgment is made via appeal to a concept, then that concept becomes a logical one (CJ, 5:215). Kant appeals to an example to illustrate his point: “... by means of a judgment of taste I declare the rose that I am gazing at to be beautiful. By contrast, the judgment that arises from the comparison of many singular ones, that roses in general are

Kant's discussion of judgments of beauty introduces a normative yet non-moral type of expectation. This expectation is normative yet non-moral insofar as it involves a uniquely second-personal type of address. That is, judgments of beauty implicitly make second-personal addresses that do not have derivative third-personal analogues. This uniquely second-personal type of address is extended universally in judgments of beauty; the appeal in judgments of beauty is made to every other person.

3.7 JOKES AS APPEALS FOR INTIMACY

I contend that the uniquely second-personal type of address at play in judgments of beauty is a distinctive characteristic of loving relationships. These uniquely second-personal addresses express the normative yet non-moral expectations we have in love. But, the appeals that we make in love are not extended universally, as they are in judgments of beauty. Judgments of beauty are responses to external objects, which we appeal to all other people to appreciate with us. But the experience of love is not primarily a response to an external object. When we love someone, we do not appeal to all other people to love that person with us. Although I may expect everyone to find a certain sunset beautiful, I certainly do not expect everyone who has ever met a particular friend of mine, for instance, to love her. Rather, when I love someone, I address a set of expectations directly to the person I love. Consequently, the appeals we make in love do not follow the model of the appeals in judgments of beauty. The structures of the normative yet non-moral expectations in love are importantly different from those of

beautiful, is no longer pronounced merely as an aesthetic judgment, but as an aesthetically grounded logical judgment" (CJ, 5:215). The apprehension of a property is a conceptual judgment, but that is not what occurs in judgments of beauty, according to Kant.

judgments of beauty. Due to this different structural dynamic, the question arises as to what the content of the appeals in love is. That is, if they are not appeals to judge an object with love, comparable to judging an object beautiful, then what are the appeals *for*?

To approach that question, it is helpful to consider additional contexts in which it seems we make uniquely second-personal, normative yet non-moral, appeals to other people. Appealing to someone to share the humor of a joke is one such context. Ted Cohen's discussion of what is involved in sharing a joke provides a useful model for understanding what the appeals in love are appeals for. On Cohen's account, jokes facilitate intimacy. Taking Cohen's emphasis on intimacy as a starting point, I argue in section 3.8 for three interrelated dimensions of intimacy that our appeals in love seek to maintain and deepen.

Cohen argues that jokes are "... devices for establishing and maintaining intimacy ..." (J, 69).⁹² They function to establish intimacy because when I tell you a joke, I am asking you "... to join [me] in a community of appreciation" (J, 26). Such a community of appreciation is grounded in the shared feeling that appreciating a joke together involves (J, 40, 31). If the joke fails, "... what has failed is the effort to achieve an intimacy between teller and hearer" (J, 26). Cohen compares this type of failure to engaging with someone who does not appreciate what you know to be beautiful—someone, for instance, "... who doesn't care to turn his head to see the sun set behind a mountain, or to see the colors of the ocean change as the sun plays upon the water" (J,

⁹² Ted Cohen, *Jokes: Philosophical Thoughts on Joking Matters* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999). In-text "J" citations refer to *Jokes*.

26). Cohen claims you cannot call this person irrational, as the deficiency is not like "... when one's argument fails to move someone ..." (J, 26). Appreciating a joke, like appreciating beauty, is not a matter of "... latching on to the objective features of the world ..." (J, 30). This type of appeal is not a rational demand: "You cannot show that the joke is an instance of something that must be acknowledged as funny, as you might show that an argument is an instance of valid reasoning. So you point to the joke" (J, 29). One expects the joke itself, that particular appeal, to elicit a certain response from another person, but that response is not compelled by the recognition that the joke instantiates certain properties.

Yet the person who does not laugh at a joke someone seeks to share with her, or cannot be bothered to look at a beautiful sunset, fails to respond to a significant type of appeal that other people make to her. On Cohen's view, the person who does not appreciate your humor, or care to watch a sunset, "... is a kind of stranger to you" (J, 26). Cohen claims: "... I worry and feel stricken every time one of my jokes does not reach you" (J, 32). He reports experiencing this anxiety because sharing a joke functions to reassure him that the part of himself that appreciates humor "... is indeed something that constitutes an element of my humanity" (J, 31). In the experience of humor or beauty, Cohen writes, "I discover something of what it is to be a human being by finding this thing in me, and then having it echoed in you, another human being" (J, 31). For that reason, Cohen suspects that our drawing each other's attention to things we find beautiful and funny expresses "... a wish, a need, a longing to *share* these things, to feel them together (J, 31). Successfully sharing a joke or the experience of beauty affirms, for Cohen, that the part of himself that is affected by jokes and beauty are distinctively

human parts of himself. Failed attempts to share—the rejections of his appeals—are scary, for Cohen, because they make him feel alone.

In addition to being “devices for establishing” intimacy, jokes are also devices for “maintaining” intimacy (J, 69). Sharing a joke makes explicit our common background, whatever that background is (J, 27). And our shared background supplies the context for the intimacy that the joke facilitates or deepens (J, 28). Sometimes our humanity is the extent of our joint background, but sometimes we share jokes that presuppose richer common ground. In other words, some jokes build on a pre-existing intimacy. I take Cohen’s point to be that the bonds of relationships can be sustained by private or “inside” jokes. I imagine that such jokes serve to deepen those bonds by reinforcing the boundaries and identities of particular communities. To share an inside joke, people must already be together in a community of appreciation, and the sharing of the joke strengthens the intimacy that already characterizes the relationship.

3.8 THE SECOND-PERSONAL APPEAL IN LOVE

Considering how inside jokes can serve to strengthen intimacy sheds light on how the uniquely second-personal appeals function in loving relationships. To be in a loving relationship is to belong already to a community of appreciation. A loving relationship is more like the communities in which inside jokes are appropriate, as opposed to the fleeting communities that arise when we share jokes or beautiful sunsets with near strangers. The appeals we make in love seek to strengthen the intimacy we take for granted in loving relationships. When those appeals are rejected, the intimacy that is implicit in loving relationships is threatened or damaged. In what follows, I identify

three interrelated dimensions of the intimacy that characterizes a loving relationship. First, those we love have the standing to interpret us in a constitutive manner; second, we share a perspective with those we love; and third, being loved enables us to see ourselves as distinctive and special. These dimensions of the intimacy in a loving relationship reveal what we appeal *for* in love.⁹³ In section 3.9, I discuss how we are hurt when the appeals we make in love are rebuffed.

3.8.1 Standing to Interpret

I contend that one dimension of the intimacy in a loving relationship is that the people we love interpret our concerns and interests, and we incorporate their interpretations into our self-understandings. Our concerns and interests have an indeterminate quality until we make them determinate through a process that we share with those we love. We fine-tune the character of our concerns and interests—in part—by accepting the interpretations provided by those we love. In that way, the people we love help to constitute who we are. We grant them the standing to interpret us in a constitutive manner, which amounts to the conferral of a normative power. As a result of their having this normative power, part of who we are as distinctive individuals cannot be specified without reference to them. Consequently, we implicitly appeal to those we love to help us fine-tune the character of our concerns and interests.

This process of making determinate our attitudes with those we love is prevalent in ordinary circumstances. Take, for instance, an average day during which I happen to

⁹³ At this point, I am arguing for a characterization of the central cases of loving relationships. Peripheral cases, such as our relationships with troublesome relatives or childhood friends, can be interpreted derivatively of this account.

have a conversation with a co-worker that leaves me unsettled. After the conversation, my emotional response can only be characterized (at that time) as a nebulous discontent. Beyond that discontent, I am unsure what feeling to have about what just occurred. Whether I am angry, sympathetic, dismissive, entertained, etc., remains to be worked out. In other words, my response has yet to form. And, the right characterization of my attitude depends partially on how I respond to other people's interpretations of it. On such an occasion, the robust development of my reaction to the event occurs through my discussion of it with someone I love. The interpretations of the people I love contribute to it being the case that I feel *x* instead of *y*—perhaps that I am sympathetic instead of angry.

Williams defends the general point that the precise nature of an experience can be indeterminate at the moment of the central event. He considers the phenomenon of *akrasia*, and argues that future attitudes and decisions can qualify an act as *akratic* or not.⁹⁴ Williams provides the example of a married man who attempts to end an affair he is having. But, the man continues to see his lover even after the two “had decided not to meet” (SN, 45). Williams contends that those episodes of infidelity—when the man acts against his resolution and continues to see his lover—do not have a determinate character at the time of their occurrence. The man's feelings are certainly unsettled, but beyond that discontentedness there is no fact of the matter about what the man wants. Within a range of possibilities, the man's desires have yet to be made determinate. That is, it is not clear until later, when the episodes of infidelity are part of a larger narrative in the man's

⁹⁴ Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 44-46. Williams expresses dissatisfaction with translations of *akrasia* as “weakness of will” or “incontinence,” and retains the Greek term in his discussion (SN, 44). For that reason, I use it as well.

life, whether they were *akratic* acts, or whether they were "... intimations of what were going to prove his truly stronger reasons" (SN, 45). Williams writes,

The relevant descriptions of what happened are available, in many cases, only retrospectively, as part of an interpretation that establishes or reestablishes one's identifications and the importance of one reason rather than another. Consequently, whether an episode was an episode of *akrasia* at all may depend crucially on later understandings. (SN, 45)

Williams's point in this example is that how one's will ought to be characterized is not derivative of a single moment of choice. His point more generally is that the determinate characters of given episodes in our lives depend upon how we develop our stories. The nature of specific choices or actions is not written into those events as they occur.

Rather, the precise nature of events in our lives is subject to how we conceive of them in the future. We reflect on potential interpretations of those events, and the ones we accept fine-tune their character. My contention—a point to which I will return—is that we engage in this process with those we love.

In light of the indeterminate character of certain choices at the moment of choice, Williams argues for a type of justification that he calls "essentially retrospective" (ML, 24). Essentially retrospective justifications are first-personal, having to do with a person's evaluation of his or her own choices. These are not moral justifications; they are not assessments of the quality of rational or moral deliberation. They concern "... what [agents] can be expected coherently to think about themselves" (ML, 27). As a case of essentially retrospective justification, Williams considers the story of Anna Karenina, who leaves her husband for her lover, Vronsky, thereby abandoning her son and sacrificing her role in Russian society. Ultimately, she finds she cannot live the life that resulted from her decision, and she commits suicide.

On Williams's interpretation, Anna does not kill herself from moral regret over having wrongfully abandoned her child. We can imagine, Williams claims, that "Anna remains conscious in her life with Vronsky of the cost exacted from others, above all her son. She might have lived with that consciousness, we may suppose, if things had gone better, and relative to her state of understanding when she left Karenin, they could have gone better" (ML, 26). But as it happens, the remainder of Anna's story makes it the case that she views her choice to run away with Vronsky as "unjustified" and "insupportable" (ML, 25, 27). The kind of life that becomes available to her with Vronsky is not the kind of life that she would need it to be in order to see her choice as part of a larger narrative. Anna's decision, according to Williams, is of such a kind that "... if it succeeds, [her] stand-point of assessment will be from a life which then derives an important part of its significance for [her] from that very fact; if [she] fails, it can, necessarily, have no such significance in [her] life" (ML, 35). Her interpretation of this choice hinges on the fuller context of her life, which has yet to develop.

At the time of her choice, Anna gambles on the possibility that her relationship with Vronsky will deepen and support her so that she may carve out a new direction in her life. When we make choices like Anna's, we are "... putting a great deal on a possibility which has not unequivocally declared itself" (ML, 23). But for Anna, that possibility does not crystalize—the relationship does not become such that she is supported by it. As it turns out, her life with Vronsky is not a storyline she can endorse or identify with. The path she goes down is so incomplete and underdeveloped that she cannot recover her way. As a result, Anna cannot weave her choice to run away with Vronsky into the narrative of her life—not even the narrative of a miserable life. Had her

story gone differently, an alternative interpretation of her earlier choice would have been available to her; Anna might have conceived of it as supportable (despite still recognizing that she wronged her son). In this sense, Anna's decision has an indeterminate character at the time she makes it. The nature of such a decision depends upon later interpretations, which are, in principle, not available at the moment of choice.

The point I want to take from Williams's discussions of *akrasia* and essentially retrospective justification is that we fine-tune the character of some of our choices and actions based on later interpretations that we give them. In such cases, there is no fact of the matter about what we want or how we feel at the moment of choice. Certain possibilities can be ruled out as clear outliers: some characterizations of our concerns are not real contenders. But within a certain range, we do not have determinate interests or desires. In an important sense, then, the character of our choices and actions can be unsettled at the moment they occur. Interpreting the nature of our concerns is the act of giving definition to them, and thereby constituting ourselves as distinctive individuals. Williams emphasizes the unformed nature of some of our choices, but he neglects the way in which we interpret their character with those we love. It is striking that his examples, however, turn on the development of relationships with other people. In the first case, whether the episodes of infidelity are *akratic* seems to hinge on the extent to which the man comes to understand himself and his life in terms of his relationship with his mistress, his spouse, both, or neither. And, whether Anna has a rich enough conception of her own life to support her depends upon whether or not her relationship with Vronsky becomes such that he has the standing to help orient her. That is, Anna's

ability to make sense of her choice depends upon her relationship with Vronsky becoming a loving one.⁹⁵

My contention is that we do not engage alone in the process of making determinate our concerns and interests. Instead, we fine-tune our concerns and interests by conferring on those we love the normative power to provide interpretations of the events in our lives. Consequently, the people we love determine—to some extent—what we care about and who we are as distinctive individuals. Having the power to interpret each other in a constitutive manner is inherent to loving relationships. We do, however, occasionally give a comparable power to people we do not love—to professionals such as therapists and religious leaders. In times of special need or heightened personal disarray, we create artificial versions of what we do naturally in loving relationships. With therapists, for example, we practice in concentrated form the interpretive activity that we implicitly practice with those we love. This interpretive activity, where we make determinate our concerns and interests, is spontaneously performed with those we love, and artificially reconstructed with professionals we trust. Still, the standing to interpret our inner lives in a constitutive manner is a normative power that we grant only to select people. A casual acquaintance might offer her interpretations of us, but that type of recommendation is not inherently constitutive of us. Were an acquaintance to act as though she has the standing to fine-tune our concerns, she would be behaving inappropriately. Of course, we begin to give someone this power as we become more intimate. As a friendship develops, it becomes more natural to expose the unsettled parts

⁹⁵ Anna's case is extreme because she has given up her other relationships, with the result that everything hinges on her relationship with Vronsky transforming into a loving one. Few of our choices are as radical as that one of Anna's.

of oneself to the other person, with the expectation that the other person will provide interpretations of oneself that one accepts.

3.8.2 Shared Perspective

A second dimension of the intimacy that characterizes loving relationships is the way in which we share a perspective. The way we engage the world together—and so share a perspective—is best understood on the model of playing a spontaneous game or improvising music. Such play is purposeful, but does not seek to achieve an end beyond playing together, which means that the play is not instrumental. This purposeful but not instrumental way of engaging the world together is the living of a life. In that way, we are oriented together as we encounter the world. Inherent to loving relationships is the appeal to each other to share a perspective and engage the world together.

Sharing a perspective and engaging the world together involves our emotional coordination. But that coordination is not predetermined, on the model of the inner workings of a well-functioning machine. Recall Annette Baier's emphasis that love "... is a coordination or mutual involvement of two (or more) persons' emotions, and it is more than sympathy, more than just the duplication of the emotion of each in a sympathetic echo in the other" (UL, 43). Our emotional involvement with each other is not guided by a determinate rule such as sympathetically echoing the emotion of the other. Instead, how we affect each other can be understood on the basic model of a parent and baby playing together, according to Baier. How they respond to each other

... is not just sympathetic sharing of expressed emotions, it is also appropriate follow-up responses to what one knows by sympathy that the other is feeling—mischievous delight at the other's temporary bafflement, a frisson of fear at the

other's feigned aggression, glory in the other's surrender. (UL, 44)

In our interactions with each other, we utilize "mutually responsive feelings" and offer appropriate emotional responses in a way reminiscent of how "... the cello replies to the violin in a duo ..." (UL, 44).

Baier's discussion suggests to me that playing a spontaneous game, just as children do, or improvising music together, as musicians are capable of, is the appropriate model on which to understand how we engage the world together (and what it means to share a perspective) when we are in loving relationships. These activities are not performed in terms of determinate rules. The games I have in mind are not freeze-tag or Monopoly, but are ones that might not get a name because they are not quite replicable, precisely because they do not quite have rules. As adults, we engage the world together in a manner that resembles children playing a spontaneous game or musicians improvising music. This is the mode in which we develop interests together, as we do such things as explore new places, create elaborate joke schemas, try new foods, or just spend time together. We share a life in a way that we make up as we go along. That living of a life is a purposeful activity, but it is not aimed at an end beyond the activity itself.

Although the practices of playing spontaneous games and improvising music do not follow determinate rules, they are governed by normative standards. We can certainly respond to each other inappropriately. When the cello plays after the violin, some sets of notes will count as replies to the violin, and others will not. As we play together, sometimes my feigned aggression will be the right move, and other times it will

not. Standards and expectations constrain the types of responses that one person ought to give to the other even when we play in spontaneous or improvised modes.

This account of the way we share a perspective and engage the world together speaks to the manner in which we share interests with those we love. Recall that on Frankfurt's account, individuals bring interests into a relationship, and loving someone essentially involves adopting that person's interests (as much as possible) as one's own. What it means to share interests, on Frankfurt's view, is to take on each other's interests or have overlapping interests. Of course, we do have our own interests, and those who love us take some of those concerns seriously. But Frankfurt's focus on the pre-existing, determinate interests of individuals meshing together misses a large swath of what occurs in the context of a loving relationship. In contrast, I suspect that loving someone centrally involves the activity of forming concerns together. We do not merely explore all the interests the other person brings into the relationship, but we begin to explore possible avenues of interest together. We create new desires and concerns together. As we encounter the world, our individual perspectives inform what we entertain as possibilities and shape our joint explorations. This is about how we are oriented in the world together in a loving relationship. We determine together what we pay attention to.

The process by which we form desires and interests together is analogous to Korsgaard's account of what it is to deliberate and reason together. When you and I deliberate over a matter, nothing qualifies as a reason for either of us individually until it is ratified by both of us jointly. Deliberating together requires regarding ourselves as having a unified will: if something does not count as a reason for us together, then it does not count as a reason for either of us independently. In this way, we determine what

decision to share (SC, 190). As we deliberate, we might individually contribute preferences and suggestions, which are components of the raw material that gets deliberated about. But we do not genuinely reason together unless we treat that process as determining the reasons we take ourselves to have. In contrast, if we see ourselves as bringing our independently-established reasons to the table in an attempt to persuade the other person to adopt them, then we are engaged in a process of bargaining, not deliberation. In that case, we do not regard ourselves as having a unified will. Instead, we approach each other's independently-held reasons as "tools and obstacles," and we will "fence and negotiate and bargain" (SC, 194).

On Korsgaard's interpretation of Kant, "[m]arriages and friendships, like the state, depend on the formation of a General Will" (SC, 189). That is, in both marriage and friendship, a new, unified will is produced, which is not reducible to the combination of our two separate wills. As it applies to the state, Kant's General Will refers to the way in which a properly formed government represents every citizen and yet no one person in particular. Likewise, Korsgaard claims, in both marriage and friendship the arrangement "produces something new, a shared object, *our* happiness, which we now pursue together, and make decisions about together, as the object of our unified will" (SC, 188-9). In other words, in relationships like marriage and friendship, our happiness is not reducible to my interests and your interests. Rather, we suss out together what to pursue, what we will enjoy, what will make us happy.

In a loving relationship, we are united in exploring the world and possible avenues of interest in it. The content of our concerns is not determined prior to our undergoing that process together. We do not simply join forces to maximize the

fulfillment of an amalgam of our pre-established desires, as Frankfurt seems to assume. Rather, we each shape our joint exploration by contributing suggestions and possibilities, but the interests we have together are not determined prior to our interaction in forming them. Consequently, being in the loving relationship changes our nature as experiencing subjects. We are part of a new subjectivity as we encounter the world, which is not reducible to each of us taken separately. As members of this new subjectivity we share a perspective, and that becomes the perspective from which we each look at the horizon of possible interests and concerns. That means that we no longer encounter the world as the creatures we were before. This is one way in which our practical orientations depend upon the people we love. The way that we understand ourselves and engage with the world depends upon these relationships. In loving relationships, we are creatures whose capacity for feeling and desiring is co-dependent with particular other people's.⁹⁶

3.8.3 Subjective Importance

A third dimension of the intimacy that characterizes loving relationships is the significance we have to the people who love us. We have a subjective importance to those who love us that does not track how objectively special we are. In other words, our importance to those who love us need not reflect any thoughts about how important we are in the eyes of all other people. (Consider, for instance, the way parents care about their children. The preference loving parents have for their children does not depend on whether or not the children would be considered outstanding by an unbiased observer).

⁹⁶ Of course, being united with other people in this way both enables and constrains, as I discuss in the following chapter on grief.

As a result, being loved enables us to see ourselves as distinctive and special, which in turn enables us to develop personal concerns and interests.

Our specialness to those who love us is not contingent upon our possession of certain qualities or traits that are objectively prized—such as being especially smart or kind. In fact, those who love us see us just as ourselves and not in terms of a set of characteristics, which Frankfurt emphasizes:

The focus of a person's love is not those general and hence repeatable characteristics that make his beloved *describable*. Rather, it is the specific particularity that makes his beloved *nameable*—something that is more mysterious than describability, and that is in any case manifestly impossible to define.⁹⁷

We have a dimension to our individuality that resists descriptors, and is for that reason best captured by a proper name. Indeed, we are most comfortable referring to the people we love by their proper names, because those names conjure up for us something beyond sets of attributes. (We even turn “Mom” and “Dad” into proper names). Niko Kolodny explains this aspect of a person as the person's “bare identity: her being Jane, her being this very person, her being she.”⁹⁸

Our ability to see those we love as distinctive individuals is bound up with their having subjective importance to us. I suggest that being seen and cared about in this way enables us to be people with distinctive, first-personal perspectives. Being regarded as special and individual enables our particularity, and it enables us to see ourselves as special and distinctive. Moreover, caring principally about ourselves, our lives, and the people in them is necessary to having a personal self at all. Williams argues for the

⁹⁷ Harry G. Frankfurt, “On Caring” in *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 170.

⁹⁸ Niko Kolodny, “Love as Valuing a Relationship” in *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 2 (April 2003), p. 142.

significance of maintaining a sense of the special, non-objective importance of our own lives. Williams emphasizes that we are chiefly concerned with our particular projects, but not because we imagine that “a distinctive contribution to the world will have been made, if [our] distinctive project is carried forward” (PCM, 14). Our personal projects are not especially important to us because we conceive of them as objectively important. Rather, these particular interests “give [us], distinctively, a reason for living this life” (PCM, 15).

Seeing ourselves as especially important enables us to have enough of a personal self to undertake our own interests, and in that way enables our practical orientation. For that reason, I think Williams is mistaken in his focus on the importance to us of our personal projects. Of course, the projects and interests we adopt or develop throughout our lives—such as careers, hobbies, or social causes—give us direction as well. But our personal interests and projects only make sense against the backdrop of a distinctive, first-personal perspective, which our loving relationships give rise to. Our sense of ourselves as distinctive individuals is the precondition for our pursuing our own projects, and our relationships enable that sense. The unilateral relationship we have with objects is not a substitute for the basic sense of ourselves we derive from being seen as distinctive and special by the people who love us.

3.9 EXPLAINING HURT FEELINGS

The uniquely second-personal addresses that we make in love are appeals that seek to maintain or strengthen these dimensions of intimacy in loving relationships. When such appeals are rebuffed, the reactive attitude we have in response is hurt feelings.

Having hurt feelings is an appropriate second-personal reactive attitude to someone we love when that person does not engage with us about how to interpret our concerns and interests, or does not engage with us in the perspective we share, or does not see us as especially important and distinctive.⁹⁹ This account makes sense of the examples of hurt feelings introduced earlier in the chapter.

We appeal to those we love to help constitute us. Their rejection of such appeals leaves us bereft and diminished, in the sense that we are unable to constitute ourselves adequately. This is one source of hurt feelings, and is relevant to one way in which gift-giving can go wrong. Recall how Erica disappointed Oliver when she gave him the wellington boots after he had searched out the perfect watch for her birthday. To understand his reaction, it helps to consider generally the ways gift-giving can go badly.

Certainly gifts are inappropriate when they presuppose a more intimate relationship than actually exists. As with other modes of personal interaction, appropriate gift-giving in an intimate relationship differs from what is acceptable in a non-intimate relationship. We do not typically give family heirlooms to new acquaintances. In general, gifts should not be too elaborate or expensive in the context of a casual relationship, in part, because such gifts might be coercive attempts to ingratiate the other person, with the expectation of future reciprocity. What would be luxurious or indulgent in an intimate relationship is overbearing or controlling in a casual one. Even if one is not currying favor, giving too elaborate a gift in a non-intimate relationship is

⁹⁹ Hurt feelings make sense in at least these circumstances. But I do not want to exclude the possibility of other dimensions of intimacy that would make sense of hurt feelings.

overbearing, just as standing too close in conversation or encroaching on a private issue is.

If we are in an intimate relationship, on the other hand, gift-giving fails if you did not select your present for me in particular. Think of the person who has an assistant do his personal gift shopping for him, or the person who collects potential gifts with no special recipient in mind. Other examples of this type of phenomenon include giving money or gift certificates, or making a donation to one's own favorite charity. Along similar lines, something has gone wrong when the gift-giver uses her own preferences to guide her selection, rather than contemplating what the recipient might enjoy. Another non-optimal mode of gift-giving is to select an item that the person would get herself, or even specifically requests. Useful household items are particularly bad gifts of this kind.

What do these ways of failing at gift-giving in intimate relationships all have in common? I suggest that they do not help to define the other person—to refine her tastes. One kind of paradigmatic gift expands on someone's style, helps her develop interests, and goes beyond what has already been determined about her.¹⁰⁰ It makes sense, then, to think that gifts should be luxurious or indulgent in intimate relationships but not too elaborate in casual ones. In a casual relationship, an elaborate gift is inappropriate because it seeks to define a person whom the gift-giver does not have the standing to interpret. This is comparable to assuming that one has the right to direct a casual acquaintance in how to deal with a private matter.

¹⁰⁰ I do not intend this to be a comprehensive account of gift-giving. Rather, my attempt is to highlight and make sense of certain aspects of the practice.

Understanding gift-giving in loving relationships as a mutually self-defining activity also illuminates ways of ungraciously receiving a gift. Graciously receiving a gift from a person one loves affirms that person has the standing to provide an interpretation of oneself. When someone has given a gift that represents a genuine attempt to make the other person's tastes more determinate, then the gift-giver is understandably hurt if the gift is rejected. If I carefully select a gift for you and you do not use it (you do not listen to the mix-tape I spent a weekend making for you; you never wear the sweater I thought you would be really excited by; you return, sell, or give away what I have given you), you signal an unwillingness to let me refine your tastes. And that indicates an unwillingness to let me interpret you in a constitutive manner. Never letting others expand on one's tastes is a way of being guarded and closed off. This signals the danger that someone does not confer on others the normative standing to interpret her, and lacks this kind of intimacy with other people.

The practice of gift-giving in loving relationships introduces occasions for hurt feelings, which makes sense if we understand gift-giving in relation to the dimension of intimacy that involves interpreting each other in a constitutive manner. On my view, gift-giving in the context of loving relationships is a mutually self-defining activity. We confer on those we love the normative power to interpret us in a constitutive manner, and gift-giving is one mode of interpretation. It is one way in which we make each other's concerns and interests determinate. As such, not attempting an interpretation of someone or refusing to accept someone's interpretation are both hurtful behaviors.

I have argued that we give those we love the normative power to interpret our concerns and interests in a constitutive manner. As a result, if their interpretations of our

inner lives are not available to us, we will not be sure of how to constitute ourselves. Their abandonment of us in this respect—temporary or permanent—has a detrimental effect on our ability to constitute ourselves. Consequently, this dimension of intimacy accounts for one source of hurt feelings. I suspect that the example of the elderly parents might be best explained in these terms, as well. Recall that in this example the woman is presented with multiple reasonable options, but one presents itself as the obvious choice in the context of her relationship with her parents. This could be the case because she faces a variety of ways to refine their interests, and on her assessment some potential interpretations clearly miss the mark.

Not engaging in or withdrawing from the shared perspective also constitutes hurtful behavior in loving relationships. In loving relationships we are part of a new subjectivity and our practical orientations depend upon the perspective we share, in the sense that we engage with the world from that perspective. Typically, we take for granted that the other person engages the world with us, and our shared perspective remains an implicit feature of our lives. The existence of our shared perspective becomes explicit when one person stops engaging in it. We notice when the other person withdraws and does not meet our implicit appeals with an appropriate response. At those times, we feel hurt: we “worry and feel stricken” (in Cohen’s words) when the other person does not respond to our (implicit) appeals to engage the world together. Visiting the inattentive friend, failing to visit a loved one in the hospital, or not helping a good friend move are illustrations of hurtful behavior because they call to mind occasions on which a loved one withdraws from the shared perspective.

Finally, those who love us enable our distinctive, first-personal perspectives. One set of appeals in loving relationships seeks to have affirmed our distinctive, first-personal perspectives—our individual personhood. Rejection on this front threatens our ability to have a special concern for ourselves, which is a precondition of our having personal interests. This type of rejection is another source of hurt feelings. If the people we are in relationships with fail to provide us with the sense of our subjective importance, then our sense of self is diminished, and we will feel diminished. If the man in Williams’s example rescued his wife for the wrong reason, she naturally would have been hurt by the thought that she is fundamentally one among others in her husband’s eyes.

Hurt feelings involve a sense of abandonment. Not interpreting me, not engaging in our shared perspective, or not seeing me as special and distinct, are all ways of abandoning me. Williams’s “one thought too many” example resonates because the threat of abandonment is literal: the wife might be left to drown. In that example, it seems the wife could be hurt if the husband does not respond to the situation in a way that demonstrates an almost primal need for her to stay alive. In loving her, he should have no choice but to save her, with an urgency comparable to that with which he would try to save his own life. The husband needs the wife he loves to stay alive because there is no he without her. To put the point in the language used earlier, he is constituted through her, he shares a perspective with her, and his sense of himself depends on her. The fundamental answer to why he saved her is that he loves her. There is something deeply wrong with any other response. The act of saving her is comparable to an act of self-

preservation. In that way, it is an act that does not call for moral justification.¹⁰¹ Were the husband not to act from the same unreflective urgency that would motivate him to save his own life, he would be abandoning his wife—discarding her as someone he does not need—regardless of whether he rescues her from drowning from some other motivation. If another motivation were emotionally available to him—if he could adopt a different perspective on the event—that response would reveal that he does not love her.

Lest this account seem purely egoistic, consider that the rational egoist sees all value relative to himself, and would see no value in saving others over himself, as that would eliminate the source of value in his life. Contrary to this, my account implies that the person who loves her children, for instance, would save them over herself. That is because, on this account, you are “of me” in such a way that there is no me without you. I would not recognize myself in a world without you; and my abandonment of you would be tantamount to the death of myself. In fact, my abandonment of you is worse than my own death, because at least physical death does not corrupt me. Love is not egoistic on this account, but it is not altruistic either. Korsgaard makes a similar point when she considers the cost of abandoning our fundamental commitments:

It is the conceptions of ourselves that are most important to us that give rise to unconditional obligations. For to violate them is to lose your integrity and so your identity, and to no longer be who you are. That is, it is to no longer be able to think of yourself under the description under which you value yourself and find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking. *It is to be for all practical purposes dead or worse than dead.* (SN, 102, my emphasis)

Korsgaard argues that one makes oneself a person, generally speaking, by giving oneself standards and living by those standards (SN, 102). That activity is constitutive of

¹⁰¹ Think here of the way in which self-preservation is, for Hobbes, a fundamental natural instinct and thus our right (*Leviathan*, XIV.3).

personhood in general. More specifically, one's own practical identity depends upon one's fundamental commitments. Violating those commitments means "no longer be[ing] who you are," and being "for all practical purposes dead or worse than dead."

What I do for you out of love is deeply personal—deeply "of me." Reacting to what I do for you out of love as though I act from a moral motivation is a hurtful response for you to give me. If I visit you in the hospital or help you move because I love you, and you respond with the kind of gratitude that characterizes impersonal interactions, *I* am hurt. This kind of gratitude has a distancing effect in a personal relationship. Imagine that both Wolf's brother and neighbor are hospitalized, and Wolf visits each one. Both the brother and neighbor might thank her for coming, but I suspect that their expressions of gratitude track different sentiments. In moral interactions, gratitude functions to praise virtue—praise those who do their duty—as well as supererogatory acts. But in loving relationships, expressions of gratitude that mean "thanks for being a good person" are rejections of the intimate dimensions of the relationship. The thanks we offer in loving relationships, instead, express the sentiment "I am glad to be loved by you."

We make appeals at the level of dimensions of intimacy that I argue for, and our feelings are hurt when those appeals are rebuffed. On my interpretation, the attitude of hurt feelings is characterized by a sense of personal diminishment or deflation that comes from feeling abandoned or rejected. In this way, the experience of hurt feelings is closer to being sad than angry. This is a significant difference between hurt feelings and the attitude of resentment. Resentment is not a sad, deflated state, because resentment raises

a challenge to the way in which one was treated. In contrast, the attitude of hurt feelings involves emotional withdrawal.

3.10 CONCLUSION

Against the background of judgments of beauty, it becomes clearer how love could involve a non-moral set of second-personal appeals and attitudes. Interpreting love through the lens of Kant's discussion of judgments of beauty allows for the possibility that being disappointed by a loved one is neither trivial nor warrants casting moral blame. I have argued that recognizing a normative yet non-moral type of expectation can make sense of a variety of appeals that we make to each other, ranging from minimally intimate ones (attempts to share a joke) to the maximally intimate (what occurs in loving relationships). This conceptual space can accommodate at least our experiences of beauty, love, and perhaps humor, none of which fit comfortably as either mere psychological inclinations or as real values recommended by reason. For that reason, I suggest that Kant's moral psychology is uniquely situated to provide the foundations for a satisfying theory of love, according to which love participates in a unique type of necessity, different from both moral necessity and the necessity of a psychological impulse. The dimensions of intimacy that I identify explain what we appeal for in loving relationships, and how we are hurt upon the rejection of those appeals. This account also has consequences for other nearby emotional phenomena, including grief, as I discuss in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

LOVE AND GRIEF

People who have recently lost someone have a certain look, recognizable maybe only to those who have seen that look on their own faces. ... It is the look of someone who walks from the ophthalmologist's office into the bright daylight with dilated eyes, or of someone who wears glasses suddenly made to take them off. —Joan Didion¹⁰²

4.1 INTRODUCTION

My account of love has the resources to shed light on related dimensions of our emotional lives. For instance, our experience of grief derives from the nature of our love for particular people. In this chapter, I provide an account of grief as an application of my theory of love, and a demonstration of its ability to make sense of familiar yet under-theorized phenomena.

As the previous chapters have highlighted, we often assume that the people we love are irreplaceable. Love presents itself as a direct attachment to a particular person, rather than as a sum of value judgments about that person's traits or characteristics, or as affection for those qualities. My discussion takes seriously the intuition that love does not allow for substitutions—even qualitatively identical ones. If those we love are indeed irreplaceable to us, then we might expect to be unable to recover fully from their deaths. After all, such a profound loss could not be compensated or made up for.

Recent research in empirical psychology, however, suggests that this common conception of our loving relationships is false. These reports claim that people recover from the pain of loss relatively quickly. We are very rarely devastated upon the deaths of

¹⁰² Didion, *The Year of Magical Thinking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), pp. 74-5.

beloved spouses, children, siblings, parents, or friends, and thus should not expect to be. Dan Moller takes these data from social scientists and makes the philosophical claim that our ability to recover, often rapidly, should reveal something to us about the nature of our loving relationships. Based upon our apparent resilience in grief, Moller concludes that those we love are important to us insofar as they play certain roles in our lives. These are functional roles that other people can fulfill, in principle and often in practice. The truth is, we are attached to particular people because they are well-suited for the performance of specific functions in our lives. In defense of this position, Moller emphasizes the frequency with which widows and widowers remarry or express a desire to remarry. As a consequence of Moller's conclusion, if we fail to understand that our love for other people is essentially mediated by the functions they fulfill for us, then we labor under a misunderstanding of our own values and concerns.

I grant the empirical data, along with Moller: we do often recover after the deaths of those we love. In light of this, he believes that we ought to realize that our love for others is not a direct attachment to particular, irreplaceable individuals. Unlike Moller, I contend that the data do not rationally compel us to learn any such lesson about the character of love. The fact of our resilience does not imply that we only love people as inhabitants of general roles. I have argued for three dimensions of intimacy in loving relationships, which also serve as three interrelated reasons for thinking that the very activity of loving and being loved enables our sense of who we are as distinctive, particular individuals. In this chapter, I contend that my view of love provides the right conceptual resources for an account of grief, and that common aspects of grief substantiate this theory of love. A proper understanding of the dynamics between love

and grief reveals that grief cannot be adequately characterized in terms of the feelings of sadness that accompany it. Rather, grief is best understood as a type of practical disorientation—more specifically, a disorientation that involves the loss of the personal self. This account implies that recovery in grief involves the reconstitution of the self, which is emotional work not measurable on the level of hedonic tone. Furthermore, this interpretation of grief makes sense of features that are not well understood if we assume it is simply painful feelings. Such features include why only certain people should be near us when we grieve, and why grief can so easily become total devastation.

The larger philosophical significance of my account is that examining grief through this lens makes it clear that loving relationships have irreducible first- and second-personal elements. In other words, the significance of our intimate relationships cannot be captured from the external point of view, which is the standpoint any science of the mind necessarily adopts. As a result, in the case of love there is a rightful asymmetry between judgments made from these two different standpoints. So, while we should acknowledge the truth of the objective judgment, made in the third-person, that we will likely recover after the deaths of those we sincerely love, it does not follow that we must affirm such a claim from the internal perspective of one person who loves another. The two types of belief are made in different currency. An inability to imagine personally recovering from the death of a particular loved one is both rational *and* compatible with the third-personal prediction that one will likely recover from the death of any given loved one. My argument licenses the rejection of Moller's position, and any like it, which assume that external evaluations of our responses to the deaths of those we love take rational precedence over our internal experiences of loving and losing people.

4.2 GRIEF AS SADNESS AND LOVE AS ROLE-FILLING

Moller's philosophical conclusion about the nature of love begins from the simple assumption that grief is best characterized as a feeling of sadness. This understanding of the nature of grief manifests itself in recent psychological research on the process of grieving, prominently conducted by George A. Bonanno. Bonanno's empirical research asks people to attend to their feelings as they grieve the loss of spouses, parents, children, siblings, and friends. He concludes from the reports of his subjects that grief

... comes and goes in a kind of oscillation. ... We focus on the pain of the loss, its implications, its meanings, and then our minds swing back toward the immediate world, other people, and what is going on in the present. We temporarily lighten up and reconnect with those around us. Then we dive back down to continue the process of mourning. (OSS, 40)¹⁰³

On this view, grief has a painful quality, the diminishment of which indicates that grief has subsided. Bonanno emphasizes "...the empirical fact that most bereaved people ... [m]ay be deeply saddened, they may feel adrift for some time, but their life eventually finds its way again, often more easily than they thought possible. This is the nature of grief" (OSS, 24).¹⁰⁴

Like Bonanno, Moller characterizes grief as the experience of unpleasant feelings: unhappiness, misery, or suffering, for instance.¹⁰⁵ And he affirms that most people are

¹⁰³ Bonanno, *The Other Side of Sadness: What the New Science of Bereavement Tells Us About Life After Loss* (New York: Basic Books, 2009). Bonanno references are cited in the text as "OSS."

¹⁰⁴ He also writes: "... [B]ecause we know that bereavement is painful, we expect bereaved persons to feel constant sadness and grief. When they do not, we tend to be surprised" (OSS, 47); "... the truth is that most bereaved people are not debilitated by grief" (OSS, 49).

¹⁰⁵ Moller, "Love and Death," *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 104, Number 6 (June, 2007), 301-316. Moller references are cited in the text as "LD."

Moller's language in just the first few pages of his article supports the interpretation that he assumes that grief is the feeling of sadness experienced upon a loss. Moller describes the experience of grief and the recovery from it using the following terms: "distress" (301, 302, 303) "mild depression" (302), "subjective well-being" (302, 303, 304, 306), "well-being" (306), "psychic trauma," "happiness" (303, 305, 306), "misery," "suffering" (304), "unhappy" (303). He also refers to "grief and psychological distress" (305).

able to overcome the sadness experienced upon a death within a relatively short period of time. He writes: "... empirical research seems to show that most people manifest ... *resilience* in the face of loss: although they are initially traumatized, they quickly recover and manifest little long-term distress" (LD, 302).¹⁰⁶ Moller takes these studies to indicate that "... a large class of people whose lives we thought were shattered by a major loss turn out to be affected only to a fairly low degree" (304). Many people are, in other words, only intensely sad for a relatively short period of time before they move on.¹⁰⁷ Most widows and widowers are remarkably quick to recover after the death of their spouse (304). Moller concludes that "the widely held view in our culture" that the death of a spouse is "an agonizing blow with long-lasting and significant impact" is wrong (302). The effects of a spouse's death on one's happiness are relatively minor, because any pain soon goes away and happiness returns to what it was before the loss.

Moller worries that the quick recovery our spouses make from our deaths implies that "we do not possess the kind of importance for them that we thought we had" (308). In response to this concern, Moller argues that we are in fact important to those we love, but that our importance is tied up with the functional role we play in their lives: "the ways in which we are needed are functional rather than idiosyncratic..." (310). And, Moller argues that others can fulfill our functions after we are gone. Support for this position is found in the "tendency toward remarriage" (LD, 310). Upon a spouse's death, we often remarry, or express an interest in remarriage, because what we need is someone

¹⁰⁶ However, David Wood pointed out to me that it might be the case that people falsely report a low level of sadness, due to the social expectation to move on and not seem depressed.

¹⁰⁷ Moller writes: "All of this occurs because of adaptive processes that may be in the self-interest of the survivor since they facilitate a rapid return to a healthy emotional baseline, but they involve profound reasons for regret as well, both because of what these processes say about the bereaved and, more generally, what they say about the significance of our relationships with one another" (LD, 301).

to adopt a certain role in our lives: "...we play an important role in the lives of those we love, but not a role that others cannot without relative ease fill once we are gone, since our unique traits do [not]¹⁰⁸ make much of a difference to our success in those roles.... [Although w]e may be desperately needed as companions, friends, sex partners and intimates," these are roles that other people can adopt (310). Moller compares an individual's well-being to that of a sports team. The role of the spouse, on this analogy, becomes that of a key player, such as the pitcher on a baseball team. We want to believe that losing our spouse will "have a profound and lasting effect" on us, "just as the sudden injury of a key baseball player should have a disruptive and debilitating effect on the team" (309). But in reality, if a key player is injured, it only affects the well-being of the whole team intensely for a relatively short period of time, namely, until the team finds a suitable replacement (310). Analogously, if my spouse dies and we fulfilled functions well for each other, my well-being is negatively affected at first—until I find a new, equally good spouse who performs the same basic functions. When those suitable replacements are made, the absence of a deceased person is no longer painful.

In summary, Moller operates on the assumption that grief is the experience of sadness, and he affirms empirical reports that the painful feelings of grief quickly abate. From there, Moller concludes that our personal traits are not sufficiently unique to make us irreplaceable—not even in our most intimate relationships. Although we may find it disturbing to realize that we are not uniquely important to those who love us, he believes that the empirical evidence commits us to this position. In other words, the fact that we

¹⁰⁸ Dan Moller confirmed in personal correspondence that the omission of "not" was a typographical error in publication.

are not devastated by grief indicates that those we love have a functional importance to us, rather than the importance of someone who cannot be replaced. If Moller is right, then the common view of love as an attachment to particular, irreplaceable people is an illusion, and if we are thinking rationally, we will recognize this conception of love for the fantasy that it is.

4.3 INITIAL OBJECTIONS TO GRIEF AS SADNESS

I do not wish to dispute the empirical reports that the feelings of sadness people experience in grief subside, sometimes very quickly. Grief does involve sadness and is also something from which people normally recover. I will, however, raise doubts about the adequacy of characterizing grief in terms of these painful feelings. Certain common dimensions of grief do not register on the level of intense and reportable feeling, yet are central to the experience. These initial concerns motivate the need for an alternative theory of grief that will better address these dimensions of it.

My first worry pertains to the oddness of Moller's view that when widows and widowers remarry, they are functionally replacing their deceased spouses. Indeed, it would be surprising if new spouses regarded themselves as replacements of deceased spouses. And, we would be uneasy or offended if griever's adopted the attitude that they ought to find substitute people. Consider how inappropriate it is to recommend that parents whose beloved children have died turn their attention to finding replacement children. Grieving parents are not comforted to hear that they "can always have another child." Even in remarriages following the death of a spouse, we expect the new spouses to encourage acts of remembrance. For example, we expect them to support visits to the

cemetery and to respond attentively to stories about the deceased spouse. Moller might characterize these behaviors as advisable because they make it psychologically easier for new spouses to replace deceased ones. And on his view, the more a new spouse is able functionally to replace the deceased spouse, the better. Even more radically, though, his account implies that bereaved parents ought to seek out new children to instantiate the roles played by their deceased children, because doing so will ameliorate the loss the parents experienced. But our responses in grief indicate that our love for people does not merely amount to an attachment to them insofar as they fulfill certain roles.

Second, the assumption that grief is reducible to painful feelings does not easily accommodate the measures we undertake to memorialize people—to give the deceased a continued place in our lives. We tend flowers at gravesites, put up pictures, commemorate anniversaries, and conceive of various situations in terms of “what he would have liked” or “what she would say.” Typically, when we are in pain, being reminded of the cause exacerbates the feeling. But in grief, performing rituals that force us to attend to our loss is comforting, which suggests that there is more to grief than the experience of painful feelings. Moller might theorize that these rituals ease our transition into life without the deceased person by reminding us of happy times, thereby reducing our sadness. Were that the rationale for rituals, though, we should abandon them after the anguish of loss dissipates. Instead, we perform acts of remembrance long after Moller would say that we have recovered. And, these rituals require us to attend to the cause of our pain: the death of someone we loved. On Moller’s view, long-held acts of remembrance may simply be unintelligible.

The next noteworthy aspect of grief, which the assumption that grief is the feeling of sadness does not make sense of, is the apparent fact that only certain people can approach us when we are grieving. Those closest to us, our family and friends, come to be with us and physically surround us. But casual friends and acquaintances send their condolences from a distance. In fact, it is offensive when mere acquaintances impose themselves on a grieving person by not staying at arm's length, or by attempting to extend more than formal messages of sympathy. Accounts that characterize grief in terms of painful feelings will have difficulty explaining this type of offense. Indeed, when we are in physical pain, distractions are generally welcome because they divert our attention away from the pain, and thereby ease it. Much as turning one's attention away from physical pain can make it more tolerable, it would seem that the distraction of almost any visitor could alleviate our feelings of grief. As a result, the characterization of grief as pain implies that anything or anyone we can focus our attention on should be welcome in grief. But we know in practice that grief is deeply private, and those people in one's outer circle of acquaintances should maintain their distance.

A fourth point to consider is that if grief amounts to painful feelings, then drugging ourselves until the pain subsides should present itself as an adequate method for dealing with grief. Why not numb the pain until a safe amount of time has passed? Or until we have found a functional replacement for the deceased person, at which point the pain should have dissipated? The fact that numbing pain is not a sufficient treatment of grief suggests that there is emotional work to be done beyond pain control.¹⁰⁹ And if that

¹⁰⁹ In fact, a recent movement to include grief symptoms as indicators of a depressive disorder in the fifth and latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders has met strong resistance. Allen Frances focuses on and argues against this proposal in a recent *New York Times* op-ed article.

is the case, then we should wonder what type of emotional reconstitution is called for when we grieve.

Finally, we ought to notice that Moller's account has little to say about the possibility of not getting through grief, but instead being devastated by it. Given that this happens regularly, albeit in a minority of cases, there is a significant connection between grief and the possibility of hopelessness or despair. In the case of elderly spouses, Moller attributes this possibility to being unusually interdependent.¹¹⁰ But we can be devastated by the deaths of small children, for instance, whose functional roles in our lives are not exclusively fulfillable by them. In addition to making sense of the other practices I have described, a persuasive interpretation of grief will show how hopelessness and despair are intelligible distortions of it.

4.4 GRIEF AS PRACTICAL DISORIENTATION

On Moller's view, we ought to realize from the fact of our quick recoveries after the deaths of loved ones that love is not a direct attachment to particular, irreplaceable people. In contrast, I argue that the people we love and grieve over give us a sense of who we are as particular individuals. Based on this interpretation, I suggest that grief is a

("Allen Frances, an emeritus professor and former chairperson of psychiatry at Duke University, was the chairman of the task force that created the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.") <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/15/opinion/15frances.html> on 8/21/10.

¹¹⁰ Moller writes: "... a large number of people in absolute terms are completely devastated by their loss, and some never recover" (LD, 303). This is demonstrated, for example, by the "sharp rise in risk of death" among the recently widowed (303). Moller explains this phenomenon by appealing to "problems arising from interdependence" (303, fn 11). People have a difficult time navigating their domestic lives in the absence of the person with whom they were accustomed to sharing responsibilities. Nevertheless, even though a significant number of people are not resilient to loss, they remain the minority. (The subjects of the particular study to which he refers were elderly men. In fact, he explains, these men had the same amount of difficulty whether their spouses died or were just hospitalized, indicating that the problem was indeed a functional one).

type of practical disorientation—namely, a disorientation that involves the loss of the personal self.

I take “personal self” to refer to what it is to be a distinctive or particular person. Of course, there are many dimensions to who we are. We have legal statuses and social roles: we might identify with a gender, a religion, a profession, and so forth. But personal selves cannot be explicated in terms of objective characteristics, whether those are physical or intellectual qualities, or social facts about us. A personal self is not an attribution of determinate concepts to ourselves. Familiarity with our first-personal individuality or particularity is not a matter of fine-tuning lists of characteristics. Recall Frankfurt’s claim that “[t]he focus of a person’s love is not those general and hence repeatable characteristics that make his beloved *describable*. Rather, it is the specific particularity that makes his beloved *nameable*...”¹¹¹ Naming someone defies reducing that person to a set of attributes. Our existence as distinctive individuals, I argue, is enabled by the people who love us and whom we love back.

The three dimensions of intimacy in loving relationships that I argued for in the previous chapter are three interrelated reasons for thinking that those we love and grieve over enable our sense of our personal selves. First, those we love have the standing to interpret us in a constitutive manner. Second, they are the people with whom we share a perspective, in the sense of encountering the world together and sharing experiences. And finally, those with whom we are in loving relationships give us a sense of our subjective value or importance, as distinguished from any objective value we might

¹¹¹ Harry G. Frankfurt, “On Caring” in *Necessity, Volition, and Love* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 170.

possess by virtue of instantiating certain qualities or characteristics. The major conclusion of this account is that we are not under rational pressure to give up on our idea that we love particular, irreplaceable people. Although we may be able to recover from the death of a loved one, we cannot imagine doing so in advance. But this imaginative limitation is not simply a psychological shortcoming; it stems from love's role in our self-constitutions. Those we love enable us to be ourselves, which is why we cannot project ourselves into a future without them.

4.4.1 Standing to Interpret

The first point to notice is that those who love us have the normative power to interpret us in a constitutive manner. We fine-tune the character of our experiences, concerns, and interests by accepting the interpretations those we love provide of them. Consequently, the deaths of those we love render us unable to form the nature of our experiences, concerns, and interests. We are left unable to react fully or respond robustly to various situations. Upon the deaths of those we love, we are incapable of constituting ourselves in all the ways we typically do from day to day. Along these lines, Joan Didion describes what she underwent after the death of her husband:

Only the survivors of a death are truly left alone. The connections that made up their life—both the deep connections and the apparently (until they are broken) insignificant connections—all have vanished.... I could not count the times during the average day when something would come up that I needed to tell him. This impulse did not end with his death. What ended was the possibility of response. (YMT, 193-4)¹¹²

¹¹² Didion references are from *The Year of Magical Thinking*, cited in the text as "YMT."

Didion was accustomed to spending nearly twenty-four hours a day with her husband. She had an impulse to tell him about almost everything that she came across, such as minor news snippets (YMT, 194). For Didion, responding to an event or piece of news involved sharing it with her husband, and when she lost that connection that “made up [her] life,” she felt “truly... alone.”

The way we relate to the world is profoundly disrupted upon the death of a person we love. We lose a sense of how to respond to others, and how to make sense of our choices, experiences, and potential future interests. Dave Eggers describes his emotional state after both of his parents died within thirty-two days of each other. He writes, “... that loss is accompanied by an undeniable but then of course guilt-inducing sense of mobility, of infinite possibility, having suddenly found oneself in a world with neither floor nor ceiling.”¹¹³ To have nothing under or above oneself is to be floating in space; it is the experience of being completely disoriented. Certainly, that can be a liberating experience, because it means that no one direction makes any more sense than any other. Upon the loss of a person to whom one was oriented, one loses a sense of how to approach one’s choices, interests, and future.

Having the standing to interpret those we love in a constitutive manner means that as moral subjects we are not wholly distinct from those we love, and this affects the normative relations we bear to other people. We are properly identified with those we love, and as a result, our personal relationships frequently mediate our engagement with other people in the world. One’s identity as someone’s spouse or child, for instance,

¹¹³ Dave Eggers, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), p. xxv.

conditions the normative relations one stands in with a variety of other people.¹¹⁴

Ultimately, this informs an explanation of various reactive attitudes that cluster around loving relationships, such as our susceptibility to pride and shame, and our ability to apologize or accept apologies on their behalf.

Consider that those we love are people we are appropriately proud or ashamed of, whereas we are not susceptible to these attitudes with regard to casual friends or acquaintances. If someone I work with behaves violently or grotesquely, I might be horrified or disgusted.¹¹⁵ In contrast, the actions of those I love and am identified with are enough mine that I can be ashamed of them and have some standing to apologize for them. For example, David Kaczynski, the brother of the “Unabomber” Ted Kaczynski, famously sought to make contact with his brother’s victims.¹¹⁶ He is reported to have said, “It seemed important to acknowledge and apologize for what had happened.”¹¹⁷ Ted Kaczynski’s mental condition precluded him from realizing the appropriateness of an apology. In that circumstance, David Kaczynski experienced the duty to apologize as falling to him. Paradigmatically, an apology is a moral transaction that occurs between an offender and a wronged party. In apologizing, David Kaczynski felt he had the power to act as a moral proxy for his brother. Having such a normative standing makes sense if we understand ourselves as having the power to interpret the responses of those we love.

¹¹⁴ This is related to an issue adoptive families sometimes face, which is not being seen as an “us” by the outside world. See Sally Haslanger and Charlotte Witt, eds., *Adoption Matters: Philosophical and Feminist Essays* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

¹¹⁵ I may, however, feel that this incident reveals something about where I work, and could be ashamed about the kind of job I have. Similarly, if my neighbor behaved badly, that could induce or exacerbate the shame I have over the kind of neighborhood I live in. Those are possibilities that I am not exploring here, though.

¹¹⁶ His interactions with Gary Wright are perhaps the most well known. See, for instance: <http://www.cnn.com/2008/CRIME/06/06/unabomber.brother/index.html> (on 8/11/2010).

¹¹⁷ <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/08/05/nyregion/our-towns-crime-punishment-and-the-brothers-k.html> (on 8/11/2010).

(The Kaczynski case would, then, be an extreme instance of that phenomenon—our power to interpret each other). Responses such as shame, pride, and certain types of apology, which presuppose our being normatively identified with those we love, can be accounted for when we understand ourselves as having the standing to interpret each other in a constitutive manner.

4.4.2 Shared Perspectives

Our sense of ourselves also depends upon our loving relationships because we share a perspective with those we love in a way that is not reducible to or derivative of our independent perspectives. In a relationship, we are co-experiencers in addition to co-deliberators and co-actors. We engage the world together in a way that is best understood on the model of playing a spontaneous game or improvising music. This is the mode in which we explore potential avenues of interest together. Through these joint explorations, we develop and maintain shared interests. In this way, we are oriented in the world together. Upon the death of someone with whom we share a perspective, we lose our receptive capacity (and must re-form it if we are to recover).

Didion recalls the sights that she saw in the company of her husband, and wonders how she could revisit those spots without him. She writes:

... I remember thinking that the most beautiful things I had ever seen had all been seen from airplanes. The way the American west opens up. The way in which, on a polar flight across the Arctic, the islands in the sea give way imperceptibly to lakes on the land. The sea between Greece and Cyprus in the morning. The Alps on the way to Milan. I saw all those things with John. How could I go back to Paris without him, how could I go back to Milan, Honolulu, Bogota? (YMT, 180-81)

Perhaps when Didion asks, “How could I go back [to those places] without him?,” she only means that there is no apparent justification for revisiting places to which one has been already. But then it would be more natural to ask “*Why would I go back?*”, instead of “*How could I go back?*” Her worry might, instead, be that returning to those places would bring too many painful reminders of her dead husband. But her description of the countless times “during the average day when something would come up that [she] needed to tell him” is evidence that her daily life involves continual reminders of her loss, so there would be no cause to worry in particular about revisiting those locations. Additionally, Didion’s concern cannot be that she was too dependent upon her husband to undertake travel on her own, for she describes other travel she has done since her husband’s death and would therefore be aware that she is able to manage logistics. What, then, motivates her question? Certainly her sentiment is a common one: when we grieve, we frequently wonder how we can go on, or return to certain activities.

Didion lost someone with whom she encountered the world. She and her husband not only adopted and shared ends together, but they took in places and appreciated beauty together. They sought out new interests and experiences together. They received information and reacted emotionally with each other. The dimension of grief that Didion describes gestures not only at the loss of someone to make plans with, but also the loss of a certain reactive power or capability in *herself*. Being receptive to encounters with the world around her—taking something in—had become such, for Didion, that her process of experiencing implicitly involved her husband. This is a feature of *her* that is made explicit upon his death.

Loving a particular person involves sharing a perspective, which means scoping out the horizon of potential interests and desires together. This opens us up to new ways of experiencing, which affects our first-person perspectives. Consider the descriptions we give to the experience of loving someone. When we fall in love, have children, or are reunited with beloved family members or friends, we might say we feel ourselves “coming alive” in their presence. We notice that people “light up” or become more animated around those they love. Parents who love their children find that they engage with life in a fresh way after having their children, and their senses of self become richer. These phenomena track the general principle that loving particular people introduces us to different ways of experiencing the world, and thereby presents a new horizon of possibilities in our lives.

The loss of a beloved person results in a basic change in one’s character as an experiencer. The survivor’s reactive power or capability is impaired. This change is like having damage done to a rudimentary ability, such as the capacity to taste certain flavors, or even hear or see. Those we love are people we are receptive *with* and feel *with*. After someone’s death, we still have a need to share experiences with him or her: to exchange a look or joke, for instance. We conceive of a situation in terms of what “she would have liked.” On my view, this need to share indicates that one is constituted to approach the world with that other person, from a joint perspective that no longer exists. Recovering from a loved one’s death means rebuilding our receptive capacity so that it no longer makes inherent reference to the person who died. Moving on requires remaking ourselves into people capable of having complex feelings, emotions, desires, and interests

without the deceased person. Attempts to recover in grief—to rebuild or reattach—require adapting so that one no longer needs the other person in this fundamental way.

4.4.3 Sense of Subjective Importance

The third reason that grief is best understood as a practical disorientation involving the loss of the personal self results from the significance we have to those who love us. The way in which those who love us care about us does not track how objectively special our characteristics are—whether we are especially smart or nice, for example. In other words, if I love you, your importance to me need not reflect any thoughts about the quality of your characteristics relative to those of all other people. Being especially important to certain people enables our distinctive first-personal perspectives. Our importance to those who love us does not depend upon our possessing certain character traits. As Frankfurt argues, those who love us see us just as ourselves.

Didion discusses feeling “invisible” in the aftermath of her husband’s death (YMT, 75).¹¹⁸ This feeling did not arise because she was overlooked by those who should have been supporting her. She recounts receiving a great deal of generous support and being surrounded by people with “instinctive wisdom” and “intuitive kindness” (61, 116). Her feeling of invisibility arose, I suspect, because she lost a person who enabled her to be her particular self for forty years. In the account of her experience of grief, she writes: “For forty years I saw myself through John’s eyes. I did not age” (197). To her husband, Didion was not defined in terms of her attributes, such as being a person of a certain age. Those who love us are attached to us as individuals, and that attachment

¹¹⁸ She writes: “I myself felt invisible for a period of time, incorporeal.”

enables our particularity. Against the backdrop of a basic sense of subjective importance, which our loving relationships give us, we can develop projects and interests that provide us with specific direction in our lives. But the sense of ourselves as especially important gives us the fundamental practical orientation that we must have in order to undertake our own projects and interests.¹¹⁹

4.5 ACCOUNTING FOR SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF GRIEF

On my account, those we love enable our personal selves and grief is a practical disorientation involving the loss of the personal self. This account implies that it is perfectly appropriate to be unable to anticipate one's own recovered future from the first-person perspective, even in light of the objective psychological fact that one will most likely recover. This inability is not an epistemic limitation, but neither is it moral, because both epistemically and morally speaking, recovery is conceivable. (Still, *I* cannot imagine recovering). Before drawing that conclusion, though, I will discuss how my account of grief is better equipped than an account like Moller's to explain significant aspects of the grieving process, beyond the phenomenological condition of being sad.

¹¹⁹ This implies that while we can be upset by the loss of objects, we do not grieve for them. Rather, what we experience in reaction to the loss of objects might be regret, disappointment, or nostalgia. It is possible that one degenerate form of grief would be grief over the loss of an object that one imagines as having a perspective, but which is in fact not capable of having a perspective. Children often make such projections with respect to their favorite toys, for example.

In treating the loss of persons as paradigmatic occasions for grief, my account of grief is analogous to Jerome Neu's account of jealousy. He argues: "What is special about the fear of loss that constitutes jealousy is connected with what is special about people: while one could lose possession of a thing, one could not lose its affection—it has no affection to give or to be taken away." In Neu's view, we experience jealousy only with regard to people, because it is the affection of certain people we fear the loss of. From "Jealous Thoughts" in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1980), p. 433.

First, recall Moller's claim that the commonness of quick remarriage after the death of a spouse is evidence of the essentially functional role people play in our lives. Of course, when we remarry, we do perform a number of functions with our new spouses, since spouses tend to be people with whom we build and maintain households. But we should not abstract from that fact about marriage to a general philosophical claim about the nature of our love for individuals. On my account, finding another person to love can mitigate grief because it adds richer dimensions to our new orientation. Loving new people, perhaps even people we want to marry, can enhance the new shape our personal selves take. But there is no reason to think that the love we have for another person replaces the love we have for a deceased spouse. After all, we do not assume this about love in other contexts: we do not worry that the love parents have for a second child threatens their love for a first child, for example. There may be very good practical reasons we ought only to marry one person at a time, but those sorts of reasons do not obviously speak to our capacity for loving multiple people. As a result, the commonness of remarriage, a primary piece of evidence for Moller, can be easily accommodated on my account.

Next, the characterization of grief as a practical disorientation makes sense of having mourning rituals, even in secular contexts. If we think in terms of disorientation, then the creation of and participation in elaborate rituals, such as funeral services and burials, can be understood as providing the simulacrum of direction. The view of grief as sadness might characterize these activities as distractions from our sorrow, but it is difficult to see how creating more reminders of someone could serve as such a distraction. On my interpretation, these rituals help us to maintain relationships with

people in the only ways that are possible after their deaths. Visiting a grave or observing an anniversary are quasi-communications that we can make after someone's death. These practices provide us with the form of an outlet for our impulse to share our experiences with the deceased person. In that way, we maintain as much of our previous orientation as we can, and incorporate as much as possible of our relationships with the deceased as we look forward.

My account also explains why it is only appropriate for certain people to approach us when we are grieving. This category includes only those who are very close to us, and perhaps our spiritual or religious leaders. Those who love us are physically present with us in our grief. Others properly send unobtrusive words of condolence. This standard response, wherein those who are close to us make themselves physically available, is intelligible on my account of grief as an experience of disorientation. Kant observes: "In the darkness, I can orientate myself in a familiar room so long as I can touch any one object whose position I remember."¹²⁰ Being surrounded by other people who love us can help us reconstitute our personal selves by reminding us of who we still care about, and thus who we still are.

Not only do those who love us make themselves physically available to us, but they are the only ones who *should* approach us. That is because when we grieve we are intensely emotionally vulnerable, which is a facet of grief that my account illuminates.

Didion describes this experience of vulnerability while grieving:

People who have recently lost someone have a certain look, recognizable maybe only to those who have seen that look on their own faces. I have noticed it on

¹²⁰ "What is Orientation in Thinking?" in *Political Writings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 239

my face and I notice it now on others. The look is one of extreme vulnerability, nakedness, openness. It is the look of someone who walks from the ophthalmologist's office into the bright daylight with dilated eyes, or of someone who wears glasses suddenly made to take them off. (YMT, 74-75)

Exposure and vulnerability make people susceptible to shame or embarrassment, and more liable to be a source of embarrassment to those around them. Witnessing the exposure of a stranger or acquaintance is uncomfortable. As a result, the difficulty we have in offering condolences to those who are grieving makes sense. Upon the death of his wife, C. S. Lewis reflected: "An odd by-product of my loss is that I'm aware of being an embarrassment to everyone I meet. At work, at the club, in the street, I see people, as they approach me, trying to make up their minds whether they'll 'say something about it' or not."¹²¹ Lewis recognized that his condition was a source of embarrassment to his acquaintances. An account of grief as sadness cannot make sense of these common reactions. We are not typically embarrassed when we come upon someone who is sad for other reasons—for instance, around someone whose arm is broken, or whose sports team just lost a crucial player. But if we understand grief as involving the loss of the personal self, the vulnerability and embarrassment that accompanies it makes sense. In grief, the personal self is diminished and we are more exposed. With a strong sense of self, we are primed to make our stamp on the world. But with a weakened one, we are more easily caught off guard. Consequently, my account addresses the feelings of exposure, vulnerability, nakedness, and embarrassment that surround grief. And, this interpretation of the experience makes sense of our common social practice of giving mourners their privacy.

¹²¹ Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1976), p. 10.

We cannot drug ourselves to get through grief because any recovery will involve the reconstitution of the personal self, which is a project that requires our reflective presence and emotional work. Moller implies that recovery in grief involves waiting out a period of sadness and realizing that one can get what one needs equally well from a new person. He argues that certain people might seem irreplaceable, but we come to see that they are not. I suggest, instead, that the death of those we love presents us with a deep problem—a profound practical disorientation—that we have to overcome. These losses require us to change in some way: to change our commitments, to create new relationships, to refocus, reattach, and reorient. To be “resilient” should mean that one has been emotionally unstable, but has latched onto work that can be done to reground one’s practical outlook. This interpretation justifies our suspicion that although numbing ourselves might alleviate our pain, it will not resolve our grief.

Consider, again, the pathologies that grief is liable to. In light of empirical evidence, we ought to agree that grief does not characteristically destroy someone, just as Moller points out. But grief does open one up to the *possibility* of hopelessness and despair.¹²² These are the outside limits of what can happen in grief, and it is not typical for people to reach them. We generally think something has gone wrong if someone succumbs to these states. In most cases, we think grieving should be something that people go through, not get destroyed by. The history of customary mourning periods is evidence of this. Some prescribed mourning periods are long and last for a few years,

¹²² The connection between grief and despair is salient enough that the American Psychiatry Association is currently considering including typical grief symptoms as signs of a “major depressive disorder” in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, as I noted in an earlier footnote.

while others are shorter, but they typically come to an end.¹²³ These customs not only ensure that due respect is paid to the deceased, but they also ritualize grieving so that it will one day be over. The social expectation is that the mourner will rejoin the world.¹²⁴

If the mourner remains disengaged from the world, though, an account of grief should provide insight into that response. Moller assumes that grief is a feeling of sadness in response to the loss of someone who fulfills certain roles. When a person does not move on from grief, but instead succumbs to hopelessness, perhaps Moller would say that the deceased's functional role in that person's life was unusually broad. But such an account will struggle with occasions of being devastated by the loss of those who would seem most easily functionally replaceable, such as small children. I suggest, instead, that when we lose our way in the world, there is a real danger that we will not recover it. If our grief becomes hopelessness or despair, we have lost and not regained our sense of our personal selves. We are no longer concerned with inhabiting a particular world. At the limit, if we lose everyone important to us and to whom we are important, it becomes difficult to maintain a sense of oneself as anything more than just another anonymous

¹²³ Consider the highly ritualized mourning periods of the Jewish tradition, for one example. For further reference see Maurice Lamm's *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning* (New York: Jonathan David Publishers, 1969).

¹²⁴ Arnold van Gennep surveys rites throughout many societies and cultures and argues that mourning "is a transitional period for the survivors, and they enter it through rites of separation and emerge from it through rites of reintegration into society (rites of the lifting of mourning)." From his *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 147. See also, for example, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown's account of the mourning ritual of the Andaman Islanders: "... during the period of mourning the mourners are cut off from the ordinary life of the community. ... At the end of the mourning period they re-enter society and take up once more their place in the social life." From "The Andaman Islanders" in *Death, Mourning, and Burial*, ed. Antonius C. G. M. Robben (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), p. 153.

person.¹²⁵ This is not to have extremely sad feelings. Rather, it is the experience of losing oneself.

4.6 EXTREME AND PERIPHERAL OCCASIONS OF GRIEF

In addition to accounting for these common dimensions of grief, my view also addresses various extreme and peripheral occasions of grief. Grief understood as practical disorientation speaks to the unique experience of grieving the suicide of a beloved person. On the periphery lies our response to the deaths of people we might not expect to grieve for, such as public figures.

I have argued that grief is best understood as a practical disorientation involving the loss of the personal self. That disorientation will be most manifest in certain occasions of grief. Grief over someone who has committed suicide can be especially difficult to recover from. On my account, this is because suicide brings with it the challenge of maintaining one's previous understanding of the relationship. The suicide of a loved one presents itself as a repudiation of the life one shared with that person. Consequently, suicide poses a special challenge to the process of reconstituting oneself, because in such cases we do not have our previous selves as unambiguous starting places.

In grieving other sorts of deaths, one does not face that particular challenge. One can imaginatively appeal to the person one knew and the life one was confident of sharing to begin the process of reconstitution. Marie Tillman makes such references

¹²⁵ Bernard Williams makes a similar point in "Persons, Character, and Morality" when he discusses the significance of having personal projects: "...in general a man does not have one separable project which plays this ground role: rather, there is a nexus of projects, related to his conditions of life, and it would be the loss of all or most of them that would remove meaning" (13).

when she describes grieving her husband, Pat Tillman, who was killed as a soldier fighting in Afghanistan. She says,

There was something about Pat that affected almost everybody who was close to him. It's made me want to continue living in a way that honors him. I want him to be proud of the way I live my life and handle things. ... It's hard to keep going, but I know that for me to just give up, that would piss him off. (WMG, 387)¹²⁶

Marie Tillman gives direction to her life on the basis of the way her husband would see her. She lives her life according to what she sees as “the best way to honor our relationship and the life Pat and I had together...” (WMG, 387).

In contrast, someone grieving a suicide might have a more difficult time making that type of appeal to the nature of the lost relationship. Karen Green is the widow of the author David Foster Wallace, who killed himself. In a recent interview, she stated: “When the person you love kills himself time stops. It just stops at that moment. Life becomes another code, a language that you don't understand.”¹²⁷ The attitude that life has become a “language that you don't understand” is strikingly different from feeling confident that you know what would make someone proud, or how best to honor your relationship. That distinction suggests that grieving a suicide involves an extreme form of practical disorientation, because it is a disorientation that works its way backwards into one's life before the death.

In addition to grieving those whom we love and who love us, it seems possible for us to grieve for people we have never met or with whom we do not have actual

¹²⁶ From Jon Krakauer, *Where Men Win Glory: The Odyssey of Pat Tillman* (New York: Random House, 2009). Cited in-text as WMG.

¹²⁷ <http://m.guardian.co.uk/books/2011/apr/10/karen-green-david-foster-wallace-interview?cat=books&type=article>. The Observer, Sun 10 Apr 2011 00.04 BST. Cited on 5/24/11.

relationships. We might grieve over a miscarried pregnancy.¹²⁸ Moreover, we are susceptible to grief in response to the deaths of public figures, for instance John F. Kennedy, Jr., Princess Diana, and Michael Jackson.¹²⁹ On my account, those who are closest to us certainly see us most vividly. But we can also feel that public figures whom we have never met truly see us as well. When David Foster Wallace died, many of his fans experienced a personal loss (albeit a minor form of such loss). One journalist described the kinship numerous readers felt with Wallace. He recalls first encountering Wallace's work and having the "uncomfortable sense that not only did I know this guy, but he knew me."¹³⁰ The journalist describes Wallace's literary voice as "the voice in your own head." He is not, of course, being literal, but neither is the description simply metaphorical. Certain people make themselves heard in their songs, books, or speeches, and we, on the other end of that pseudo-conversation, feel understood by them and find ourselves addressing them back. When they die they are no longer there at the other end of that imaginatively constructed conversation. In the spirit of an account like Moller's, these public figures would continue to have the same basic functional role in our lives: we will keep listening to their songs and reading their books, for instance. A view like Moller's might claim that we are upset these people will not produce any new material, but it is not the case that we necessarily expected that of them anyway. On my account,

¹²⁸ This can be the case even before quickening, that is, before the pregnant woman initially feels the movement of the fetus.

¹²⁹ The numerous funeral tributes, memorial services, and shrines that arose in response to these deaths are some evidence of this phenomenon. See, for example, *The Mourning for Diana*, ed. Tony Walter (New York: Berg, 1999), especially pp. 231-233.

¹³⁰ http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/21/weekinreview/21scott.html?_r=1&ref=dauid_foster_wallace on 9/16/2010. A. O. Scott, the author of this piece, takes himself to be describing our temptation to experience the tragedy of Wallace's death first-personally, but wants to make it clear that Wallace's death was a "private tragedy." While I would not want to conflate the experience of those close to Wallace with the experience of those who did not know him personally, I think my account does explain how the latter group can experience a form of grief.

we grieve for these people because we felt seen by them and took ourselves to share a perspective with them. As a result, we can feel a bit less visible and complete when certain public figures die.

We can be oriented towards people we have not met, which explains why we can grieve for them. Positioning ourselves in a relationship with people we have not met involves the moral imagination, but in being imaginative it need not be delusional. This is the experience of unrequited love: one does not simply admire from afar, but rather adopts the stance of someone who is in a loving relationship with that other person. We are prepared, for example, to defend the objects of our unrequited love against slander, and we might experience some embarrassment or shame when they make fools of themselves. This sort of stance could be taken toward a public figure or a casual acquaintance, but it is simpler to see if we consider unborn children. Frequently, future parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles love unborn children without having met or developed actual relationships with them.¹³¹ If the pregnancy ends in miscarriage, the family will grieve for the loss of that particular unborn child. It makes sense to grieve for those one does not have actual mutual relationships with, because it is still possible to orient oneself towards that person.

4.7 CONCLUSION

Moller concludes that grief is a reaction to a loss that we thought would be devastating, but that usually turns out to be fairly minor because the importance of people to us derives from the importance of their functional roles. These roles are in principle

¹³¹ Thanks to Lisa Fuller for bringing this to my attention.

fulfillable by other people. Moller argues that this is the character of our love. We should realize that the people we love are replaceable, and that we will recover from their deaths.

On my account, our constitutions as distinctive individuals with practical outlooks depend upon our loving relationships with particular people. As a result, realizing from an objective or external perspective that most people recover from grief does not commit us to accepting, from the internal standpoint, that we ourselves will recover after the death of certain people whom we love. This difference between our understandings of ourselves from the first- and third-person perspectives is perfectly appropriate. Assenting to the empirical fact that “people” recover in grief is reasonable. But, imagining our own lives without the people upon whom our existence as distinctive individuals depends is impossible. Along similar lines, Frankfurt distinguishes between the “inconceivable” and the “unthinkable”:

We are accustomed to understanding rationality as precluding contradiction and incoherence—as limiting what it is possible for us to think. There is also a sense of rationality in which it limits what we can bring ourselves to do or to accept. In the one sense, the alternative to reason is what we recognize as inconceivable. In the other, it is what we find unthinkable. (RL, 45, fn. 5)

Frankfurt’s distinction makes clearer the asymmetry in our ability to anticipate moving on after the deaths of those we love. Our own recovery after the deaths of those we love is conceivable, and yet is, for us, unthinkable.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

After surveying prominent accounts from the sentimentalist and rationalist traditions in moral philosophy, I argue that standard theories of practical reasoning cannot accommodate our experience of love. Rather, love participates in its own form of practical necessity. This necessity derives from the contribution our loving interactions make to our basic sense of ourselves as distinctive individuals. Just as moral necessity arises from the claims other people make on us, so does necessity in love arise from appeals made in the second person. The second-personal addresses that characterize interactions in love, however, cannot be delivered in third-personal terms, as they properly are delivered in moral contexts.

My account of love accommodates Hume's sense that love affects our idea of ourselves, and agrees with Korsgaard's position that we constitute ourselves by creating and following standards of action. Going beyond Korsgaard's picture, though, my account implies that we—with those we love—constitute ourselves at the less agential level of being experiencing subjects. Following Frankfurt, the theory of love I provide takes seriously the essentially personal, particular nature of love, as well as its inescapable quality. In contrast to Frankfurt, I contend that the non-moral yet normative type of expectation involved in love is properly situated within a basically Kantian moral psychology. Kant's discussion of judgments of beauty makes room for the uniquely second-personal kind of address inherent to love.

Both Korsgaard and Darwall provide contemporary Kantian accounts, which present moral obligations as grounded in second-personal interactions. I agree that a focus on second-personal addresses and exchanges provides the correct starting point for an account of normative relations. But Korsgaard and Darwall maintain that all of our normative relations have third-personal, public, or objective dimensions, and as a result qualify as moral. My central critique of their accounts targets that feature. Furthermore, this criticism extends to any impartial moral theory that treats all interpersonal normative expectations as moral. I push against the idea that all of our normative expectations on others are moral, and recognize a non-moral yet normative type of expectation, which is predominant in loving relationships. This dissertation advocates an expansion of our conception of normative expectation. Existing conceptions preclude satisfactory discussions of significant dimensions of our personal and emotional lives. As this dissertation demonstrates, the appeals we make in loving relationships are not well accommodated by current theories of practical reasoning. As discussed, too, humor and beauty make more sense when understood in terms of this non-moral yet normative type of expectation. When we make an appeal in love, or seek to share an experience of humor or beauty with another person, we place an expectation on the other person that is more than a mere prediction of, but less than a rational demand for, a certain kind of response. This type of expectation is normative like a moral demand, but is inherently personal and particular as only a non-moral expectation can be.

I suspect that introducing this alternative notion of expectation into the discourse of moral philosophy can make better sense of other common attitudes as well. The introduction of this notion will allow us to reframe questions about our experiences of

pride and shame, some transactions of apology and forgiveness, the bestowing of mercy, at least certain senses of gratitude, the experience of agent-regret, and perhaps a basic sense of trust we have in others. Such attitudes are clearly normative, but also have dimensions that defy translation into objective, third-personal terms. My account of love provides a conceptual framework that can be applied to other attitudes that do not fit neatly in existing theories of practical reasoning.

In addition to introducing the category of a non-moral yet normative expectation, I suspect that my discussion of love supports a general claim concerning the proper work of moral philosophy. The asymmetry between what we can accept from the first- and third-person perspectives demonstrated in my account of love and grief is evidence for the broad conclusion that no science of the mind will capture our normative experience or the issues of significance in moral philosophy. Moral philosophy concerns the way we reason in our practical lives—how we approach our choices and the people around us. Practical reasoning, as we engage in it, has an essential first-personal component, which means that moral theorizing ought not be done from a purely third-person perspective. As the case of love and grief illustrates, the understanding of ourselves gained through empirical data is not a substitute for the normative conclusions that are revealed through first-personal reflections on our relationships.

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